

**MINUTES  
CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025 @ 6:00 P.M.  
CHURCH OF THE ISLES**

**200 24<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FLORIDA 33785**

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Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor-Commissioner Denise Houseberg, Vice-Mayor Commissioner Janet Wilson, Commissioner Jude Bond, Commissioner John Bigelow, and Commissioner Hilary King.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Manager Gregg Mims, City Attorney Randy Mora, and City Clerk Lorin Kornijtschuk. and Planning Consultant Hetty Harmon.

*For continuity, items are listed in agenda order, although not necessarily discussed in that order.*

**1 A. REPORT OF Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.**

The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office submitted a written crime analysis report for May 2025. He confirmed a recent water rescue incident was safely resolved.

**1 B. REPORT OF Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District.**

The Fire Chief reported approximately 66 calls in the past month, with 17 fire-related and the remainder medical. A property has been purchased, and plans are underway to move a fire truck into the area by October 1. Additional rescue services and a new station are also in development.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

**Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg** opened public comment, hearing and seeing no one wishing to speak, public comment was closed.

**3. REPORTS OF:**

**A. City Attorney- Randy Mora**

City Attorney Mora provided a legislative update, noting the state budget is still pending. He highlighted Senate Bill 180, which could limit local governments from adopting stricter land use amendments in federally declared emergency areas for up to two years. Mora emphasized that this could impact future local land use decisions. He thanked the City for the opportunity to serve over the past

10 years, clarifying he chose not to renew his contract.

**B. City Manager- Gregg Mims**

City Manager Mims provided updates on the legislative appropriation request for an aqua fence to protect City Hall during storms. The City Hall renovation is progressing with interior walls painted, flooring being installed, and furniture ordered. The City has received an initial FEMA reimbursement of \$1,051,000 for hurricane expenses. He announced the preliminary property taxable value decreased by approximately \$35,000. He outlined the upcoming budget process and key dates, including the release of the proposed budget on July 3, 2025. Thanked Randy Mora for his service and support to the City over the years. Mims, handed a letter to the City Clerk from Representative Kimberly Berfield, thanking him for his service and asked that it be published in the minutes.

**C. City Commission.**

**Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson:** Thanked Randy Mora for always being available and providing clear guidance.

**Commissioner Bond:** Requested discussion on parking be placed on a future agenda. City Manager Mims recommended deferring the topic until after the hiring of a new city manager.

**Commissioner Bigelow:** Raised concerns about two properties continuing to operate as unregistered short-term rentals despite fines. City Attorney Mora and City Manager Mims explained enforcement options, including liens, daily fines, and potential legal action.

**Commissioner King:** Reported on the Big C meeting and updates from the Pinellas County Administrator on hurricane response improvements and new FEMA substantial damage estimation tools.

**Mayor Commissioner Houseberg:** Announced a Flag Day ceremony on Saturday, June 14, at 10:00 AM at Chic-a- Si Park and invited all to attend.

**4. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS. None**

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. APPROVAL OF** May 13, 2025 City Commission Meeting Minutes.
- B. APPROVAL OF** Proclamation recognizing June 2025 as LGBTQ Pride Month.

City Attorney Mora read the Consent Agenda items, consisting of items A through B by title only.

**Motion: Vice-Mayor Commissioner Wilson motioned to approve the consent agenda, consisting of agenda items 5 A ~ 5 B. Commissioner Bond seconded.**

**Vote:**

- Commissioner Bigelow: Yes
- Commissioner Bond: Yes
- Commissioner King: No
- Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Mayor Commissioner Houseberg: Yes

**Approved 4-1**

Commissioner King stated support for the minutes but not the proclamation and noted a preference to consider the items separately.

The City Attorney advised that in the future, Commissioners may request to pull items when the Consent Agenda is introduced.

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- A. BOA-2025-02 -QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEEDING 800 GULF BOULEVARD, INDIAN ROCKS BEACH FLORIDA:** Variance request from Sec.110-103(a) of the Code of Ordinances, requesting to encroach into the existing front yard setback for property that is non-conforming to construct an elevated structure primarily following the existing footprint and is located at 800 Gulf Blvd Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, and legally described as a part of Lot 13, block "A", New Haven Beach, according to map or plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 20, Page 8, public records of Pinellas County, Florida. Parcel # 12-30-14-59832-001-0130.

