



# City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road  
Sanibel, FL 33957

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

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Tuesday, March 31, 2026

9:00 AM

MacKenzie Hall - 800 Dunlop Road

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### Regular Meeting Rescheduled from 3/17

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.

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

Councilmember Johnson 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. SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Miller noted two agenda items with set times: the affordable housing ordinances at 9:10 AM and a quasi-judicial hearing at 10:30 AM. He indicated they would skip the 10:30 item if reached early and return to it at the designated time. Council set the agenda as published.

#### 5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Miller welcomed District 1 County Commissioner Kevin Ruane, acknowledging his support for Sanibel's recovery efforts.

Public Comments:

- Matt Joyce - inquired as to the Sanibel Pier item and was advised it is later on in the agenda.

#### 6. PRESENTATION(S)

##### a. Gopher Tortoise Day Proclamation

Mayor Miller read into record a proclamation recognizing Gopher Tortoise Day. He presented the proclamation to Natural Resources Staff members Rachel Rainbolt and Erin Reed. Ms. Rainbolt thanked Council for the proclamation and thanked residents for their re-vegetation efforts following recent storms and reported seeing new gopher tortoises surviving on the island.

**b. PACE - Believing in Girls Month Proclamation**

Mayor Miller read into record a proclamation recognizing March as "Believing in Girls Month" in recognition of PACE Center for Girls Lee, which provides services to at-risk young women. Representatives included Board Vice Chair Amy McQuagge, Board Member Jennifer Nelson (also Cape Coral City Council member), and Executive Director Jennifer Cellitti. Vice Mayor Smith emphasized the importance of supporting young women who face challenges and noted that PACE provides mentorship and support for those who might need extra help. Ms. McQuagge detailed PACE's mission of serving at-risk girls aged 11-17 through education, advocacy, and counseling, reporting that 100% of their girls improve academically and 75% increase their self-belief.

**c. Water Conservation Month Proclamation**

Mayor Miller read into record a proclamation recognizing April 2026 as Water Conservation Month, emphasizing water as a finite and fragile resource. The proclamation noted that approximately 60% of potable water produced by Island Water Association is used for irrigation. Diana Wilson, General Manager of Island Water Association (IWA), thanked the city for the recognition and emphasized that while focusing on conservation in April, it should be a daily concern. She directed residents to the Island Water website for irrigation schedules and noted that beautiful landscapes and water conservation can go hand in hand.

**d. World Landscape Architecture Month Proclamation**

Mayor Miller read into record a proclamation recognizing April 2026 as Landscape Architecture Month and April 1, 2026 as Professional Landscape Architecture Day. Leigh Gevelinger, owner of Coastal Vista Design and president of the American Society of Landscape Architects Florida Chapter, accepted the proclamation. She noted this was one of the first proclamations received statewide and thanked the city for its recognition. Ms. Gevelinger emphasized the importance of water conservation and native planting principles, acknowledging other allied professionals present who contribute to successful landscape projects.

**7. 9:05 AM - SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING****a. Community Housing & Resources - Conditional Use Permit**

**ORDINANCE 26-004 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY AS SET FORTH AND APPROVED IN PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 26-04, CONDITIONAL USE PETITION APPLICATION NO. PL20260002, PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 82-201, AUTHORIZATION, AND 82-204,**

**APPLICATION AND HEARING, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO ALLOW INCREASED-DENSITY BELOW MARKET RATE HOUSING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A 39-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY OWNED BY COAST ISLANDS COMMUNITY LAND TRUST, INC. (FORMERLY OWNED BY SANIBEL 1523 , INC., AND SANIBEL 1531, INC.), AND LOCATED AT 1523 PERIWINKLE WAY, TAX PARCEL NO. 30-46-23-T1-00004.0060 AND NO. 30-46-23-T1-00004.0070, MORE FULLY DESCRIBED HEREIN; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Ordinance 26-004 which sought to approve an increase in residential development density to allow for the construction of a 39-unit multifamily below market rate housing development at 1523 Periwinkle Way, owned by Coast Islands Community Land Trust, Inc. Mayor Miller spoke to the need for a super majority vote to pass.

Discussion ensued regarding Councilmember DeBruce being the Liaison to Community Housing and Resources (CHR) and not having seen the project plans prior to the presentation on March 17th, Mayor Miller attending the Planning Commission meeting on February 24th, and Councilmember Johnson and others attending the County Commission meeting regarding the project.

