



MINUTES

3

City of Holmes Beach City Commission Regular Meeting

December 16, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Patricia A. Geyer Commission Chambers
5801 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach FL 34217

Present: Commissioner Diggins, Commissioner Oelfke, Commissioner Patel, Commissioner Schaefer, Chair Whitmore

Staff Present: Mayor Titsworth, City Attorney Augello, City Clerk Johnston, Chief Tokajer, Director of Development Services Minor

Also Present: Deputy Clerk/Records Manager Lowe, Administrative Assistant Migaiolo, City Treasurer Marcotte, Accounting Clerk Fischer, Code Compliance Chief Thomas, Code Compliance Clerk Olson, and Dev. Serv./Bldg./EOC Coordinator Charron. Also in attendance was Attorney Randy Mora

1. Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance; Moment of Silence

Chair Whitmore called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Schaefer
Seconded by Commissioner Diggins

November 18, 2025, Organizational Special Meeting and November 18, 2025, Regular Meeting were approved as written.

Motion Approved

3.a Special Meeting - Organizational - November 18, 2025

3.b Regular Meeting - November 18, 2025

4. Commission Reports

Commissioner Schaefer

Proposed Legislative Bill relating to Real Estate Taxes

Report attached as part of the official record.

Commissioner Schaefer spoke relating to the Governor's approach to real estate taxes and the significant challenge to funding of vital city services if approved. He noted that the City's lobbyist

has been tracking the bill and that it is the intent for the City to come out with an announcement on the City's position.

Clean Water Committee

The Clean Water Committee (CWC) met on December 10. Discussion was held relating to expanding the role of the committee. Commissioner Schaefer stated that new CWC member Charles Mopps from the Town of Longboat Key has provided details relating to the Town's Green Team who deal with a wide variety of issues.

Commissioner Diggins

Commissioner Diggins attended the December 15 Tourist Development Council meeting. He also reported he had met Paul Hoback, Jr., the new CEO of the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport.

Chair Whitmore

Attended December 2nd Lester Family Fun Day hosted by The Center of Anna Maria Island.

5. Mayor's Report

5.a Mayor's State of the City Report

Mayor Titsworth presented the 2025 State of City which has been attached as part of the official record.

She also handed out a comprehensive "*City of Holmes Beach - A town with a future - Celebrating 75 Years*" report. The report is available in the City Clerk's Office.

5.b Mayor's Liaison Appointments 2025-2026

Mayor Titsworth announced that the 2025-2026 Mayor's Liaison Appointments were as follows:

Commissioner Dan Diggins

- Buildings and Grounds, Roads, Bridges, Drainage, Canals, & Erosion

Commissioner Steve Oelfke

- Recycling and Solid Waste
- Recreation, Beautification, and Parks

Commissioner Jessica Patel

- Barrier Island Elected Officials
- The Center of Anna Maria Island

Commissioner Terry Schaefer

- Clean Water Ad Hoc Committee
- Legislative – Includes ManaSota League
- Police Pension Board

Commissioner Carol Whitmore

- Anna Maria Chamber of Commerce

- Legislative – Alternate – Includes ManaSota League

5.c City Board and Committee Recognitions

Plaques were presented by City Clerk Johnston to the following outgoing committee members for their service through 2025.

- **Clean Water Ad Hoc Committee** - Presented by Commissioner Schaefer and City Clerk Johnston to former Committee member Jeffrey Drinkard and former Committee Chair Ron Huibers
- **Municipal Police Officers' Pension Trust Fund Committee** - Former Committee member Sean Murphy - not in attendance
- **Parks & Beautification Committee** - Former Committee member Eileen Jellison - not in attendance
- **Planning Commission** - Former Commission member Steve Oelfke

5.d Mayor's Presentation of 2025 Awards

Mayor Titsworth presented the following 2025 Awards

- **Shining Star** - Dev. Serv./Bldg./EOC Coordinator Kim Charron for her 75th Anniversary Celebration festival leadership
- **Community Partnership** - Hagen Family Foundation - not in attendance
- **Louis Strickland 2025 Citizen of the Year** - Brian Mathae - presented to Mr. Mathae during the 75th Anniversary Celebration festival
- **Employee of the Year** - Deputy City Clerk/Records Manager Michelle Lowe