**OWNER Andrew J Conti**

**LOCATION of PROPERTY:**

800 Gulf Blvd

**ZONING:**

CT- Commercial Tourist

Direction	Existing Use	Zoning Category
North	Residential	CT
East	Residential	CT
South	Commercial	CT-1
West	Residential	CT

**BACKGROUND:**

The applicant is proposing a new elevated home at this location due to storm damage from Helene. The existing structure is non-conforming due to the lot size and existing setbacks. The existing house is 616 square feet and proposed is approximately 1250 square feet. The new structure would increase the existing footprint by encroaching further into the front yard setback on the east side. The existing side setbacks are less than 5 ft on one side. The increased square footage would accommodate stairs and an elevator.

Sec 110-103 allows for enlargement of a non-conforming structure only if the side setbacks are a minimum of 5ft and all other setbacks are met.

Sec 110-103(a) states the following:

*(a)Enlargement or reconstruction.* No existing structure or premises devoted to a nonconforming use shall be enlarged, extended, reconstructed, substituted or structurally altered, except when changed to a conforming use. When an existing nonconforming structure built prior to May 11, 1981, does not meet the minimum required side yard setback, an addition may be constructed on the same line as the exterior wall of the existing residential structure. Additions may extend into the required side yard setback up to the setback line formed by the nonconforming wall. The side yard setback between the extended wall of the residential wall and the property line shall not be less than five feet as long as lot coverage, height, front yard and rear yard setbacks and other requirements conform to the appropriate part of the schedules in sections 110-153 through 110-155 and a substantial improvement is not accomplished.

**NOTICE:** A public notice was mailed by first class mail to property owners within 150 feet in any direction of the subject property and posted on subject property on May 6, 2025 and May 23, 2025 (Sec. 2-149 of the Code of Ordinances.)

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Five nearby property owners submitted letters of support.

**City Attorney Mora** read by title only Agenda Item No. 6 A, BO case No. 2025-02, 800 Gulf Boulevard.

**City Attorney Mora** inquired of the City Commission Members if they had any ex-parte communications with the applicant or their agent, with all members responding negatively.

**City Attorney Mora** inquired of the City Commission Members if any of them had

conducted a site visit for the limited purpose of evaluating the application, with all members responding negatively, except Commissioner King, who conducted a brief site visit but confirmed impartiality.

**City Attorney Mora** duly swore in all persons planning to give testimony during the quasi-judicial proceeding.

**Planning Consultant Harmon** provided her report and stated that the Board of Adjustments and Appeals recommended approval by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Applicant Andrew Conti** explained the need for additional space to accommodate accessibility improvements, including an elevator. He also noted support from his immediate neighbors.

**City Attorney Mora** reminded the commission to apply variance criteria, noting that variance approvals are not precedent setting.

**Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg** opened public comment, hearing and seeing no one wishing to speak, public comment was closed.

**Motion: Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson motioned to approve the variance. Commissioner King seconded.**

**Vote:**

- Commissioner Bigelow: Yes
- Commissioner Bond: Yes
- Commissioner King: Yes
- Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Mayor Commissioner Houseberg: Yes

**Approved 5-0.**

## **6 B – Review of Proposals for Municipal Legal Services**

### **Presentation by Mr. Anthony Sabatini:**

- Mr. Sabatini introduced himself and his firm, which currently represents several Florida cities.
- Emphasized that his firm is fast-growing due to its highly personalized legal services, availability 24/7 via his direct cell phone, and a focus on serving smaller cities that value personal attention.

- Explained that his experience as a city commissioner, county commissioner, and state representative uniquely qualifies him to understand the needs of local governments. He stressed the importance of providing options, legal education, and creative strategies rather than just legal barriers.
- Highlighted his approach of building strong, personal relationships with city commissioners, often meeting regularly to guide from drafting motions to long-term budget planning.
- His firm focuses primarily on local government law, but it also handles related areas in-house to minimize outsourcing and reduce costs. Examples include contract reviews, litigation, and other municipal legal issues.
- Addressed his firm's ability to manage multiple clients without time conflicts, noting that the cities they represent meet at different times and that his team is structured to always have coverage.
- Confirmed that his firm can handle lawsuits for the city, either directly or in collaboration with trusted outside counsel, and acknowledged that some current cases may fall under the city's insurance coverage with separate defense attorneys.

