

MINUTES

CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH

CITY COMMISSION MEETING

Civic Auditorium/Commission Chambers

1507 Bay Palm Blvd., Indian Rocks Beach, Florida 33785

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

- Commissioner Hilary King
- Commissioner John Bigelow
- Commissioner Jude Bond
- Vice Mayor-Commissioner Janet Wilson
- Mayor-Commissioner Denise Houseberg

Also present: City Manager Ryan Henderson, City Clerk Lorin Kornijtschuk, Public Works Director Dean Scharmen, Planning and Zoning Consultant Hetty Harmon, Code Enforcement Manager Mike Kelly, Interim Finance Director Robin Gomez, and City Attorney Matthew Maggard.

For continuity, items are listed in agenda order, though they may not be discussed in that order.

1. PRESENTATIONS

A. REPORT OF Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

- The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office provided its monthly report.

B. REPORT OF Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District

Chief Grimes reported on November fire activity, noting no fires occurred in Indian Rocks Beach but mentioned a significant house fire in Oakhurst, where occupants and pets were rescued. Multiple departments responded and worked effectively together. The Chief reported 30 calls in Indian Rocks Beach for November (9 fire calls, 21 EMS calls). He announced discussions with the county about obtaining land at Tiki Gardens property for a new fire station, which would be strategically located for beach rescues, and discussed ongoing plans for the north station at Church of the Isles.

2. NEIGHBOR'S COMMENTS

- John Phanstiehl, 448 Harbor Dr. S - Thanked the code enforcement team for their work at recent magistrate hearings on illegal transient rentals. Expressed concern that enforcement of Ordinance 2023-02 has been slow. Requested the Commission direct staff to develop a detailed enforcement plan.
- Beth McMullen, 481 Harbor Dr. South - Requested an update on a specific home on Harbor Dr. S that is still renting on Airbnb despite losing its lawsuit. Urged stricter enforcement of the short-term rental ordinance with maximum fines for non-compliant properties.
- Linda Newton, 438 Harbor Dr. N - Promoted Beach Art Center calendars for sale. Discussed how short-term rental legislation at the state level has negatively impacted neighborhoods since 2011. Encouraged addressing these issues at the state level.
- Patty Katz, 124 13th Ave - Urged candidates to work on bringing the community together rather than taking sides in the short-term rental debate.
- Jerry Newton, 438 Harbor Dr. North - Suggested that short-term rental regulation enforcement is hampered by insufficient funding and staffing. Called for a firm deadline for all short-term rentals to operate legally according to established regulations.

- Bob Coplen, 445 20th Ave - Discussed short-term rental issues as a crisis and suggested utilizing the Department of Business and Professional Regulation and State Fire Marshall for enforcement assistance.
 - Nico Troy, representing the Indian Rocks VFW - Invited City Council and residents to the VFW's birthday celebration.
 - Scott Shapiro, 2030 220th Ave. Parkway - Advocated for the re-establishment of citizen advisory boards, particularly for beaches and waterways. He offered to volunteer for a board.
 - Don House, 2104 Beach Trail - Announced he qualified to run for commission and that this might be his last meeting as a public commenter.
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3. REPORTS OF:

A. City Attorney: No report.

B. City Manager: City Manager Ryan Henderson welcomed Robin Gomez to the team as interim finance director.

C. City Commission

- **Commissioner Jude:** No report.
- **Commissioner John:** No report.
- **Commissioner Hillary:** Expressed support for reintroducing citizen advisory boards.
- **Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson:** Reported on attending the Florida League of Cities Legislative Conference. Provided updates on legislative issues, including Senate Bill 180, taxation proposals, municipal elections timing, sovereign immunity changes, and ADU regulations. She will be participating in the Florida League of Cities and the Suncoast League of Cities during the upcoming legislative session.
- **Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg:** Thanked everyone for the successful weekend events, including the tree lighting ceremony and parade. She reflected

on the challenging year and expressed optimism about the city's direction with new leadership in place.

