



City of Sanibel

City Council

Planning Department Agenda Memorandum

City Council Meeting Date: March 17, 2026

To: City Council

From: Paula N. C. McMichael, AICP, Planning Director
Craig J. Chandler, AICP, Deputy Planning Director

Date: March 10, 2026

TITLE: Conditional Use Permit for Increased-Density Below Market Rate Housing (PL20260002) and Variances for Below Market Rate Housing (PL20260007)

REVIEW TIMELINE

Date	Meeting Type	Summary
02/24/2026	Planning Commission	Resolution 26-04, recommending authorization of increased density BMRH, and Resolution 26-05, recommending authorization of variances, both approved by 5-1 vote
03/17/2026	City Council	Discussion and First Reading

PROPOSAL

The applicant, Rachel Bielert, RLBCM LLC, on behalf of Sanibel 1523 INC and Sanibel 1531 INC (the property owners), proposes increased-density for Below Market Rate Housing use (+30 dwelling units) at 1523 Periwinkle Way to develop a 39-unit multifamily residential building.

Community Housing & Resources is potentially receiving a grant award of \$9.75M from U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program to fund construction and land acquisition for development of this project.

BACKGROUND: The Sanibel Plan describes circumstances under which residential density could be increased by City Council for a specific site if mitigating considerations are found to exist that would outweigh potential drawbacks and work toward achieving other objectives of the Sanibel plan, including, “where opportunities are provided for below market rate housing.”

Plan for Housing, Policy 3.4	Maintain the provision of the Land Development Code allowing conditional use increased density (additional bonus units) for BMRH units.
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Plan for Development Intensity, Provision #2	By such implementing development regulations, the City Council may also permit residential densities in excess of those shown on the Development Intensity Map as incentives to the provision of below market rate housing.
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Procedures to authorize increased density for Below Market Rate Housing, as a conditional use, are described in the Land Development Code and reiterated by City Charter Section 3.10.2. Actions to increase the residential development intensity established by the Sanibel Plan require a supermajority vote of council (four-fifths of the full membership or unanimous where less than full membership is voting) per LDC Section 82-32.

Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of both petitions by a 6-1 vote. Commissioner Schopp voted against the proposals, citing Sanibel Plan Section 3.6.1, Policy 3.7, “Ensure that BMRH units continue to be developed and maintained in a manner that is compatible with the character of the community.”

BENEFITS: Application no. PL20260002 proposes development of thirty-nine (39) dwelling units dedicated to the Below Market Rate Housing (BMRH) program. The increase of density for BMRH use achieves housing goals of the Sanibel Plan to increase housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income households and essential services workforce housing. The variances (application no. PL20260007) are necessary to accommodate the below market rate housing development.

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Move Ordinances 26-04 and 26-05 to first reading.