



# City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road  
Sanibel, FL 33957

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

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Tuesday, April 21, 2026

9:00 AM

MacKenzie Hall - 800 Dunlop Road

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### Organizational Meeting

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER BY JOHN AGNEW, CITY ATTORNEY

Attorney Agnew called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Agnew noted that he was opening the meeting in his capacity as City Attorney because this was the annual organizational meeting for the election of Mayor and Vice Mayor.

#### 2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Councilmember Smith)

Councilmember Smith gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 3. ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Mayor Mike Miller, Councilmember Holly Smith, Councilmember Laura DeBruce, Vice Mayor John Henshaw, and Councilmember Richard Johnson

#### 4. ELECTION OF MAYOR AND OATH OF OFFICE

Councilmember Henshaw nominated Mike Miller. There were no further nominations. Mr. Miller accepted the nomination.

**Councilmember Henshaw moved, no second needed, to elect Councilmember Miller as Mayor. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### 5. ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR AND OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Miller opened nominations. Councilmember Smith nominated Councilmember DeBruce. Ms. DeBruce accepted the nomination. Councilmember Johnson nominated Councilmember Henshaw. Mr. Henshaw accepted the nomination and advised that he would be on the council for another year, planning to resign in coordination with the 2027 election. Following traditional practices, roll call votes were taken in order of nomination.

Roll call vote for Laura DeBruce as Vice Mayor.

**Councilmember Smith moved, no second necessary, to elect Councilmember DeBruce as Vice Mayor. The motion failed by a vote of 2-3, with Council Members Miller, Johnson and Henshaw opposed.**

**Opposed:** 3 - Mayor Mike Miller, Vice Mayor John Henshaw, and Councilmember Richard Johnson

Roll call vote for John Henshaw as Vice Mayor.

**Councilmember Johnson moved, no second needed, to elect Councilmember Henshaw as Vice Mayor. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

## **RECESS FOR PHOTO OF COUNCIL**

The meeting recessed at 9:15 a.m. and reconvened at 9:25 a.m.

## **6. SET THE AGENDA**

Mayor Miller spoke to the time certain item. Councilmember Smith requested to continue item 14d Council Liaison list to May 5 and move 15a up in the agenda before item 13 Council Comments.

**Councilmember Smith moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Henshaw, to continue item 14d Council Liaison List to May 5 and move 15a up in the agenda before item 13 Council Comments. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

## **7. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT (Chair Nichols)**

Since the last report the Planning Commission twice, March 24th and April 14th.

At the March 24th meeting:

1. Vegetation Buffer Standards - motion to forward to Council a recommendation of approval of updates to the Commercial and Institutional buffer standards with amendments to correct various technical references, typographical errors, and scrivener's errors as discussed, passed by unanimous vote.
2. Accessory Structures in Front Yards - motion to forward to Council a recommendation of approval with amendments to change references from buildings to structures throughout both sections, add little free libraries as permitted accessory structures with specified dimensional limits, and make other technical formatting corrections as discussed, passed by unanimous vote.
3. Below Market Rate Housing/Flat Roof Provision - motion to forward to Council a recommendation of approval with the change to delete the proposed "below market rate housing development" exception, keeping only the flat roof provision changes, passed by 6-0 vote, with Vice Chair Steiner recused due to bias based on being a CHR Board Member.
4. Elevation of Non-Conforming Structures - motion to forward to Council a recommendation of approval with language changes in Section 126-172A3 as proposed by Attorney Agnew to clarify the elevation exception provisions, passed by unanimous vote.
5. Coastal Creek Plat Revision - motion to approve Application SPLT-2022-000074 with all previous conditions remaining in effect passed by unanimous vote.

Additional Discussion Highlights

- On going interest in Round-about referendum timing

- E-Bike regulation and potential registration system
- Commissioners introduced to Ashlee Painter, Chief Resiliency Officer

At the April 14th Meeting:

1. The Commission reviewed and unanimously approved a conditional use permit for Santiva Islanders, a nonprofit senior center, to operate in Unit 11 at Palm Ridge Plaza. Approval included the 8 conditions recommended by Staff as amended by Commission.