Additional Discussion: The Mayor asked the City Manager about planned changes to the Neighbors' Comments section. The City Manager suggested a plan to implement a card system where residents fill out cards to organize speakers, emphasizing that this would not limit participation but assist staff.

4. WORK SESSION ITEMS: Paid Parking Implementation

City Manager Ryan Henderson presented a proposal for implementing paid parking in Indian Rocks Beach as a pilot program. Key recommendations included: focusing initially on 182 beach access spots for a 6-month pilot period; setting uniform pricing at \$4.50/hour; using Park Mobile app (no cash/coins); enforcement by the Code Compliance team with Sheriff's Office assistance; hours from 6 AM to 10 PM. Goals include generating revenue for infrastructure/stormwater needs, ensuring efficient use of parking spaces, and promoting fairness between residents and visitors. Residents with city decals would park for free.

Neighbors' Comments:

- Dan Minesburg, 442 Harbor Dr. N - Supported limiting resident parking permits to 2 vehicles per household.
- Kelly Watt, 431 Harbor Dr. S - Asked whether golf cart spaces would be included in paid parking and suggested they should be.
- Lan Vaughn, 301 Harbor Dr. - Supported the pilot but wished it were more aggressive with higher rates. Expressed concern about visitors parking in neighborhoods to avoid fees and suggested designating some areas as 'no beach parking'.
- Beth McMullen, 481 Harbor Dr. South - Expressed concern that code enforcement is already stretched thin with short-term rental issues and that enforcement might be a challenge. Asked about fine amounts for violations.

- Mary Wilkerson, 490 Harbor Dr. N - Noted Indian Rocks Beach is the last beach in Pinellas County with free parking and is known online as a 'free and cheap' destination. Suggested a more aggressive approach, as people will find ways to park in neighborhoods to avoid fees.
- Dave Watt, 431 Harbor Dr. S - Asked for clarification about which 182 parking spots would be included in the paid parking program.
- Ann Lopez, 337 12th Ave. - Noted Park Mobile app sends expiration notifications, mentioned \$10 all-day parking might be too inexpensive, expressed concerns about neighborhood parking and vacant lots being used for parking.
- RB Johnson, 1206 Beach Trail - Addressed overnight parking concerns, noting parking used to be prohibited after 11 PM, but signs were changed. Suggested that no overnight parking should be allowed with the new paid system.
- John Thayer, 1819 Bay Blvd. - Warned that paid parking would push visitors to park in neighborhoods.

Commission Discussion: Commissioners discussed the pricing, concerns about pushing parking into residential neighborhoods, operating hours and implementation timeline.

- Establishing a \$4.50 fee at metered locations.
 - Exempting Indian Rocks Beach residents from paying at metered locations upon display of a properly issued parking decal.
 - Setting metered parking hours from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - Implementing metered parking at beach access points, with the possibility of additional locations in the future.
 - Increasing the minimum fine for parking violations from \$75.00 to \$100.00.
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5. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Remove and reschedule Agenda Item 7 B, BOA Case No. 2025-06 to January 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. City Commission Meeting.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson to move Board of Adjustment case #2025-06 to January 13, 2026, City Commission meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner King.

Vote: Carried Unanimously

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The following item was presented on the Consent Agenda:

A. APPROVAL OF November 12, 2025, Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson to approve the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Bigelow

Vote: Carried Unanimously

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. BOA Case No. 2025-05 – QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEEDING

Property: 2618 Gulf Boulevard, Indian Rocks Beach, Florida

Request: Variance request from Sec. 110-131(5)(f) of the Code of Ordinances, of 14 feet into the required 25-foot front yard setback, resulting in a total front yard setback of 11 feet and 5.7 feet into the required 7-foot side yard setback resulting in a total side yard setback of 1.3 feet for the installation of a carport.

Legal Description: Driftwood Sands Condominium according to plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 62, Page 106, public records of Pinellas County, Florida.

Parcel #: 01-30-14-22615-000-0001

Planning & Zoning Consultant Hetty Harmon presented variance request for 2618 Gulf Boulevard for a carport installation requiring setback variances. Noted the Board of Adjustment voted 2-1 in favor.