6. Comments by the Public

6.a Manatee County Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau Elliott Falcione - County Water Taxi Status

Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau Elliott Falcione provided an update and PowerPoint presentation relating to the Water Ferry operations. He reviewed the following:

- Objective - To enhance multi-modal transportation from the mainland to Anna Maria Island and allow the county the ability to run a "hopper" service on Anna Maria Island.
- Service began January 22, 2024 - Runs five days a week.
- Two Current routes as of March 2025 - Bradenton Riverwalk Pier and Historic Bridge Street Pier.
- Third and largest vessel, The Manatee Belle, will be coming in January 2026. Will seat 93 passengers with accommodations for both indoor and outdoor seating. Air conditioning and heating available. The vessel will be 100% paid for by Tourist Development Council (TCD) funds.
- Future landing - South Coquina Beach Boat Launch. Estimated for January 2026.
- Additional dock site - Palmetto Estuary Park. People from the convention center will be able to utilize the Water Ferry to Anna Maria Island for the day.

- Bradenton Area Savings Pass and Ferry Perks Passes are available.
- MCAT - myStop App - will provide Ferry Routes and Service Alerts allowing the ability to plan a trip across all public transport. The app will include discounts for museums, etc.
- Information about the Gulf Islands Ferry can be found on www.bradentongulfislands.com/gulf-islands-ferry. Also on Facebook, and Instagram.
- The Water Ferry takes 22,000 to 23,000 cars off Manatee Avenue and Cortez.
- The route between Bradenton to the Historic Bridge Street Pier is 45 minutes.
- Acknowledgement that there may be a program where Anna Maria Island residents would not be charged. They are currently working with the Anna Maria Oyster Bar.
- An ADA lift for handicapped accessibility will be installed at the South Coquina Boat Ramp.
- The County is looking for additional launch spaces on Anna Maria Island.
- There is a 2.7-person car ratio based on seasonality.
- Discussion relating to TDC funds and where the funds are allocated.
- A tourist is defined as someone outside of Manatee County or someone from Lakewood Ranch.
- It was recommended that prior to addressing multimodal, there be a study of "what do we want on our beaches". The transportation and amenities could be provided to address the results.
- Chair Whitmore noted when she served as County Commissioner, she did not vote in favor of the Water Ferry.

Comments by the Public

Renee Ferguson, 210 77th Street, spoke relating to the Dog Park. She noted that in the past residents had paid out of their own pockets. The Public Works fertilized, sanitized, and mowed the Dog Park. The City improved the Dog Park in 2018, and the residents were assured that the property would be better. Lighting and trees were promised. However, the trees and grass all died. She noted the Dog Park is utilized 365 days per year and includes 40 people and dogs playing and socializing every day.

Ms. Ferguson stated that funds have been allocated to the Skate Park, Baseball Field, and the Pickle Ball Courts. She noted that the TDC advertises the Dog Park in Holmes Beach so felt a committee should be put in place and a plan made to move forward.

Dennis Groh, 3704 4th Avenue, provided a handout requesting the City ban the use of e-bikes in City Parks. The handout is attached as part of the official record.

Nickie Hunt, 202 Lakeview Dr, Anna Maria, said she utilizes the Dog Park daily and felt the Island should not be proud of it. In her opinion it appears that no funding has been utilized to maintain and improve the Park. She met with Public Works and others recently and it appears none of their recommendations have been implemented. She used the example of the location of the benches.

Ms. Hunt also asked for mature trees, noting that some residents had paid for mature trees at the prior Dog Park location. Trees that provide shade have been requested but they

have been told they are not available. She recommended the City work with Dog Park attendees.

Tom Evans, 526 Kumquat Drive, stated the Dog Park is a 'park' and wanted to be included when discussion about the Dog Park is held. He would like Holmes Beach to have a better Dog Park than the one in Longboat Key.

James Golembiewski, 81st Street, suggested residents be asked what they felt can be done for the Dog Park.