The April 28th meeting has been cancelled, the next Commission meeting will be Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

## 8. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Councilmember DeBruce congratulated Vice Mayor Henshaw upon his election, thanked Mayor Miller for his guidance as Mayor, and thanked Councilmember Smith for all she does to represent the City.

Councilmember Johnson echoed the comments congratulating Mayor and Vice Mayor and thanked Councilmember Smith for her continued service.

Councilmember Smith further concurred with the congratulations and spoke to allowing the other members leadership opportunities.

Vice Mayor Henshaw thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve as Vice Mayor, encouraging people to run for council in the March 2027 election.

Mayor Miller congratulated Vice Mayor upon his election and spoke to the Trailways Camps for Special Needs Adults, advising the 4-day camp would be hosted on Sanibel for the first time.

## 9. PRESENTATION(S)

- a. Recognition of the Employee of the 2nd Quarter, Fiscal Year 2026 - Linda Garcia, Senior Administrative Assistant (Sanibel Police Department)

Human Resources Director Crystal Mansell introduced the Employee of the Quarter recognition program, which has been in place since 2000. Honorable mention nominations were also acknowledged for Dakota Phillips of Public Works and Lieutenant Grace Towler of the Sanibel Police Department.

Mayor Miller presented the award to Records Clerk Linda Garcia of the Police Department, who was hired in 2022 and has received two promotions since then. Her peers noted she is always the first to volunteer and last to leave, consistently goes above and beyond for both coworkers and residents, and performed with particular

distinction during the post-Hurricane Ian hurricane pass effort. Police Chief William Dalton echoed the recognition and thanked Ms. Garcia publicly for her work.

## 10. 9:30 AM PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Appeal of Planning Commission's Decision of Resolution 26-10  
**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, [UPHOLDING/REVERSING/MODIFYING/REMANDING] THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S DECISION DETAILED IN SANIBEL PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 26-10, REGARDING PERMIT SUBDIVISION PLAT APPLICATION NO. SPLT-2022-000074 DATED MARCH 24, 2026, TO ALLOW REVISION OF AN APPROVED PRELIMINARY PLAT, TO AMEND ALLOCATED IMPERMEABLE COVERAGE FOR LOTS 1 THROUGH 6 AT A UNIFIED RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (CLUSTER HOUSING) DEVELOPMENT KNOWN AS "COASTAL CREEK" SUBDIVISION, ON PROPERTY OWNED BY BUCKINGHAM 225 DEVELOPMENT, INC. (DANIEL W. DODRILL), LOCATED AT 5325 AND 5301 SANIBEL CAPTIVA ROAD, PARCEL NOS. 13-46-21-T2-00002.4000 AND 13-46-21-T2-00002.2000, RESPECTIVELY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

City Attorney John Agnew read into record the title of Resolution 26-016. Mayor Miller explained the quasi-judicial nature of the proceeding and that Council's review is limited to whether the Planning Commission properly interpreted and applied the Land Development Code based on the record before it; no new evidence or public testimony would be accepted.

Ex Parte Disclosures: Councilmembers Smith and DeBruce disclosed site visits; no other ex parte communications or conflicts were reported by any member.

Appellant's Argument: Attorney Ralph Brooks presented on behalf of appellant Gayle Dendinger, a property owner on Heron's Lake directly across from the former Sanibel Bayous wastewater treatment plant site. Mr. Brooks argued that PFAS ("forever chemicals") contamination has been confirmed in the water column and sediment of Heron's Lake through 2024 testing, indicating migration from the former wastewater plant site on which the Coastal Creek development is proposed. He cited LDC Sections 14-244 and 14-247, arguing that a hazardous condition exists on the property that must be assessed and remediated before development proceeds, and requested that Council modify the Planning Commission's resolution to add a condition requiring PFAS assessment and remediation prior to building permit issuance. Mr. Dendinger also addressed the Council personally, describing the impact on his neighborhood, the collaborative spirit he hoped to foster, and asking for the city's help.

