



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on July 15, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 09:47 AM in the Town Council Chambers.

Members Present: Bridget Moran, Ted Cooney, Lewis Crampton, Danielle Moore, Julie Araskog, Nicki McDonald

Staff Present: Wayne Bergman, James Murphy, Abraham Fogel, Kelly Churney, and Town Attorney Joanne O'Connor

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Town Clerk Churney led the invocation, and Council President Cooney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member Moran to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH

Town Clerk Churney swore in all those intending to speak and continued to do so throughout the meeting, as necessary.

COMMENTS

1. MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council Member Araskog encouraged residents to yield to emergency vehicles with flashing lights, emphasizing that every second can be critical during an emergency response. She also requested that the Town issue a public reminder to help increase awareness and improve compliance with this requirement.

Council Member Crampton requested that the Town Council revisit the issue of sight-distance obstructions caused by hedges at intersections, citing ongoing public safety concerns. He recommended scheduling a future discussion, reviewing the existing angle-of-vision standards, evaluating the applicability of nonconforming properties, and requesting an informal survey of potentially hazardous locations. Town Attorney O'Connor explained that existing nonconforming hedges have vested rights and that recent state law further limits the Town's ability to impose more restrictive regulations. Assistant Director James Murphy suggested proactively addressing the issue by reviewing nonconforming hedges when redevelopment or other applications are submitted. Council members discussed the challenges of requiring existing hedges to be modified, the fairness of identifying property owners who complied with prior regulations, and the value of educating residents. The Council agreed that staff would continue evaluating the issue and report back with potential options for future consideration.

2. PUBLIC - 3 MINUTE LIMIT

Rick Smith, 130 Sunrise Avenue, expressed concerns regarding the approval process for the Paramount project, specifically the Construction Management Agreement, Declaration of Use, and Settlement Agreement. He questioned the transparency of the process, the opportunity for public participation, and compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and quasi-judicial procedures. Mr. Smith stated that he had submitted a letter outlining his concerns for the public record and urged that building permits not be issued until the procedural issues had been addressed and Comprehensive Plan compliance had been demonstrated.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

3. PROJECT UPDATE: ZON-24-0046 (ARC-24-0090) 2720-2730 S OCEAN BLVD. - EDGEWATER / AMBASSADOR SITE

Assistant Director James Murphy provided a courtesy update on the Ambassador/Edgewater redevelopment project, advising that demolition permit applications had been submitted and were under review, with demolition activities expected to begin following the required public notifications. He reviewed the project's approval history, including the Architectural Commission's multiple reviews of the rooftop mechanical equipment screening, noting that the Commission's requested design refinements reduced the height, footprint, and overall appearance of the rooftop equipment. Mr. Murphy explained that the project highlighted the need to evaluate current code provisions governing rooftop mechanical equipment as part of the ongoing code rewrite, particularly for multi-building developments where modern equipment requirements continue to increase. Council members expressed appreciation for the update and supported incorporating the issue into the code review process. They discussed balancing modern mechanical equipment needs with maintaining the Town's building scale and character, including whether future regulations should address rooftop equipment size, setbacks, screening, or its relationship to allowable building height and story limitations. Members also noted that the Ambassador project provided a valuable learning opportunity for both the Town and the Architectural Commission, as similar redevelopment projects are considered in the future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. ZON-26-0015 (COA-26-0004) 151 ROOT TRAIL (COMBO) – VARIANCES The applicant, Julie Phillips (Brian Brady with Brady Design, Representative), has filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval of two (2) variances to reduce the east side yard and west side yard setbacks for a new second-story addition to the existing one-story residence for property under consideration to be landmarked. The Landmarks Preservation Commission shall perform design review of the application impacting the property under consideration to be landmarked. *[The Landmark Preservation Commission Recommendation: Implementation of the proposed variances will not cause a negative impact on the subject property. Carried 7-0.] [The Landmark Preservation Commission approved with conditions. Carried 7-0.]*

Council Member McDonald and Council President Cooney disclosed ex parte communications.