**Council Discussion:**

The discussion, which was extensive, reflected the significance and complexity of the proposal.

Vice Mayor Smith, who had been absent from the first reading due to travel for FEMA-related work, opened with lengthy preliminary comments. She stated she had reviewed the prior council meeting and Planning Commission recordings thoroughly, and while she expressed philosophical support for CHR and below market rate housing, she voiced serious reservations about the proposed project at 39 units and three stories over parking. She questioned compliance with Section 86-164 of the land development code (limitations on principal buildings), raised concerns about the concentration of affordable housing units in a single location, and expressed uncertainty about CDBG-DR funding restrictions under the Fair Housing Act-specifically whether residents could be required to both live and work on Sanibel. She also indicated that she would have been more comfortable supporting a two-story alternative, noting that a reduced footprint might still be financially viable with creative funding approaches, and that she had visited the site and consulted the County's CDBG-DR administrator prior to the meeting.

Councilmember Johnson spoke in favor of the project, urging his colleagues not to allow the matter to divide the community. He acknowledged that information had arrived late, noting that renderings were not available until the day before the prior meeting, but emphasized that the right decision was to vote yes, and that there was still time to address open concerns. He stressed the importance of

using the available federal funding and that the risk of inaction was losing this opportunity entirely.

Councilmember DeBruce stated she continued to have significant reservations, particularly regarding the size and mass of the building and its compatibility with the Sanibel Plan's requirement that below market rate housing be "virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the community." She acknowledged her sense of personal responsibility as City Liaison to CHR, noting she had not been informed of the specifics of the project until the prior meeting. Most critically, she proposed a firm condition that every unit be occupied exclusively by individuals employed by businesses with a principal place of business on Sanibel, or a Sanibel-affiliated business on Captiva, or individuals who had previously worked on Sanibel for 20 years and were retired or disabled. She argued this condition was necessary to ensure the density increase was justified under the City's charter, which permits increased density solely as an incentive for the City's own below market rate housing program serving Sanibel's workforce.

Councilmember Henshaw inquired whether the project would have been proposed absent the federal funding and whether the density and style of the building were truly aligned with Sanibel's character. He ultimately indicated he could support the project if the conditions adequately addressed who would occupy the units and how the property would be managed, while accepting some residual risk that one or two units might eventually house individuals not employed on Sanibel.

Mayor Miller stated he was a yes vote, finding the project consistent with the Sanibel Plan when read as a whole, not troubled by Section 86-43 compliance given the commercial district context, and willing to accept the risks associated with concentration. He cautioned against letting the "drive for perfection" on the workforce eligibility condition jeopardize the project's funding eligibility but ultimately acknowledged that Councilmember DeBruce's vote was necessary to achieve the required four-vote super-majority.

#### Staff and Applicant Presentations:

Planning Director Paula McMichael presented a detailed review of the proposal, confirming staff and Planning Commission findings of consistency with the Sanibel Plan and applicable land development code provisions. She acknowledged that a variance from Section 86-164 had not been requested for the companion Riverview I project (Harkey House), characterizing this as an oversight. She confirmed that the building, set back approximately 135 feet from Periwinkle Way, was designed with a maximum height of 45 feet NAVD, and that the updated design presented at this meeting differed from the initial rendering shown at first reading by relocating the elevator shaft and opening the central walkway.

b. Community Housing & Resources - Variances

**ORDINANCE 26-005 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, DETERMINING A VARIANCE (APPLICATION NO. PL20260007) RELATIVE TO SECTION 86-163, MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS, SECTION 86-164, LIMITATIONS ON PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS, SECTION 122-48, LOCATION AND SIZE OF REQUIRED VEGETATION BUFFERS, SECTION 122-49, TYPES, VARIETIES, AND NUMBERS OF PLANTS REQUIRED, SECTION 126-494, REQUIRED CONDITIONS, SECTION 126-1029, SITE PLANNING, AND SECTION 126-1404, DRIVEWAYS AND SERVICE AISLES, TO ALLOW FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 39-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, ON PROPERTY OWNED BY COAST ISLANDS COMMUNITY LAND TRUST, INC. (FORMERLY OWNED BY SANIBEL 1523, INC. AND SANIBEL 1531, INC.) AND LOCATED AT 1523 PERIWINKLE WAY, TAX PARCEL NO. 30-46-23-T1-00004.0060 AND NO. 30-46-23-T1-00004.0070, FILED PURSUANT TO SECTION 82-138 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; MORE FULLY DESCRIBED HEREIN; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Ordinance 26-005. Planning Director McMichael continued the presentation, specific to the variance requests, regarding the proposed conditions to be included with any project approval as the two ordinances are closely incorporated.