A procedural question arose regarding whether the PFAS testing reports in the appellant's five-volume submission were properly part of the Planning Commission

record. The City Clerk confirmed that stacks of documents were submitted at the end of the Planning Commission hearing and were ultimately included in the record volumes. Council agreed to proceed.

Staff Presentation: Planning Director Paula McMichael presented the staff report, explaining that the sole request before the Planning Commission was to amend the maximum allocated impermeable area per lot in the preliminary plat table. The overall impermeable coverage maximums permitted by the LDC for the site's two ecological zones (G-altered lands and D2 upland wetlands) had not changed; rather, the table on the plat had not been updated to reflect those already-approved maximums. The correction increased per-lot figures from approximately 2,955 sq. ft. to up to 4,999 sq. ft., consistent with what was already lawfully permitted. All 24 conditions of the prior approval remained in effect. Director McMichael confirmed the city has no PFAS standards, that FDEP was previously consulted and did not recommend PFAS testing, and that no PFAS data exists for the site itself. She further confirmed all approved site work-roadways, drainage, utilities, and landscape buffers-has been completed.

Appellee's Argument: Attorney Terry Kramer and engineer Bryan Smith of Ensite presented on behalf of developer Daniel Dodrill/Buckingham 225 Development. Mr. Smith clarified that no new impervious coverage was being requested beyond what had always been allowed under the LDC. The error was confined to the plat's tabular data not having been updated to match the site plan, which correctly reflected the permitted maximums from the outset. The stormwater management system was designed to accommodate the maximum permitted coverage and in fact provides 3.6 times the required treatment capacity. Mr. Dodrill confirmed that contaminated soil had been excavated and removed off-site with photographic documentation provided to City staff.

Rebuttal and Council Discussion: Mr. Brooks reiterated the request for an additional condition requiring pre-permit PFAS assessment. Vice Mayor Henshaw acknowledged the PFAS issue as a legitimate concern but noted the absence of regulatory standards for PFAS in soil, the scientific uncertainty around specific compounds, and that the Planning Commission appeared not to have engaged substantively with the PFAS issue. He expressed support for upholding the Planning Commission and directing staff to study PFAS more broadly island-wide. Councilmember Smith observed that the developer does not own or border Heron's Lake and that the development meets all LDC requirements. Councilmember DeBruce disagreed with the majority, expressing concern that the coverage increase was substantive, that the site's unique history as a wastewater treatment plant warranted more scrutiny, and that PFAS testing should have been a condition. Councilmember Johnson noted the request was consistent with the LDC and supported upholding the Commission's decision.

Councilmember Johnson moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Henshaw, to adopt Resolution 26-016 upholding the Planning Commission's decision, finding that the Planning Commission properly interpreted and applied the provisions of the Land Development Code. The motion carried by a vote of 4-1 with Councilmember DeBruce opposed.

**Opposed:** 1 - Councilmember Laura DeBruce

Following the vote, Vice Mayor Henshaw inquired if the Natural Resources Department and Planning Staff should be directed to research the current state of knowledge and applicable standards regarding PFAS (specifically PFOA and PFOS), identifying who is taking the lead at state and federal levels, and report back to Council to increase awareness and inform future policy decisions island-wide.

Public Comment:

- Marsha Ellis - Lee County Resident - spoke to information she previously provided to the City relative to PFAS

Vice Mayor Henshaw moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to direct the Natural Resources Department to research and report to Council on PFAS-related issues, applicable standards, and ongoing regulatory developments. The motion carried.