### **Commission Questions and Discussion:**

**Commissioner King:** Asked about the firm's other practice areas and how they manage conflicts. Mr. Sabatini explained that most work is in municipal law. Commissioner King questioned whether Mr. Sabatini's political aspirations might interfere with his legal services. Mr. Sabatini emphasized that his public service enhances trust and does not detract from his legal practice.

**Commissioner Bigelow:** Asked about litigation capacity and client load. Mr. Sabatini confirmed that his firm actively handles litigation, has no scheduling conflicts, and is growing to meet client demands. Asked about his National Guard service. Mr. Sabatini explained that in the event of deployment, his two associates would cover city meetings, and he would remain available by phone.

**Commissioner Bond:** asked if he had familiarized himself with the city's Ordinances. Mr. Sabatini stated that he had and that in his role, he would be translating the will of the commission into litigation strategy.

**Commissioners: Mayor Commissioner Houseberg:** Asked if he had ever sued local governments. Mr. Sabatini confirmed he has and explained that his cases often involve standing up for constitutional rights and that the experience provides valuable perspective. Expressed concern about Mr. Sabatini's political presence and reputation as a "political lightning rod" on social media, stating it was not helpful for the city. Mr. Sabatini reassured the Commission that his municipal clients are satisfied with his legal services, which are separate from his political views.

## **Agenda Item 6 B – Shumaker Law Firm Proposal for Municipal Legal Services**

### **Presentation by Ron Christaldi, President of Shumaker:**

- Introduced Shumaker as a law and public affairs firm with offices across Florida and seven other states, celebrating its 100th anniversary.
- Explained the firm's unique team-based approach for city legal services, offering deep experience, broad expertise, and direct availability 24/7.
- Shared his personal connection to Indian Rocks Beach as a part-time resident and property owner for 16 years, emphasizing his commitment to the community.
- Highlighted key municipal issues the city faces, such as parking challenges and short-term rentals, areas where his team can offer both legal and public policy guidance.
- Introduced several high-profile team members, including:
  - Former Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn
  - Former St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman
  - Former Hillsborough County Commissioner Sandy Murman
  - Jenny Tarr, with over 30 years of local government legal experience
  - Sarah Glaser, experienced litigator
  - Matt Newton, board-certified in local government law

- Matt Maggard, proposed as primary City Attorney with experience serving other Florida cities

#### **Remarks by Former Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn:**

- Emphasized Shumaker's team approach and their deep local government knowledge.
- Highlighted their regional perspective and decades of experience managing municipal crises, such as hurricanes and economic downturns.
- Stressed that while some team members are not attorneys, their extensive public service gives them valuable, practical insight to help the city avoid common pitfalls.

#### **Litigation Overview by Sarah Glaser:**

- Reviewed the city's current litigation, including short-term rental (STR) lawsuits challenging local ordinances.
- Stated her litigation style focuses on minimizing risk, resolving cases efficiently, and avoiding trial unless necessary.
- She brings significant litigation experience, including commercial disputes and strategic defense work.

#### **City Attorney Role by Matthew Maggard:**

- Outlined his municipal law experience, including serving as City Attorney for Zephyrhills since 2016.
- Detailed his work with insurance providers like Public Risk Management (PRM) and his role as a Special Magistrate in Pasco County.
- Confirmed his availability to attend meetings and work around the city's schedule despite his home base being over an hour away.
- Noted that back-up support would be provided by other qualified Shumaker attorneys.

#### **Commission Questions and Discussion:**



**Commissioner King** asked how you would manage the drive from Zephyrhills and how litigation would be managed directly. Mr. Maggard confirmed he would personally handle the management and strategy of litigation issues. His drive from Zephyrhills would be about an hour. He also noted that he has back-up support that would always be available.

**Commissioner Bigelow** expressed budget concerns and asked about fee flexibility. Shumaker responded that they offered a 50% discounted rate on their standard fees and were willing to discuss creative fee arrangements. Mr. Christaldi discussed the option of a trial period or interim contract, with Shumaker confirming flexibility and an “at-will” relationship based on city satisfaction.

**Mayor Commissioner Houseberg** asked how the firm stays current on legislative changes. Mr. Christaldi explained that their Tallahassee office actively monitors state and federal updates, supported by their registered lobbyists and former lawmakers.

#### **Public Comment:**

**Kelly Cisarick**, 448 Harbor Drive South, commented that Shumaker is more suited for litigation. She suggested a possible six-month retainer instead.

**Kellee Watt**, 431 Harbor Drive South, commented that a smaller firm with local beach experience might be a better fit.