Councilmember Johnson stepped out of the meeting at 11:14 a.m. and returned at 11:24 a.m.

CHR Executive Director Nicole McHale presented background on the organization's process, including earlier failed attempts to secure CDBG-DR funding for another site (the Middle Gulf Drive parcel, which was deemed a wetland following Hurricanes Helene and Milton), the origin and constraints of the CDBG-DR Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), and the business case for the project. She shared results of a survey of 27 Sanibel businesses, reporting that 93 percent identified workforce housing as critical or very important, 63 percent had reduced hours or capacity due to staffing shortages, and 85 percent reported hiring as extremely or very difficult. She also presented an updated architectural rendering and clarified that CHR's intent was always for units to serve Sanibel and Captiva workers. She confirmed the project was a "take it or leave it" proposition with respect to the grant structure, though she clarified she did not mean the project was inflexible to conditions.

Project Manager Rachel Bielert addressed the funding timeline, explaining that May 4, 2026, was the deadline by which the City needed to confirm that zoning approvals were in place. The occupancy deadline-by which the building must be built and occupied to receive forgiveness of the loan component of the CDBG-DR award-was now understood to be May 2026, with some flexibility having been clarified by county staff. She also addressed the financial

infeasibility of reducing the project to 26 units, explaining that eliminating 13 units would reduce revenue by 30 percent while only reducing construction costs by approximately 15 percent, likely producing a negative return on investment under the county's underwriting framework.

The meeting recessed at 12:14 p.m. and reconvened at 12:28 p.m.

Public Comments:

- Chris Heidrick - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Carmella Cioffi - MHK Architecture - spoke in support of the project
- Nathan Kastle - CHR Resident, City of Sanibel Employee - spoke in support of the project
- Alison Ward - CHR Resident - spoke in opposition of the project
- Chet Sadler - Sanibel Resident - spoke in opposition of the project
- Denise Rodenburg - Kona Kai Motel Owner - spoke in opposition of the project
- Ed Holden - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Cathy Lanier - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Arlene Dillon - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Marty Harrity - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Peter Pappas - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- William Harkey - property owner - spoke in support of the project
- Terry Cool - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Roger Grogman - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Wanda McKitrick - CHR Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Nancy Gurney - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Jeff Decker - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- George Keniakalas - Birdie View - spoke in opposition of the project
- Rose Gilson - CHR Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Jason Halliburton - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- Carolyn Marino - Sanibel Resident - spoke in opposition of the project
- Larry Schopp - Sanibel Resident - spoke in opposition of the project
- Ellen Israel - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project
- James McHale - Sanibel Resident - spoke in support of the project

Supporters emphasized the demonstrated need for workforce housing, the opportunity cost of declining the funding, CHR's track record of responsible property management, the quality and character of the updated architectural design, and the importance of economic diversity to Sanibel's recovery and long-term vitality. CHR residents and Sanibel employees testified about the direct benefits of on-island housing. Several speakers invoked the legacy of the Sanibel Plan's original commitment to below market rate housing and the exhortation attributed to Porter Goss that the community had an obligation to support CHR.

Opponents and those with reservations raised concerns about the concentration of lower-income housing units on a single corridor, the size and mass of the

building relative to the surrounding neighborhood, the risk that CDBG-DR funding requirements could allow non-Sanibel workers to occupy the units, the loss of commercial space on Periwinkle Way, and the compatibility of the project with the Sanibel Plan's character standards. Planning Commission member Larry Schopp, speaking as a resident, stated his belief that the project violated Policy 3.7 of the Sanibel Plan and Section 86-43, though he noted he would have voted for a two-story version. Adjacent property owner Denise Rodenburg of Kona Kai Motel raised design compatibility concerns.

- County Commissioner Kevin Ruane - clarified that the \$9,750,000 award was structured as a grant (a forgivable loan, to be forgiven upon meeting program milestones), to discourage a "no" vote, and to note that the Council could include conditions in the approval without risking the county's cooperation. He assured Council that no commissioner would hold a difficult decision against them and encouraged a path to yes.