Staff presented a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness and associated variances for the property at 151 Root Trail, previously approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The proposal includes exterior alterations and a second-story addition within the existing footprint of the historic residence, requiring variances to maintain the existing nonconforming side-yard setbacks. Council members requested clarification regarding neighboring setbacks, the height of the addition, compatibility with the surrounding streetscape, the hardship supporting the variances, and potential privacy impacts on adjacent properties. Architect Brian Brady explained that the addition had been designed to minimize its visual impact by setting the second story back from the street, preserving the existing footprint, and reducing the building's height while providing additional living space. Following the discussion, Council members generally agreed that the proposal was compatible with the historic character of Root Trail, maintained the established streetscape, and appropriately balanced preservation with the residents' functional needs. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member McDonald that Variance No. ZON-26-0015, 151 Root Trail shall be granted and find, in support thereof, that all the criteria applicable to this application as set forth in Section 134-201 (a), items 1 through 7, have been met. The motion was carried 3-2, with Council President Cooney and Council Member Araskog dissenting.

5. ZON-26-0016 (COA-26-0005) 1047 S OCEAN BLVD. (COMBO) – VARIANCE The applicant, Maura Ziska (Trustee of 1047 South Ocean Boulevard Trust), has filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval for one (1) variance to increase lot coverage associated with a two-story addition for the Landmarked property. The Landmarks Preservation Commission shall perform design review of the application. *This project is deferred to the August 12, 2026, Town Council meeting, pending architectural review.*

***Note: This item was deferred to August 12, 2026, upon the approval of the agenda.**

NEW BUSINESS

6. ZON-25-0074 376 S COUNTY RD, THE CHURCH MOUSE– SPECIAL EXCEPTION. The applicant, Church of Bethesda-By-The Sea (Kyle Fant, Bartholemew & Partners, Representative), has filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval

for a Special Exception for a merchant retail takeout in order to operate a coffee to go counter within the existing Church Mouse retail space in the CTS zoning district, within the landmarked building.

Council Members Araskog, McDonald, Moran, Council President Pro Tem Crampton, Council President Cooney, and Mayor Moore disclosed ex parte communications.

Staff presented a request for a special exception to allow a coffee-to-go counter within the Church Mouse retail space at 376 S. County Road, a landmarked property owned by the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea. The proposal includes no exterior alterations, food service, or seating, with coffee to be offered for takeout only during the Church Mouse's regular business hours. Reverend Tim Schenck of the Church of Bethesda-By-The-Sea explained that the intent is to enhance the shopping experience, foster community interaction, and generate additional revenue to support the Church's charitable mission. Council members discussed the proposal's compatibility with the surrounding area, the absence of signage, the potential for intensification of use, and the precedent of allowing retail coffee sales. The Town Attorney reminded the Council that the request should be evaluated based on the special exception criteria established in the Code. Council members generally concluded that the proposal was a compatible accessory use, would not adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood, and would provide a community benefit while supporting the Church Mouse's longstanding charitable mission. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member Moran that Special Exception and Site Plan Review No. ZON-25-0074, 376 S. County Road, meets the criteria set forth in sections 134-229 and 134-329, respectively, of the Town Code and finds that approval of the Site Plan will not adversely affect the public interest, that all zoning requirements governing the use have been met, and that satisfactory provision and arrangement has been made concerning items (1) through (11) of section 134-329, conditioned upon no exterior signage for the coffee bar. The motion was carried 5-0.

ORDINANCES

7. FIRST READING

7.1 12-2026 An Ordinance Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Amending The Adopted 2024 Town Of Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan, Pursuant To Chapter 163.3191, Florida Statutes, By Amending The Future Land Use Element, The Historic Preservation Element, And The Infrastructure Element And By Amending The Adopted 2024 Comprehensive Plan Map Series To Replace The Future Land Use Map, The Zoning Map And The Archaeological Sites Map; Providing For Incorporation Of Recitals; Providing For Severability; Providing For Repeal Of Ordinances In Conflict Here Within; Providing For Codification; Providing An Effective Date.