**John Phanstiehl**, 448 Harbor Drive South, expressed disappointment that Attorney Ralf Brookes could not attend; they seemed like the best fit.

**Bob Copelan**, 447 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, commented on selecting a city attorney who owns property in the city and questioned how they could be independent in the decisions they make.

**Jeff Graham**, 1900 Beach Trail, asked if any commissioners currently own property in the city.

**Hearing no further comments, Mayor Houseberg closed public comment.**

#### **Commission Deliberation and Vote:**

**City Attorney Mora** advised the Commission to deliberate and determine if they were prepared to vote.

**Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson** commented that it's important to address that one applicant (Attorney Ralf Brookes) could not attend the meeting and also noted that the same applicant had indicated on their application that they were unavailable for Tuesday meetings. In Wilson's opinion, this unavailability essentially removes the applicant from consideration, as they would not be able to meet the city's schedule.

**Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson** emphasized that the city's current challenges required securing the best possible legal representation.

**Commissioner Bigelow** acknowledged the difficulty of the decision, recognizing both firms as capable but representing different approaches.

All commissioners confirmed they were ready to vote.

**City Attorney Mora** instructed that ballots be signed and names clearly printed per Sunshine Law requirements. He advised that the outcome would guide a motion to authorize the city manager and city attorney to negotiate a contract.

**Ballot Results:**

- **Shumaker Firm:** Bond, Wilson, Houseberg
- **Sabatini Firm:** King, Bigelow

**3-2 majority favors Shumaker.**

**Motion: Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson motioned to authorize the City Manager and the City Attorney to negotiate a contract with Shumaker, seconded by Commissioner Bond.**

**Roll Vote:**

- Commissioner Bigelow: Yes
- Commissioner Bond: Yes
- Commissioner King: Yes
- Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Mayor Commissioner Houseberg: Yes

**Approved 5-0.**

The commission clarified that negotiation of fees was expected.

**City Attorney Mora** confirmed he and the city manager would begin negotiations with the Shoemaker firm.

**Adjournment:**

With no other legislative matters, work sessions, or business to discuss, Mayor Commissioner Houseberg called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion: Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson motioned to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.,  
seconded by Commissioner King.  
Unanimous approval by acclamation.**



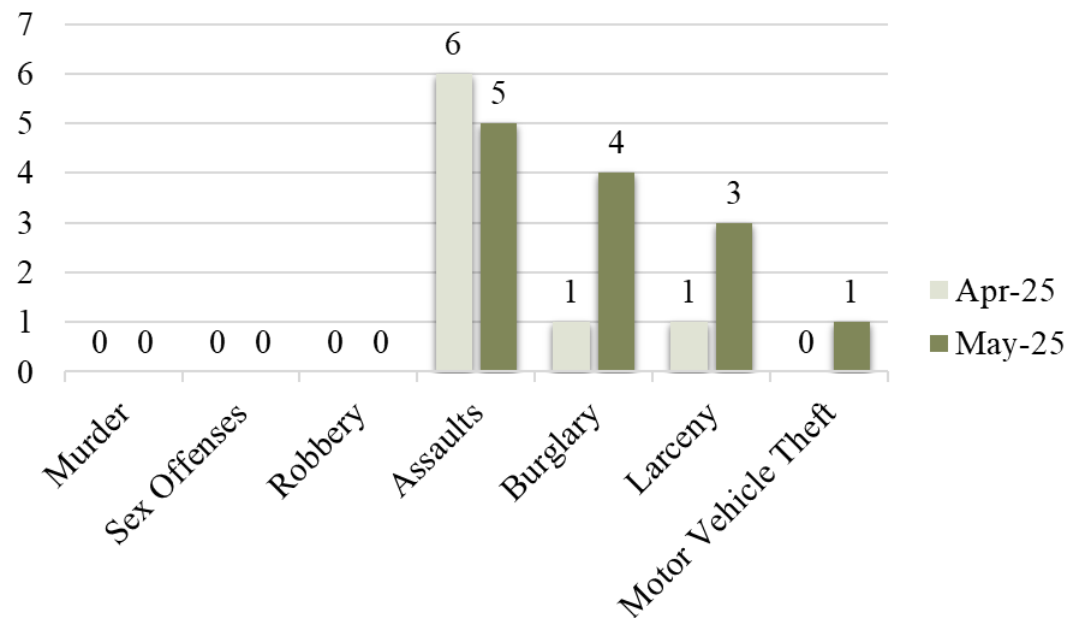
STRATEGIC PLANNING DIVISION

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH ANALYSIS

Select UCR Property & Person Crimes

May 2025

Select UCR Property & Person Crimes	April 2025	May 2025	May 2024 YTD	May 2025 YTD
Murder	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses	0	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	1	0
Assaults	6	5	32	16
Burglary	1	4	5	5
Larceny	1	3	23	7
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	1	6	3
GRAND TOTAL	8	13	67	31