Following deliberation, Councilmember DeBruce moved to approve Ordinance 26-004 with the following modifications and addition to the ordinance language: (1) changing the eighth "whereas" clause from "agrees with" to "acknowledges" the Planning Commission's finding of consistency with the Sanibel Plan; and (2) adding a new fourth condition requiring that the applicant ensure each resident of the development be an employee or owner on Sanibel of a business or organization with a principal place of business on Sanibel, an employee or owner on Captiva of a business or organization with a principal place of business on Sanibel, or an individual who has previously worked on Sanibel for 20 years and is retired or disabled.

Public Comments:

- Peter Pappas
- Caroline Marino
- Mitch Koppelman
- Arlene Dillon
- Carmella Cioffi

**Councilmember DeBruce moved, seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to adopt Ordinance 26-004 as amended, with the modification to the eighth whereas clause and the addition of the workforce eligibility condition. The motion carried 4-1, with Vice Mayor Smith opposed.**

**Opposed:** 1 - Councilmember Holly Smith

City Attorney Agnew confirmed the title of Ordinance 26-005 had been previously read. The ordinance addressed variances from Sections 86-163 (maximum number of dwelling units), 86-164 (limitations on principal buildings), 122-48 and 122-49 (vegetation buffers and plant requirements), 126-494, 126-1029, and 126-1404, all necessary to accommodate the 39-unit development.

Jeremy Walsh of RS Walsh Landscaping presented the landscape plan, describing the proposed native buffer plantings along all sides of the property, including a minimum of 15-foot trees along the Periwinkle Way frontage, the relocation of existing sabal palms into the buffer, plantings along the Kona Kai side, and a dense buffer at the rear of the property adjacent to the Sanibel River preserve area.

**Councilmember Henshaw moved, seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to adopt Ordinance 26-005.**

**Councilmember DeBruce moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Smith, to amend the motion to include the added condition from 26-004. The motion to amend passed 4-1 with Councilmember Henshaw opposed.**

**Opposed:** 1 - Vice Mayor John Henshaw

**Councilmember Henshaw moved, seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to adopt Ordinance 26-005 as amended to include the workforce eligibility condition. The amended motion carried 4-1 with Vice Mayor Smith opposed.**

**Opposed:** 1 - Councilmember Holly Smith

The meeting recessed at 3:49 p.m. and reconvened at 4:03 p.m.

## **8. 10:30 AM - PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. RESOLUTION 26-013 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 26-03, REGARDING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION NOS. PL20250011 AND PL20260006 DATED FEBRUARY 24, 2026, TO ALLOW BICYCLE RENTALS AND A FORMULA RETAIL STORE (UNLIMITED BIKING) TO OPERATE IN UNIT 3 OF THE ISLANDER CENTER LOCATED WITHIN THE TCG - TOWN CENTER GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, ON PROPERTY OWNED BY 2407 PERIWINKLE SANIBEL, LLC, AND LOCATED AT 2407 PERIWINKLE WAY, TAX PARCEL NO. 26-46-22-T2-00004.0070; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

City Attorney Agnew read the title of Resolution 26-013 and provided an overview of the quasi-judicial appeal process. He explained that Council's review was limited to whether the Planning Commission had properly interpreted and applied the land development code based on the evidence in the record, applying a competent substantial evidence standard. Public comment would not be taken; only parties to the proceeding and staff would present. The Council was advised that it could uphold, reverse, modify, or remand the Planning Commission's decision.

Councilmember DeBruce recused herself from this item, citing her ownership of a small e-bike business that could be affected by the outcome. Form 8B would be filed with City Clerk Kelly and added to the record. Councilmember DeBruce stepped out of the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

City Clerk Kelly swore in the following:

- Paula McMichael, City of Sanibel, Planning Director
- Steve Brown Jr., Incoming Owner of Billy's Bikes, filer of appeal
- Blake Bartholomew - Attorney on behalf of the Applicant, Unlimited Biking
- Hakan Ugdur - CEO of Unlimited Biking

Council members disclosed ex parte communications: Councilmember Johnson reported a site visit and conversations with resident Jeff Powers, Billy Kirkland, and Steve Brown Jr. regarding safety at the site; Councilmember Henshaw reported receiving a voicemail from Steve Brown Jr. but indicated no substantive communication took place; Vice Mayor Smith reported a voicemail from Mr. Brown and a brief encounter with the applicant's representative, Blake Bartholomew, at a public function; and Mayor Miller reported receiving a voicemail from Mr. Brown that he did not return. All ex-parte disclosure forms would be filed with the City Clerk and added to the record.