## 11. DISCUSSIONS OF DRAFT LEGISLATION

### a. Vegetation - Chapter 122

**DISCUSSION ONLY - DRAFT ORDINANCE 26-006 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES SUBPART B LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, 122, VEGETATION, ARTICLE II, LANDSCAPING, DIVISION 2, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL USES, SECTION 122-49, TYPES, VARIETIES AND NUMBERS OF PLANTS REQUIRED, SECTION 122-50, INSTALLATION STANDARDS, AND SECTION 122-51, MAINTENANCE STANDARDS, TO REVISE THE VEGETATION BUFFER STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL USES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF UPDATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Environmental Biologist Dana Dettmar presented proposed revisions to the commercial and institutional vegetation buffer standards. The changes were developed by a working group including Natural Resources, Planning, SCCF, and landscape architect Coastal Vista Design, and were prompted by ongoing challenges experienced during post-Hurricane Ian recovery.

Key proposed changes included: (1) reducing the required large and medium tree quantity from 1 per 75 sq. ft. to 1 per 200 sq. ft. in front buffers, allowing for a 2-3 year grow-in period rather than requiring immediate screening; (2) differentiating buffer requirements based on the adjacent land use (commercial, residential, or conservation), with the least intensive requirements next to conservation land; (3) creating a credit system for existing mature trees based on diameter at breast height

(DBH); (4) providing alternative planting requirements in areas with overhead power lines or underground utility easements; (5) reducing species diversity requirements in buffer areas that overlap with stormwater management areas; (6) codifying a phased installation timeline of up to 48 months; and (7) creating extended post-natural disaster compliance timelines mirroring existing build-back standards.

Council was broadly supportive. Councilmember Smith raised concerns about sight line impacts on commercial properties and the effect on projects already in progress, which staff and City Manager Souza addressed. City Attorney Agnew recommended a minor drafting addition to Subsection F to clarify that the provision applies when buffer depth cannot be increased due to site constraints. Mr. Agnew stated the verbiage as: on page 3, subsection F, between the words "if" and "the" at the beginning, add ", because of site constraints,".

**Councilmember Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to forward Ordinance 26-006, including the amended language as stated by Attorney Agnew, to first reading. The motion carried.**

## 15. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Consideration of adding “miniature golf” to the Land Development Code as an allowable conditional use

City Manager Souza introduced this item, clarifying that the discussion concerned amending the LDC to add miniature golf as a conditional use-not approval of any specific project. The owners of the Island Cow restaurant, Bryan and Elke Podlasek, and their attorney Raychel Thomas of Pavese Law Firm, presented conceptual drawings for a potential rebuild of the Island Cow incorporating a botanically-themed, professional putting experience as a recreational outdoor amenity. Following Hurricane Ian and a subsequent fire, the owners pivoted from a previously approved restaurant-and-residential plan to this new concept. Because miniature golf does not fall under any existing permitted or conditional use in the LDC, a code amendment is required.

Council discussed the appropriate terminology, with Councilmember Johnson suggesting "outdoor recreational amenity" as a broader and more appropriate designation than "miniature golf" to avoid unintended associations. Councilmember DeBruce and Councilmember Smith both preferred clarity and specificity, favoring the term "miniature golf" to ensure that future applicants have clear guidance. The City Manager suggested that the Council make two separate motions: one directing the Planning Commission to add miniature golf as a conditional use, and a second directing the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to explore broader outdoor recreational amenity opportunities.

**Councilmember Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to direct the Planning Commission to amend the Land Development Code to create a conditional use for miniature golf as a recreational amenity. The motion carried.**

Councilmember Johnson moved, seconded by Councilmember Smith, to direct the City Manager to engage the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to identify other opportunities for outdoor recreational amenities and to develop language distinguishing amenities from attractions. The motion carried.

## 11. DISCUSSIONS OF DRAFT LEGISLATION

b. Remove Obsolete Prohibition of Flat Roofs for Multifamily Buildings (PC Res 26-07)

**DISCUSSION ONLY - DRAFT ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES SUBPART B LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 86, DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, ARTICLE III, RESIDENTIAL, DIVISION 3, UNIFIED RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (CLUSTER HOUSING) AND MULTIFAMILY HOUSING, SUBDIVISION III, MULTIFAMILY HOUSING, SECTION 86-164, LIMITATIONS ON PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF UPDATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Planning Director McMichael presented this item, explaining that the LDC subcommittee and Planning Commission had unanimously recommended removing a prohibition on flat roofs for multifamily buildings that conflicted with a code change made in 2024 permitting flat roofs generally. The limitation on no more than two dwelling units vertically in a multifamily building outside the resort housing district was retained.