## Arrests

### May 2025

There was a total of **20** people arrested in the City of Indian Rocks Beach during the month of May resulting in the following charges:

ARREST TYPE & DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
<b>Felony</b>	<b>4</b>
Battery-65 Or Older	1
Burglary-Structure	1
Felony Battery-Prior Convictions	1
Tampering With Electronic Monitoring Device-Adult	1
<b>Misdemeanor</b>	<b>7</b>
Disorderly Intoxication	2
False Name Or ID By Person Arrested	2
Resist/Obstruct LEO Without Violence	3
<b>Traffic Misdemeanor</b>	<b>12</b>
Attach Tag Not Assigned	1
Driver's License Suspended/Revoked-1st Conviction	1
Driver's License Suspended/Revoked-2nd Conviction	1
Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol	1
Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol And Drugs	1
Expired License More Than 6 Months	1
No Valid Driver's License	5
Operating Unregistered Vehicle	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>

\*Information provided reflects the number of arrests (persons arrested) as well as the total charges associated with those arrests.

## Deputy Activity

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There was a total of **951** events in the City of Indian Rocks Beach during the month of May resulting in **1,253** units responding.

The table below reflects the top twenty-five events to include both self-initiated and dispatched calls in the City of Indian Rocks Beach for the month of May. *\*CAD data is filtered by problem type.*

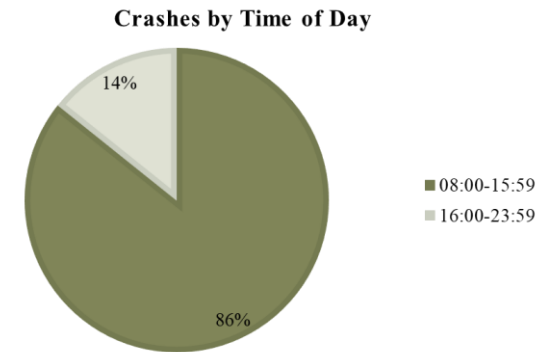
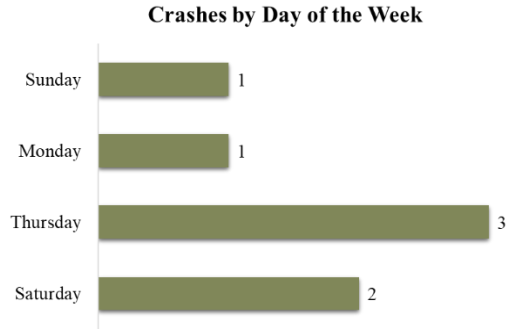
### May 2025

DEPUTY ACTIVITY	TOTAL
Traffic Stop	243
Directed Patrol	218
911 Hangup Or Open Line	84
Vehicle Abandoned/Illegally Parked	77
Suspicious Person	30
Assist Citizen	26
Ordinance Violation	24
House Check	20
Information/Other	17
Transport Prisoner	15
Area Check	15
Building Check Business	14
Contact	14
Trespass	11
Accident	11
Suspicious Vehicle	10
Lost/Found/Abandoned Property	10
Traffic Violation	9
Supplement	8
Civil Matter	7
Disorderly Conduct	7
Juvenile Trouble	6
Noise	6
Animal Call	6
Traffic/DWLSR	5

## Crash & Citation Analysis

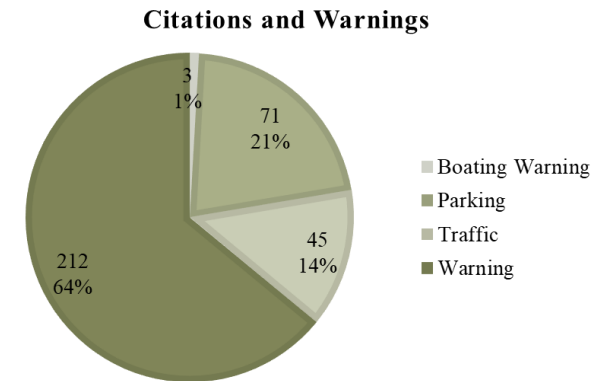
There were **7** crashes in the City of Indian Rocks Beach during May 2025. \*Crash data is filtered by disposition type and may include “accident and hit and run” problem types.