Appellant's Presentation - Steve Brown Jr.

Steve Brown Jr., appellant on behalf of Billy's Bikes and a Sanibel resident, stated that he filed the appeal because he believed the Planning Commission had erred in two principal respects. First, he argued that a bicycle rental business was not compatible with the other uses at the Islander Center under the formula retail compatibility standards of Section 162-102, particularly the requirement that the proposed development intensity not exceed that of other low and moderate intensity uses on the site. He contended that during peak season, the volume of activity at a bike rental business was substantially different from the restaurants, wine shop, and medical office also located at the center. Second, he raised safety concerns under Section 126-82(a), arguing that the physical modifications made to the site since the application was denied 7-0 in 2021-primarily the addition of an interconnectivity path alongside the ingress/egress road-were insufficient to transform what had previously been deemed an unsafe site into an acceptable one. He also questioned how the addition of 100 bikes could be consistent with the parking reductions that had occurred on the site since 2021.

Staff and Applicant Presentations - Planning Director McMichael and Blake Bartholomew

Planning Director McMichael outlined the four specific deficiencies cited in the 2021 denial and explained how each had been addressed through code amendments and site improvements since that time. The mix of uses in the Town Center General Commercial District had changed since 2021, making the compatibility analysis different. The interconnectivity path-approved by staff and constructed-now provided a dedicated route for bicyclists from the rear staging area to the shared use path, separate from vehicle circulation. City

Council's 2024 amendments to the off-street parking code eliminated the parking deficiency that contributed to the prior denial, and the traffic study submitted with the application demonstrated no net increase in vehicle trips. A rebuttable presumption of no adverse traffic impact existed under the amended code, and no competent substantial evidence to the contrary was presented to the Planning Commission.

Blake Bartholomew, representing property owner 2407 Periwinkle Sanibel LLC and Unlimited Biking, emphasized that the application had undergone an eight-month staff review process, the interconnectivity path had been constructed, letters of support from three of the four Islander Center tenants were in the record, and the former Planning Commission chair—who had been involved in the 2021 denial—had indicated the current application addressed the prior shortcomings. CEO Hakan Ugdur of Unlimited Biking also addressed safety, noting that his company's operations at this site offered superior separation of bike staging from vehicle traffic compared to the three existing bike rental businesses on the island.

#### Council Action

Following deliberations, Vice Mayor Smith moved to uphold the Planning Commission's unanimous decision in favor of approving the conditional use permits for Unlimited Biking. The Council agreed that the competent substantial evidence standard had been met and that the Planning Commission had properly applied the land development code.

**Vice Mayor Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember Henshaw, to adopt Resolution 26-013 upholding the Planning Commission's decision as detailed in Planning Commission Resolution 26-03. The motion carried 4-0, with Councilmember DeBruce recused.**

**Recused:** 1 - Councilmember Laura DeBruce

## 9. OLD BUSINESS

### a. Sanibel Fishing Pier (Supplement 1)

Councilmember DeBruce rejoined the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

City Manager Dana Souza presented a grant agreement between the City and Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) in the amount of \$2,148,000 for construction of a new Sanibel Fishing Pier. He noted that of the \$2,500,000 originally requested, design and construction administration costs were deemed ineligible for TDC funding and would need to be addressed separately. Mr. Souza indicated he would bring a cost estimate for those services back to Council. Vice Mayor Smith acknowledged her role as a TDC member in facilitating this funding and noted that Commissioner Ruane had been instrumental in the award. Council also confirmed that work on temporary

repairs to the existing pier structure remained ongoing and would be communicated to Council soon.

**Vice Mayor Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to approve Lee County Tourist Development Grant Agreement 401626 and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement. The motion carried.**

**b. Florida Legislative Session 2026**

City Manager Souza advised that the 2026 Florida Legislative Session ended without an approved budget, and a special session is anticipated in April, with potential additional sessions related to tax reform and redistricting. Vice Mayor Smith, who had recent contact with Senator Passidomo, noted that a homestead exemption increase of approximately \$25,000 was under discussion but that there remained significant uncertainty about the form and revenue replacement implications of any tax reform. The City Manager also noted that Senate Bill 290 (the Florida Farm Bill) preempted the City's prohibition on gas-powered leaf blowers effective July 1, 2026, and that an ordinance repealing the relevant code section would be brought forward. He indicated that as a matter of administrative practice, City contractors and staff would continue to be directed to use electric blowers except during declared emergencies.