Councilmember Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to advance Draft Ordinance 26-008 to first reading as written. The motion carried.

c. Speed Limits

**DISCUSSION ONLY - DRAFT ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 66, TRAFFIC, ARTICLE III, SPEED LIMITS, DIVISION 1, GENERALLY, SECTION 66-121, THIRTY-FIVE MILE PER HOUR SPEED LIMIT, AND DELETING SECTION 66-122, BRIDGE AT BUELL CREEK; SPEED LIMIT; TO ALLOW CITY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH SPEED LIMITS WITHIN THE CITY VIA RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

City Manager Dana Souza presented a draft ordinance that would set a maximum speed limit of 35 mph island-wide and allow Council to establish all other speed limits by resolution rather than ordinance. Council expressed concern that changing speed limits by resolution-rather than ordinance-would reduce the opportunity for public input on matters that have generated significant community interest. There was consensus that all speed limit changes should require an ordinance, which allows for public hearings, first and second readings, and broader notification. The item was effectively tabled, with direction to staff to return at the May 5 meeting with a comprehensive draft ordinance codifying all island speed limits and incorporating the

speed limit changes previously discussed, including those for Periwinkle Way.

Public Comment:

- Lyman Welch - Sanibel Resident - recommended using ordinance process to ensure public participation, include the reduction of speed on East Periwinkle from the bridge to the lighthouse due to bridge height changes, leave the rest of Periwinkle and SanCap Road at 35mph, and to gather more resident input on Rabbit Road speed limit.
- Richard Birney - Sanibel Resident - support reduction near the bridge, not for the rest of East Periwinkle

## 12. FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AND SCHEDULING OF PUBLIC HEARING

a. Vegetation - Chapter 122

**ORDINANCE 26-006 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES SUBPART B LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, 122, VEGETATION, ARTICLE II, LANDSCAPING, DIVISION 2, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL USES, SECTION 122-49, TYPES, VARIETIES AND NUMBERS OF PLANTS REQUIRED, SECTION 122-50, INSTALLATION STANDARDS, AND SECTION 122-51, MAINTENANCE STANDARDS, TO REVISE THE VEGETATION BUFFER STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL USES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF UPDATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Ordinance 26-006.

Second reading and public hearing scheduled for 9:05 a.m., Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

b. Remove Obsolete Prohibition of Flat Roofs for Multifamily Buildings (PC Res 26-07)

**FIRST READING - ORDINANCE 26-008 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES SUBPART B LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 86, DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, ARTICLE III, RESIDENTIAL, DIVISION 3, UNIFIED RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (CLUSTER HOUSING) AND MULTIFAMILY HOUSING, SUBDIVISION III, MULTIFAMILY HOUSING, SECTION 86-164, LIMITATIONS ON PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF UPDATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Ordinance 26-008.

Second reading and public hearing scheduled for 9:05 a.m., Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

c. Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers

**ORDINANCE 26-010 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY DELETING IN ITS ENTIRETY CHAPTER 30, ENVIRONMENT, ARTICLE III, NOISE, SECTION 30-70, GAS POWERED LEAF BLOWERS, TO COMPLY WITH CHAPTER 2026-3, LAWS OF FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Ordinance 26-010.

Second reading and public hearing scheduled for 9:05 a.m., Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

d. Speed Limits

**ORDINANCE 26-011 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 66, TRAFFIC, ARTICLE III, SPEED LIMITS, DIVISION 1, GENERALLY, SECTION 66-121, THIRTY-FIVE MILE PER HOUR SPEED LIMIT, AND DELETING SECTION 66-122, BRIDGE AT BUELL CREEK; SPEED LIMIT; TO ALLOW CITY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH SPEED LIMITS WITHIN THE CITY VIA RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance was not advanced, consistent with the Council's direction to bring back a comprehensive speed limit ordinance at the May 5 meeting.