Neighbors' Comments:

- Robert Pergolizzi, Driftwood Sands Condominium applicant, resident and board member - Explained that the carport request is for 9 parking spaces that have been there since 1982 but are currently uncovered. Noted the property has rights-of-way on both sides with no immediate neighbors affected. The carport mentioned would be 9.5 feet high with heavy-duty aluminum construction matching existing carports, able to withstand 140 mph winds.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson, to recommend that the City Commission approve Board of Adjustment Case No. 2025-05 2618.

Seconded by: Commissioner King, who voted no.

Vote: Motion Carries (with one opposing vote)

Ayes: Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg, Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson, Commissioner Bigelow, Commissioner Bond

Nays: Commissioner King

7. BOA Case No. 2025-06

The item was rescheduled to January 13, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

8. OTHER LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

A. ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06; PUBLIC HEARING / FIRST READING: Establishing procedures for Certified Recovery Residences

Staff Presenter: City Attorney Matthew Maggard

City Attorney Maggard explained that Senate Bill 954 requires cities to establish procedures for review and approval of certified recovery residences. The ordinance creates an application process, review process, and standards for certified recovery residences. Applications would come before the City Commission for approval or denial. Clarified that certified recovery residences are not halfway houses but sober living facilities that are state-certified, voluntary (not court-ordered), and not medical facilities or rehabs. The state mandates that this ordinance be in place by January 1, 2026. This is a stopgap measure to meet the January deadline until more detailed criteria can be developed.

Neighbors' Comments:

- Kelly Watt, 431 Harbor Dr. S - Asked for clarification on whether the procedures were being established today or just discussed.
- Beth McMullen, 481 Harbor Dr. South - Asked if these facilities could be located anywhere in the city and if there were limits on the number of residents.
- Lan Vaughan, 301 Harbor Drive - Sought clarification that having a procedure does not mean the city must accept any application.
- David Watt, 431 Harbor Dr. S - Asked if the city can set requirements for denying applications and expressed confusion about making a decision without more information.
- Patty Katz, 124 13th Ave - Asked who pays for these recovery residences and whether they are privately funded.
- Eddie Bie, 497 20th Ave - Asked if there would be a second reading and when it would be held.

- Matthew Barrowclough, 211 11th Ave - Expressed interest in being part of future discussions about evaluation criteria for applications.

Commission Discussion: Commissioners asked if this were mandated by the state (yes, by January 1, 2026), what criteria would be used for approval, and clarified that the ordinance establishes an application process, but specific criteria are still being developed. City Attorney Maggard explained that this ordinance would require applicants to come before the Commission rather than bypassing local control.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson to approve Ordinance No. 2025-06.

Seconded by Commissioner King

Vote: Carried Unanimously

B. RESOLUTION NO. 2025-14; A resolution of the City of Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, relating to lot mowing or clearing, providing for approval and endorsement of all assessments as finally fixed and adjusted. 440 20th Avenue, Indian Rocks Beach, FL. 33785.

Code Enforcement Manager Mike Kelly explained that the property at 440 20th Avenue belonged to an elderly woman who passed away, survived by her husband, who passed away just before the flood. The property has been abandoned since the flood with no remediation. After attempts to contact the sons who inherited the property and receiving no action, the city cleaned up the property and now needs to place a lien of \$1,100 (\$1,000 for mowing and \$100 for administrative costs).

Neighbors' Comments:

- John Thayer, 1819 Bay Blvd - Thanked Mike Kelly for the explanation and questioned why the Commission needs to pass a resolution for each property lien when there will be many similar cases.

- Bob Copeland, 445 20th Ave - As a neighbor of the property, expressed support for the city's actions and noted that neighbors had previously cleaned the yard themselves.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Wilson to approve Resolution #2025-14.

Seconded by Commissioner Bond.

Vote: Carried Unanimously

9. OTHER BUSINESS: None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vice Mayor Commissioner Wilson to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Bigelow.

Vote: Carried Unanimously

Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.