The City Manager further recommended reducing the City's pending state appropriation request for the Sanibel Weir Flap Gate Modification and Installation project from \$600,000 to \$450,000, reflecting that a flap gate repair at Beach Road had been incorporated into a previously awarded state grant. Council concurred.

**Vice Mayor Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to reduce the requested appropriation funding for the Sanibel Weir Flap Gate Modification and Installation from \$600,000 to \$450,000. The motion carried.**

By consensus, item 11d was moved forward for consideration.

**d. Sanibel Fire Station 172 - 5171 Sanibel Captiva Road - After-the-Fact Approval of a Memorial Sign and Building Signage - both as Exempt Signs (not requiring a sign permit)**

Sanibel Fire Station 172 After-the-Fact Approval of Exempt Signs - was pulled from the consent agenda for separate presentation at the request of staff, as Fire Chief Kevin Barbot and Natalie White, Project Architect were in attendance. Chief Barbot explained that two sign exemptions were sought: an oversized building sign above the apparatus bay doors (exceeding the standard 20 square foot limit, necessitated by the required setback placing a monument sign inside the building footprint) and a secondary "Bruised Not Broken" memorial sign on the rear of the structure facing Bowman's Beach. Both were approved as exempt signs under the applicable code provision.

**Vice Mayor Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to approve Item 11(d), Sanibel Fire Station 172 After-the-Fact Approval of a Memorial Sign and Building Signage as Exempt Signs. The motion carried.**

c. City Manager's Annual Performance Review

Human Resources Director Crystal Mansell presented the results of the City Manager's annual performance evaluation covering the period November 16, 2024 through November 15, 2025. The composite overall rating from all five Council members was 4.947 out of 5.0, representing an improvement over the prior year's rating of 4.883. A survey of comparable Southwest Florida city managers showed City Manager Souza's current salary of \$250,985.95 placed him at the lower-mid range of the regional market.

Council members spoke warmly of City Manager Souza's leadership, dedication, and the quality of staff he had assembled, with multiple members giving him the rare distinction of a perfect score. Council reached consensus on a 6 percent base salary increase consistent with that provided to general employees for fiscal year 2026, effective retroactively to November 15, 2025, plus a one-time \$5,000 performance bonus in recognition of his extraordinary work over the past year.

**Councilmember Johnson moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Smith, to approve Amendment Six to the City Manager's Employment Agreement, providing a 6 percent base salary increase retroactively effective November 15, 2025 and a \$5,000 performance bonus, and to authorize the Mayor to execute the amendment. The motion carried.**

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Contract approval with Tru Spec Mechanical, Inc in the amount of \$2,872,810.00 for the Donax Water Reclamation Facility Post Hurricane Ian Repairs & Hardening project and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract ([Supplement 1](#))

City Manager Souza introduced Deputy Utilities Director Jason Goodrich who presented the request for approval of a construction contract for the Donax Water Reclamation Facility Post Hurricane Ian Repairs & Hardening Project. The project addresses damaged critical components at the facility including a supplemental carbon dosing system and internal recycle pumping, SCADA control room renovation, sodium hypochlorite feed line hardening, flow meters, valves, and chlorine contact tank repairs. Four bids were received; the lowest responsive and responsible bidder was TruSpec Mechanical, Inc. at \$2,872,810. Funding is fully covered by a Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant. In response to Council questions, Goodrich confirmed the facility is currently meeting all water quality targets and that this project would provide permanent solutions to systems currently being maintained through temporary measures.

Vice Mayor Smith stepped out of the meeting at 5:57 p.m. and returned at 5:59 p.m.

**Councilmember DeBruce moved, seconded by Councilmember Henshaw, to approve the contract with TruSpec Mechanical, Inc. in the amount of \$2,872,810 for the Donax Water**

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Reclamation Facility Post Hurricane Ian Repairs & Hardening Project and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. The motion carried.

## 11. CONSENT AGENDA

### CONSENT ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

No additional items were pulled for discussion.

### ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

- a. RESOLUTION 26-014 APPROVING GRANT AGREEMENT 452816 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SANIBEL AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO REPAIR AND REPAVE CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE SHARED USE PATH SYSTEM; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (Supplement 1)**

Attorney Agnew read into record the title of Resolution 26-014.