### 13. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Smith congratulated Mayor and Vice Mayor upon their elections, congratulated Mayor Miller upon being awarded the Home Rule Hero Award by the Florida League of Cities, highlighted the League's trustee appointments including her own seat on the Loan Council, and reported on the governor's recent announcement of \$2 billion in Everglades Restoration funding and a projected five-year acceleration of the EAA completion to 2029. She also noted the upcoming retirement of Lee County VCB Director Tam Pigott and the appointment of Pamela Johnson as her successor.

Vice Mayor Henshaw commented on bicycle safety following a recent fatality in the Sanctuary subdivision, advocating for helmets and proper lighting. He also expressed personal disappointment with recent political protests on Periwinkle Way, stating his belief that the island should remain a sanctuary free of such confrontation.

Councilmember DeBruce spoke to SanCap Bank celebrating 25 years, success of the Seahorse School Fundraiser, Vice Mayor Henshaw's participation in the dunk tank, responded to Vice Mayor's comments by affirming the constitutional right to peaceable assembly and free speech, and noted that safety concerns are a separate

matter.

Councilmember Johnson congratulated Vice Mayor upon stepping up to provide leadership to the Council, advised the effectiveness of the "Slow Down Sanibel Campaign", noting a diminished report of illegal passing on Sanibel particularly around Sanibel Captiva Road, and congratulated Mayor Miller for his appointment to the Florida Municipal Pension Trust Board.

Mayor Miller spoke in detail about Trailways Camp and its significance to the community.

Councilmember Smith left the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

The meeting recessed at 2:05 p.m. and reconvened at 2:18 p.m.

## 14. OLD BUSINESS

### a. 2025 On-island Water Quality Program Update

Environmental Biologist Dana Dettmar introduced Mark Thompson of the SCCF Marine Laboratory, who presented the 2025 annual monitoring report covering 42 lake sites, 11 canal sites, and 6 permanent groundwater monitoring installations.

Key findings included: average lake salinity remains in the estuarine range at approximately 9.3 PSU, still well above the freshwater threshold of 0-3 PSU, though trending downward following Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The 2025 water quality report card showed improvement over 2024, with 14% of monitored lakes receiving a "B" grade and fewer "D" or "F" grades overall. Canal water quality reflects the impaired estuary and remains above nitrogen thresholds. Groundwater salinity is high island-wide and is sitting below mean sea level for significant portions of the dry season, raising concerns about saltwater intrusion. At the time of the report, the Western Sanibel Slough was already at a lower elevation than its lowest point recorded in all of 2025, and had not yet reached the typically driest point in May.

Mr. Thompson noted that a collaborative study with the University of Florida and the USFWS Refuge is using the monitoring well network to study Sanibel Island rice rat habitat and behavior. Mr. Thompson recommended that the City consider maintaining a permanent transect of groundwater monitoring wells to track long-term salinity and saltwater intrusion trends. City Manager Souza noted the tension between holding back water to maintain the freshwater lens versus responding to resident complaints about swale flooding, and confirmed that staff would be developing a public communications campaign ahead of the approaching rainy season.

### b. Annual Shared Use Path (SUP) Count Report

Recreation Director Andrea Miller presented the 2026 Shared Use Path Survey results, conducted by volunteers from the Sanibel Bike Club and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. Counts were taken at six intersections in mid-March 2026. All categories showed increases over 2025, with pedestrian counts up 52%, traditional bikes up 33%, e-bikes up 45%, and bikes on the road up 40%. The percentage of e-bikes relative to total bicycle traffic increased only 1 percentage point (from 15% to 16%). The data will inform the upcoming Bicycle Friendly Community re-application due in mid-June. City Manager Souza noted that helmet use declined despite increased ridership, and confirmed that a public safety campaign promoting helmet use would be integrated into the May bike safety month event.