Council President Cooney read Ordinance 012-2026 by title only. Council President Cooney called for public comment.

Anita Seltzer, 44 Cocoanut Row, reiterated her position that, while the Future Land Use Map identifies a property's land use designation, projects must also demonstrate consistency with the

Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, and policies, rather than relying solely on the property's location within a designated land use category. Council President Cooney acknowledged that Ms. Seltzer was restating comments she had made previously, and Ms. Seltzer confirmed that her intent was to emphasize the importance of Comprehensive Plan compliance. In response to Council Member Araskog's request for clarification, Wayne Bergman explained that staff's reports state whether a proposed use is consistent with the property's Future Land Use designation, but that all projects are also evaluated for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as a whole. Council Member Araskog suggested revising the standard language in future staff reports to more clearly reflect this broader Comprehensive Plan review, and staff agreed to consider the change.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member Araskog to approve Ordinance 012-2026 on first reading. The motion was carried unanimously, 4-0. (Council Member McDonald was not in the room during the vote)

7.2 13-2026 An Ordinance Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Amending The Official Zoning Map By Replacing The Existing 1974 Official Zoning Map Of The Town Of Palm Beach Last Updated September 2024 With A New 2026 Official Zoning Map; Providing For Incorporation Of Recitals; Providing For Severability; Providing For Repeal Of Ordinances In Conflict Here Within; Providing For Codification; Providing An Effective Date.

Director Wayne Bergman read Ordinance 013-2026 by title only. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member McDonald to approve Ordinance 013-2026 on first reading. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

7.3 20-2026 An Ordinance Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Amending The Town Code Of Ordinances At Chapter 134, Zoning, Article Vi, District Regulations, At Division 6. - R-D(1) High Density Residential District, Section 134-1000; And At Division 7. - R-D(2) High Density Residential District, Section 134-1055, To Remove Public And Private Academic School As Special Exception Uses In The R-D(1) And R-D(2), Respectively; Providing For Severability; Providing For Repeal Of Ordinances In Conflict; Providing For Codification; Providing An Effective Date.

Director Wayne Bergman read Ordinance 020-2026 by title only. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member McDonald to approve Ordinance 020-2026 on first reading. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

8. SECOND READING

- 8.1 **17-2026** An Ordinance Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Amending The Town Code Of Ordinances At Chapter 134, Zoning, Article V, District Regulations, At Division 4. - R-B Low Density Residential District, Section 134-890(13); At Division 5.- R-C Medium Density Residential District, Section 134-945; At Division 6. - R-D(1) High Density Residential District, Section 134-1000; And At Division 7. - R-D(2) High Density Residential District, Section 134-1055 To Reinstate The Changes Made By Ordinance 06-2025 Removing Private And Public Academic School As Special Exception Uses In Certain Residential Zoning Districts And Geographic Areas Of Same And To Clarify The Prior Governmental Approval Condition On A Special Exception Use For Pedestrian Access Tunnels To The Beach In Section 134-890; Providing For Severability; Providing For Repeal Of Ordinances In Conflict; Providing For Codification; Providing An Effective Date.

Director Wayne Bergman read Ordinance 017-2026 by title only. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member McDonald to adopt Ordinance 017-2026 on second reading. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

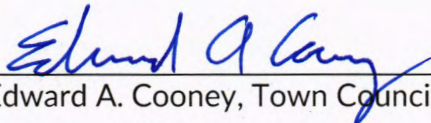
ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed at this time.

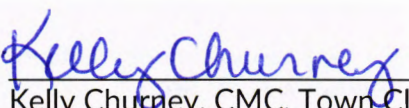
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Araskog and seconded by Council President Pro Tem Crampton to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 AM. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

APPROVED:


Edward A. Cooney, Town Council President

APPROVED:


Kelly Churney, CMC, Town Clerk
Date: 8/11/26