Vice Mayor Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to adopt Resolution 26-014. The motion carried.

### BUSINESS ITEMS

- b.** Adoption of Minutes (continued from March 17, 2026 meeting)
- c.** Approval of an agreement with EarthBalance Corporation for the Sanibel Island-wide Beach Erosion Control project in the amount of \$397,494.00 and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.
- e.** The Dunes request for twelve (12) additional special event permits for the 2026 calendar year
- f.** Sanibel School Fund (SSF) request for two temporary signs
- g.** Approval of agreement renewal with Vital Records Control for records storage in the amount of \$54,360 for three (3) year term and authorize the City Manager to execute same
- h.** Approval of a \$5,500,000 grant agreement between the City of Sanibel and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for replacement of the East Periwinkle Way bridge and authorize the City Manager to execute same
- i.** Approval of a contract with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. to assist the City in determining the appropriateness of a stormwater assessment fee program and authorize the City Manager to execute same (Supplement 1)
- j.** Request from the Sanibel Historic Museum & Village to extend the deadline for the submission of their audited annual financial statement to June 30, 2026 (Supplement 1)

Approval of Consent Agenda Business Items 11b, c, e, f, g, h, i, and j.

**Vice Mayor Henshaw moved, seconded by Councilmember DeBruce, to approve Consent Agenda Business Items 11b, c, e, f, g, h, i, and j. The motion carried.**

## 12. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Water Quality Report from Natural Resources Department
  
- b. Finance Department Reports
  - i. Causeway Traffic Counts (Supplement 2)

No discussion was held on informational items.

## 13. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSION

- a. Future Agenda Items Matrix

Vice Mayor Smith suggested reconsidering the placement of Council comments on the agenda, noting the meeting had extended past 6:00 PM and Council comments were effectively last. Council reached consensus to move Council comments to earlier in the agenda-following second and first readings-so that community-facing discussion items receive appropriate attention while the public is present. Council also agreed that committee appointments would precede Council comments when applicable.

Vice Mayor Smith raised two new items for the future agenda matrix. First, she described preliminary discussions with the owners and attorney of the Island Cow property regarding a potential mixed-use commercial and botanical-themed miniature golf amenity on Periwinkle Way. City Attorney Agnew noted that miniature golf is not currently a permitted or conditional use in the land development code and would require a code amendment through the Planning Commission before coming to Council. Council reached consensus to schedule a philosophical discussion of the concept at the April meeting. Second, Vice Mayor Smith requested staff review and develop a recommendation for a potential new crosswalk serving the Island Woods subdivision on Periwinkle Way, noting safety concerns for residents crossing to and from Periwinkle Place. City Manager Souza indicated this could be addressed in conjunction with a broader speed limit and restriping initiative planned for the April agenda. Council provided consensus direction to proceed.

Councilmember DeBruce requested Council consensus to refer Section 102-102 and Division 3 of the land development code concerning below market rate housing eligibility criteria to the Planning Commission for review and potential amendment, consistent with the discussion under Agenda Item 7. Council concurred and directed staff to send the matter to the Planning Commission.

Councilmember DeBruce also noted the discovery of the first snowy plover nest of the season on Algiers Beach by City rangers, and flagged community concern about parking and pedestrian safety in the Sanctuary neighborhood following a recent fatal cycling accident. Police Chief William Dalton, who had remained for the meeting, provided a brief account of the accident, noting that the single-vehicle incident did not involve parked service vehicles as had been rumored on social media. He acknowledged that service vehicle parking on the island's residential roads is a longstanding and unresolved safety issue requiring a collaborative response involving both the City and individual homeowners' associations, and that his staff were developing potential code amendments to address the concern.

Councilmember Johnson reported on his attendance at the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT) Board of Trustees meeting in Orlando, noting a clean audit opinion and favorable reinsurance terms that provide increased coverage for major storm events.

Mayor Miller congratulated Sanibel School Music Director Joey Giangreco on receiving the 2026 Golden Apple Award, and thanked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Colonel Bowman, Major Bell, and Huey Gonzales - for their recent visit to Sanibel and their receptiveness to advocacy for increased freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee to protect the island's estuary.

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

City Manager Souza noted the formation of a health insurance committee comprised of employee representatives from each department, intended to educate staff on healthcare costs, loss ratios, and wellness initiatives as a means of managing the City's insurance expenditures over time.

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

No further report.

#### **16. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No further public comments from the audience.

#### **17. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.