



City of Sanibel

Planning Commission

Planning Department Agenda Memorandum

Land Development Code Review Subcommittee Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

To: LDC Review Subcommittee

From: Jessica McNulty, Acting Deputy Building Director, Floodplain Manager
Craig J. Chandler, AICP, Deputy Planning Director

Date: April 15, 2025

TITLE: LDC DISCUSSION OF TEMPORARY FLOOD BARRIERS

CITY-COUNCIL PROPOSED CONSIDERATION

Subsequent to a staff-initiated discussion, City Council recommended conducting additional research and drafting potential amendments to the Land Development Code – specifically those addressing temporary structures (e.g. temporary floodproofing methods).

BACKGROUND

Following Hurricane Ian, Hurricane Helene, and Hurricane Milton, members of the public reached out to staff to learn of any permitting requirements or applicable regulations associated with the placement of temporary flood barriers. Staff initially proposed the discussion to City Council during the November 12, 2024, meeting (see Attachment B). City Council was favorable towards researching and identifying reasonable resolutions to establish duration and placement limitations, as appropriate.

RESEARCH

Staff has investigated a variety of floodproofing methods to better understand the spectrum of products that may be available to property owners. Research efforts included:

- Reviewing articles regarding the [AquaFence](#) that was installed at the [Tampa General Hospital](#);
- Discussing the success of the [TigerDam](#) installed within [Charlotte County](#) with Charlotte County staff; and
- Meeting with various representatives to learn more about sealant products (e.g. [FLEX Seal](#)), and other interior flood protection products (e.g. [“Floodgate” Quick Dam](#)).

Staff also discussed permitting requirements for temporary flood barriers, temporary flood walls, and temporary flood bladders with staff in unincorporated Lee County, Charlotte County, and the City of Naples.

DISCUSSION

In response to the growing public interest in methods to protect personal property from damages sustained by weather events such as hurricanes, the opportunity to secure temporary flood protection methods have become much more obtainable and affordable. Historically, the use of sandbags was a more common

approach; however, through advances in flood damage-resistant materials, testing, and manufacturing higher supply to meet demands, there are products that vary in size, material, and amount of human intervention necessary to install. Flood protection is a high priority, as well as identifying methods to mitigate potential losses from flood damages. Building improvements that achieve compliance with the Florida Building Code and flood standards, for instance by increasing the floor height of living area at residences or implementing dry or wet floodproofing methods for commercial structures, is the best defense against flood risk; however, these types of improvements can be costly and time-consuming.

Consideration should be made towards overly burdensome regulations, unintended consequences, as well as adverse impacts to adjacent properties, environment, and the community overall. Examples of adverse impacts include:

- Detering homeowners from implementing safe evacuation plans by requiring permitting approvals to be in place prior to securing personal property;
- Possible visual blight (e.g. sandbags that become loose and wind-blown debris), life-safety concerns (e.g. flood barriers installed for extended period that prohibit emergency response access in the event of a fire), or further unintended damages to a structure (e.g. a rain event resulting in high volume of water within the flood barrier and against the residence may result in additional forces and pressures against the substrate); and
- Disruption to wildlife returning to nests, burrows, and habitats.

The intent of these proposed amendments is to establish a definition for temporary structures, which applies to not just flood protection measures, as well as identify realistic measures to promote proper use, duration, and location regulations that align with the Sanibel Plan and the community's shared interest of resiliency.

OUTLINE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Staff proposes to draft regulations that will:

1. Require a permit for temporary flood-barriers where:
 - a. There is a permanent alteration to the property, resulting in vegetation clearance, an increase of developed areas, or increase of impermeable coverage;
 - b. The temporary structure is proposed to be secured, attached, or installed upon a nonresidential or multifamily building; or
 - c. It would otherwise be required by other provisions of the Code or State regulations.
2. Limit the duration of installation for up to 30 days, and require removal within 72 hours of the passing of a storm or after the island is safe to access, whichever is later.
3. Prohibit their installation where they would interfere with or detrimentally impact:
 - a. Wetlands for feeding, foraging, resting, nesting or breeding by indigenous and migratory shorebirds and other wildlife.
 - b. Upland areas for feeding, foraging, and habitat (burrows) of Gopher Tortoise.
 - c. Gulf beach and Bay beach zones for feeding, foraging, resting, nesting and breeding by indigenous and migratory shorebirds and other wildlife.

RECOMMENDATION

The Land Development Code Review Subcommittee should discuss the proposed amendments and provide direction to staff.

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT:

Agenda Memorandum re: Temporary Floodplain Barriers – Presented to City Council – November 12, 2024