- c. Discussion of reducing speed limits on Periwinkle Way, Rabbit Road, and a segment of Sanibel-Captiva Rd. between Rabbit Road and the western limit of the Sanibel School Speed Zone

Given Council's earlier decision to proceed with a comprehensive speed limit ordinance rather than resolutions, City Manager Souza focused this discussion on the two specific roadway segments that had not been addressed: Rabbit Road and the segment of Sanibel-Captiva Road (SanCap Road) between Rabbit Road and the school speed zone.

Conservation Officer Rachel Rainbolt presented wildlife mortality data. On Rabbit Road, collisions occur primarily near intersections and involve a mix of reptiles (including gopher tortoises and box turtles) with few strictly protected species concentrated along the corridor itself. On the segment of SanCap Road between Rabbit Road and the school zone, mortality is higher and includes bobcats-the only documented bobcat mortality on the island. The 85th percentile speed on SanCap in this segment is approximately 42-43 mph against a posted 35 mph limit, and on Rabbit Road it is approximately 34 mph against a posted 30 mph limit.

Captain Patrick Harris of the Sanibel Police Department described the Slow Down Sanibel enforcement program, including directed patrols, radar stat-tracker deployments, and increased citations and warnings. He noted the school radar sign on SanCap has been effective. Council also noted significant written public opposition to speed reductions on SanCap Road and Rabbit Road.

Following discussion, Council reached a general consensus that Rabbit Road should remain at 30 mph. Regarding the SanCap segment, Vice Mayor Henshaw supported a reduction beginning at San Carlos Bay Drive (the intersection preceding Rabbit Road) to address the high mortality area and reduce approach speeds; Councilmember DeBruce expressed openness to that proposal; Councilmember Johnson stated he was not inclined to reduce the SanCap speed limit. No formal action was taken; the topic will be included in the comprehensive speed limit ordinance to be presented at the May 5 meeting.

d. Council Liaison Discussion and Appointments

This item was deferred to the May meeting per the agenda modification approved at the start of the meeting.

## 16. CONSENT AGENDA

### CONSENT ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

Councilmember DeBruce requested to pull 16.a.

a. Adoption of Minutes

Councilmember DeBruce requested that the March 17, 2026 minutes be pulled for revision and approval at the next meeting due to comments she submitted that morning.

### BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Adoption of Minutes

b. Annual Independence Day Parade Special Event Application and request for City co-sponsorship

c. Approval of an agreement between Zambelli Fireworks Manufacturing Company and the City of Sanibel for the Independence Day fireworks display in the amount of \$33,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute same

d. Fishing Pier Temporary Repairs Pending Full Replacement

Adoption of the March 3, 2026 minutes, and approval of business items b, c, and d.

**Councilmember Johnson moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Henshaw, to adopt the Minutes of March 3, 2026, and approve business items b, c, and d. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0, with Councilmember Smith absent.**

**Absent:** 1 - Councilmember Holly Smith

## 17. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Tradewinds Update

b. Water Quality Report from Natural Resources Department

c. Advisory Committee Annual Reports

- i. Historical Preservation Committee
- ii. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- iii. Vegetation Committee

No items were pulled for additional discussion.

## **18. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

### **a. Future Agenda Items Matrix**

Mayor Miller noted that the e-bike registration program item should be added to the Future Items Matrix. City Manager Souza confirmed this item is planned for a June presentation and acknowledged it will present implementation challenges but that a workable program can be developed.

## **19. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

City Manager Souza reported that the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approved the peer agreement for \$2.1 million in TDC funds, which the City Council had previously approved. A budget amendment will be brought forward at the May 5 meeting to fund the design portion, which was not included in the county's grant. Souza also reported on ongoing complaints from residents in the Sanctuary, Dunes, and Beachview neighborhoods regarding service and landscape vehicles parking in roadways, which may be in technical violation of Section 66-34. He proposed that staff initiate community meetings with the relevant HOAs to candidly discuss the tradeoffs-ranging from enforcement of the parking ordinance, to potential shared use path or sidewalk construction, to possible ordinance amendments-and return to Council with community feedback and recommended solutions.

## **20. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

No further report at this time.

## **21. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments from the audience.

## **22. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.