Mr. Golembiewski stated he owned the boat that crashed on the beach two years prior. However, when working with the City he was told to call people who had nothing to do about the removal of the boat. He did not feel the City handled the situation correctly and he had to pay to remove the boat from the beach. He has since lost the boat based on certain actions that he felt were inaccurate.

Mark Hebden, 4605 2nd Ave, announced he had presented signed petitions to the City Clerk relating to the flooding issues near his home. He also met with Public Works Maintenance Supervisor Tray Thorp. He hopes there will be funding to address the area as soon as possible.

Mr. Hebden also commented on the Dog Park feeling it was time for the City to listen to Dog Park users and that there be a line item in the next budget for the Dog Park. He suggested donations be collected like how Manatee County is handling the veteran's monuments.

Commissioner Schaefer felt it would be a reasonable approach for the City to listen to the citizens relating to the Dog Park. He pointed out that everything the City does costs money and felt it would be helpful to accept contributions from the citizens.

Commissioner Oelfke agrees the Dog Park, Skate Park, and Tennis Courts are used a lot. It is important to him that the City also has an excellent Dog Park and that the City Commission should have discussions and get behind the residents, speak to the Dog Park users, come up with a plan, and find a way to come up with the funds needed.

Commissioner Patel agreed, stating that pets are like children. She wants the best for the Dog Park and asked what money could be reallocated.

Commissioner Diggins did not feel it was appropriate to place discussion about the Dog Park on a Work Session because the City has a Parks & Beautification Committee who should present a plan prior to City Commission discussion.

Chair Whitmore disagreed stating the City has a budget and the City Commission set policy. The City Commission had not yet had an opportunity to listen to Dog Park users. A donation policy and process could also be established.

Mayor Titsworth provided a history of Dog Park to include the funding and amenities and remodeling that has been provided. She stated currently half of the Dog Park users want sand while the other half wanted grass, so grass was provided. She stated that the minute something was requested for the Dog Park, she addressed it. Additional details about the upgrades were provided.

Mayor Titsworth asked to give time for the new grass to grow. If the entire field were to be resodded the Dog Park would have to be closed for an entire season. In addition, it was important to do what was best for the City and for the taxpayers. She pointed out that it was the role of the Parks & Beautification Committee to address the Dog Park and invited the citizens to meet with her at any time.

Chair Whitmore still felt a Work Session was needed.

City Attorney Augello stated the City Commission was still under Public Comment. She confirmed that the City Commission Chair can request a Work Session item.

Commissioner Schaefer stated that Director of Development Services Minor chaired the recent Parks & Beautification Committee when the Dog Park was discussed. He believes it was the residents' responsibility to meet with that Commission and did not believe all the recommendations were the consensus of everyone. He felt a response from Director of Development Services Minor was needed as to whether it is appropriate to make recommendations on this point.

Chair Whitmore asked for a consensus relating to a Work Session. She and Commissioners Oelfke and Patel were in favor with Commissioner Diggins and Schaefer opposed. Chair Whitmore asked that Director of Development Services Minor provide a report for the upcoming Work Session. She noted that Commissioner Oelfke will attend the next Parks & Beautification Committee meeting as their new liaison.

7. Unfinished Business

None.

8. New Business

8.a Approve Mayor's appointment of Randy Mora as the Holmes Beach City Attorney effective January 1, 2026

Mayor Titsworth introduced Attorney Randy Mora as her recommendation to replace Attorney Erica Augello as the City's Attorney.

City Attorney Augello announced that she was stepping down due to a scheduling conflict in her firm. She highly recommended Attorney Mora as the City's Attorney. Attorney Mora has worked with the City, has represented the City in litigation through the Florida League of Cities, and has conducted Sunshine, Records, and Ethics training for the City for several years. Attorney Mora also assisted the City with the Bert Harris case and Tree House case.

Action: Unanimous consensus to approve Mayor Titsworth's appointment of Attorney Randy Mora as City Attorney effective January 1, 2026.

8.b First Amendment to Agreement Between the City of Holmes Beach, Florida, and Trask Daigneault, LLP for City Attorney Services

Chair Whitmore voiced her concern about the proposed hourly increase, feeling that \$285 per hour was too high. She based her concern on the survey provided to the City Commission.