CRASH LOCATIONS	TOTAL
21st Ave/Gulf Blvd	1
22nd Ave/Gulf Blvd	1
2nd Ave/Gulf Blvd	1
500 1st St	1
5th Ave/1st St	1
74 Gulf Blvd	1
Gulf Blvd/26th Ave	1



There were a total of **331** citations and warnings issued in the City of Indian Rocks Beach during May 2025.

TOP 10 TRAFFIC CITATION LOCATIONS	TOTAL
5th Ave & Gulf Blvd	7
8th Ave & Gulf Blvd	5
12th Ave & Gulf Blvd	4
Gulf Blvd & 16th Ave	4
9th Ave & Gulf Blvd	3
Gulf Blvd & 14th Ave	3
Gulf Blvd & 19th Ave	3
21st Ave & Gulf Blvd	2
23rd Ave & Gulf Blvd	2
10th Ave & Gulf Blvd	2





# The Florida House of Representatives

Representative Kimberly Berfield

District 58

May 14, 2025

City Manager Greg Mims  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
1507 Bay Palm Blvd  
Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

Dear City Manager Mims,

As you prepare to transition from your role as City Manager of Indian Rocks Beach, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your remarkable leadership and dedication to our community. Your commitment to enhancing the quality of life in Indian Rocks has truly made a difference. Under your guidance, we've seen significant improvements in our infrastructure, community programs, and overall engagement with residents. Your ability to listen, understand, and act upon the needs of our community has inspired many.

As you move on to new endeavors, please know that your presence will be greatly missed. The impact you have made here will be felt for years to come, and your contributions have set a strong foundation for future leaders. Thank you once again for your hard work, vision, and unwavering commitment to making Indian Rocks Beach a better place for all of us.

Loyalty,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be "Kimberly Berfield".

Kimberly Berfield, MBA  
Florida House of Representatives

*You service has  
been impactful  
and will long be  
remember!*

District Address

Suite 229  
2189 Cleveland Street  
Clearwater, Florida 33765-3229  
(727) 351-8820

Tallahassee Address

313 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300  
(850) 717-5058



Vote # 1

City Attorney Ballot  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
June 10, 2025

CANDIDATE	SELECT ONE CANDIDATE
RALF BROOKES	
SABATINI LAW FIRM	JOHN BIGELOW
SHUMAKER LAW FIRM	

Commissioner Signature

J. Bigelow

Date

6-10-25

**Vote #** 1

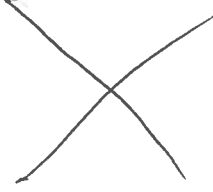
**City Attorney Ballot  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
June 10, 2025**

CANDIDATE	SELECT ONE CANDIDATE
RALF BROOKES	
SABATINI LAW FIRM	X
SHUMAKER LAW FIRM	

**Commissioner Signature** H L **Date** 10 June 2025  
H King

Vote # 1

City Attorney Ballot  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
June 10, 2025

CANDIDATE	SELECT ONE CANDIDATE
RALF BROOKES	
SABATINI LAW FIRM	
SHUMAKER LAW FIRM	

Commissioner Signature



Date

6/10/25

Denise Houseberg

**Vote #** 1

**City Attorney Ballot  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
June 10, 2025**

CANDIDATE	SELECT ONE CANDIDATE
RALF BROOKES	
SABATINI LAW FIRM	
SHUMAKER LAW FIRM	X

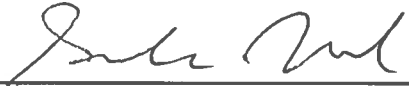
**Commissioner Signature** Janet W. Wilson **Date** 6-10-2025

Janet W. Wilson

Vote # 1

City Attorney Ballot  
City of Indian Rocks Beach  
June 10, 2025

CANDIDATE	SELECT ONE CANDIDATE
RALF BROOKES	
SABATINI LAW FIRM	
SHUMAKER LAW FIRM	1

Commissioner Signature  Date 6/10/25  
JUDE BOND