City Attorney Augello confirmed she had provided the survey information. Her firm had not increased their hourly rates since she began as City Attorney - they had honored the former Attorney Petruff's rates.

Discussion continued relating the new increased hourly fee being requested as part of the First Amendment to the Agreement. Mayor Titsworth stated she had no concerns about the increase and that the City's budget will cover the costs.

Moved by Commissioner Oelfke
Seconded by Commissioner Schaefer

Approved First Amendment to Agreement between the City of Holmes Beach, Florida, and Trask Daigneault, LLP for City Attorney Services

Discussion continued relating to cases where Trask Daigneault had prevailed and that this was the first time the firm had requested an increase.

City Attorney Augello stated their role was mostly trying to prevent the City from getting into litigation and to provide counsel to the City Commission and staff. She believed the \$285 per hour rate was commensurate with the level of service they provide and the rate was within the market rate or just below.

Motion carried on vote of 4-1 with Chair Whitmore voting No.

Motion Approved

8.c Services and Performance Agreement between Sunrise Consulting Group, LLC and the City of Holmes Beach, Florida

Moved by Commissioner Schaefer

Seconded by Chair Whitmore

Approved Services and Performance Agreement between Sunrise Consulting Group LLC and the City of Holmes Beach, Florida.

Motion Approved

9. Announcements

- Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday - December 24, 25, & 26 - Offices Closed - Christmas Holiday
- Thursday, January 1, 2026 - Offices Closed - New Year's Day
- Wednesday, January 7, 2026 - 10:00 a.m. - Parks & Beautification Committee Meeting
- Wednesday, January 7, 2026 - 3:30 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting
- Tuesday, January 13, 2026 - 2:00 p.m. - City Commission Regular Meeting w/Work Session to follow
- Wednesday, January 14, 2026 - 9:00 a.m. - Clean Water Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
- Monday, January 19, 2026 - Offices Closed - Martin Luther King Day
- Tuesday, January 27, 2026 - 2:00 p.m. - City Commission Regular Meeting w/Work Session to follow

10. Questions and Comments

10.a Questions and Comments from Mayor and City Commission

Chair Whitmore

Announced that a presentation will be made to former Commissioner Carol Soustek at the January 13, 2026, meeting.

Commissioner Oelfke

Commissioner Oelfke stated he had enjoyed working on the Planning Commission and appreciates now having the opportunity to work on the City Commission. He noted that each of the City's boards and committees have some very amazing people on them. He thanked Commissioner Schaefer for reaching out to him about initially serving on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Oelfke stated that he appreciated being appointed as the Parks & Beautification Committee liaison. Commissioner Oelfke announced that he was in favor of the City Commission holding a Work Session relating to the Dog Park.

10.b Questions and Comments from City Attorney

None.

10.c Questions and Comments from Staff

Chief Tokajer

Chief Tokajer provided a report relating to e-bikes noting the ones that are dangerous are the C class ones that can travel 40-60 mph and over. He reported that the State Legislators are working on designating the Class C e-bikes as a motorcycle versus a bicycle. The ones that go fast have no peddles versus the e-bikes that need peddles to move. He noted that e-bikes are not allowed on the sidewalk.

Chair Whitmore suggested education be provided to those that rent e-bikes and they need to know the difference in traveling on the sidewalk versus the bike lane.

Chief Tokajer acknowledged that the bike renters are educated. He provided the regulations to all rental companies in the City, along with asking that they install lights on each of the bikes.

Director of Development Services Minor

- Presented the most recent Building Department and Code Compliance reports
- Announced that the City is sponsoring a "Giving Tree" for Senior Citizens again this year. The tree is in the City Hall lobby and encouraged residents to take a name from the tree.
- Thanked his staff for all their help at the 75th Anniversary Festival.

Chair Whitmore

Chair Whitmore noted in the past the City used to sponsor movies on the City Field. She felt that was something that could be investigated again.

Chair Whitmore thanked City Attorney Augello for all her work for the City.

Mayor Titsworth stated the City Attorney Augello will still serve as the attorney for Code Compliance cases.

10.d Questions and Comments from the Public and Press

None.

11. Adjournment

Chair Whitmore adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Stacey Johnston, MMC, City Clerk

Minutes Approved