

DRAFT



CITY OF FORT PIERCE PLANNING BOARD

Planning Board Minutes

OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORT PIERCE CITY PLANNING BOARD HELD ON MONDAY, **JANUARY 12, 2026** IN FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 100 NORTH US HIGHWAY 1, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Mr. Edwards attended the meeting from 2:13 PM to 3:10 PM.

Present: Ryan Collins; Christopher Widing; Clayton Johnson; Alexander Edwards; Nichelle Clemons; Anton Kreisl, Chairman

Absent: Justine Carter

Staff Present: Sara Hedges, City Attorney
Kev Freeman, Planning Director
Chris Suneson, Assistant Planning Director
Vennis Gilmore, Historic Preservation and Senior Planner
Alicia Rosenthal, Planning and Development Organizer

Attendees: Stephanie Heidt, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Deputy Executive Director

4. CONSIDERATION OF ABSENCES

Ms. Carter was excused.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes from the November 11, 2025 meeting

Motion was made by Nichelle Clemons, and seconded by Clayton Johnson to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2025 meeting.

AYE: Clayton Johnson, Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Chairman Anton Kreisl
Passed

6. HEARING OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY

a. **2026 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Review Transmittal**

Mr. Gilmore gave an overview of the Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments. He said the plan updates the data, goals, objectives, and policies of the twelve (12) elements by addressing local issues, providing legislative consistency and considering the community's vision. Mr. Gilmore listed the local issues and vision, which were identified through stakeholder interviews, a public survey, and workshops:

- Rational Boundary
- Strategic Annexation
- Consider Infrastructure in all Decisions
- Ensure Zoning and Land Use is Consistent
- Support Small Businesses
- Address Housing Needs
- Up Our Transportation Game
- Protect Coastal Areas – Resiliency/Mitigation

He reviewed the narratives and data and analysis that was done, and he noted there are two planning periods: 10-year and 20-year.

Mr. Gilmore listed the different map series that will be included:

- Future Land Use
- Existing Land Use
- Zoning
- Future Land Use Advisory Map With Urban Service Boundary
- Functional Classification
- Mass Transit
- Bicycle Facilities and Multiuse Trails
- Pedestrian Facilities
- Natural Resources and Land Cover
- Soils
- Flood Hazard Zones
- Coastal High Hazard Areas

He gave an overview of the additions, updates, corrections and revisions for each element shown below.

1. Future Land Use
2. Transportation
3. Infrastructure
4. Conservation
5. Coastal Management
6. Housing
7. Recreation and Open Space
8. Intergovernmental Coordination
9. Capital Improvements
10. Public Facilities Management
11. Public School Facilities
12. Property Rights

Mr. Gilmore concluded the presentation by listing the next steps. He said the Planning Board will provide recommendations to the City Commission for consideration at the January 20, 2026, transmittal hearing. Next, the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Review is transmitted to the Florida Commerce for State Agency Review, which is 30 days later. After that, comments are given back to the City from Florida Commerce and the state agencies. The necessary changes are made by the City and the City Commission holds an adoption hearing.

Chair Kreisl asked what is being proposed for the city boundary goals. Ms. Clemons asked if properties out west could still be annexed. Mr. Gilmore said currently any properties within the FPUA service boundary that have signed an annexation agreement are eligible to be annexed. He noted the map shows the possible final boundaries of the city of Fort Pierce.

Chari Kreisl stressed that appropriate and specific higher standards are needed for annexing properties outside the target goal. He said he wants a stricter defined policy that staff can follow, and he wants to know what kind of plan the city is putting in place for un-annexed properties. He asked if the vision for the city is voluntary annexations or more deliberate.

Mr. Freeman stated he gave a presentation to the City Commission to get feedback on the city limits for annexations. He said the discussion was left open on extending the service boundary. Mr. Freeman said discussion was had on how far north the city should go, how removing property taxes would affect the city, and should commercial uses be prioritized for annexation. He said the city has many options and eliminating enclaves was clear. Mr. Freeman said a more detailed analysis of service provision and cost is needed for both commercial and industrial parcels. He noted that the City Commission is in favor of movement to the north area around the airport but not the airport itself. Mr. Freeman concluded by saying that currently, the city is constrained by boundaries and provisions and criteria are needed to allow the city to go beyond that.

Stephanie Heidt, Deputy Executive Director for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, recommended policies to the Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments that the future goal of the city is that annexations are not tied to the FPUA service boundary.

Mr. Freeman noted that once the annexation policy has been worked out, a policy amendment to the Comprehensive Plan will need to be added.

Motion was made by Nichelle Clemons, and seconded by Christopher Widing to forward a recommendation of approval to the City Commission for the transmittal of the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Review Amendment to the Florida Department of Commerce for review, with the addendum to remove the last sentence "*The annexation of land outside the future annexation area is prohibited*" in Future Land Use Policy 1.11.10.

AYE: Clayton Johnson, Alexander Edwards, Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Chairman
Anton Kreisl

Passed

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. PZANN2025-00006

Annexation
Tony Acerra Property
2413-501-0154-000-6

Mr. Suneson stated that the request was for a voluntary annexation by the owner, Tony Acerra, to extend the territorial limits of the City of Fort Pierce to include one parcel containing 0.19 acres, generally located at or near 2528 South Ocean Drive. He said, if annexed, the property would have a City Future Land Use Designation of RL, Low Density Residential, and a City Zoning of R-1, Single-Family Low-Density Zone. The subject property has a St. Lucie County Future Land Use Designation of RS, Residential Suburban, 2 du/ac, and a St. Lucie County Zoning designation of HIRD, Hutchinson Island Residential District. Mr. Suneson said the subject property is currently vacant and the current taxable value of the property is approximately \$27,860.

He said the parcel meets the statutory eligibility tests and the comprehensive plan policies. Mr. Suneson stated the subject parcel lies within the Fort Pierce Utility Authority (FPUA) service boundary and is therefore eligible for annexation under Objective 1.11. He stated there is no increase or decrease in density in the Future Land Use comparison for the maximum build-out potential. Mr. Suneson noted the lot is non-conforming with regard to the lot area and width and the owner would be allowed to construct a single-family residence. Mr. Suneson stated the application meets the annexation review criteria and all departments have supported the annexation, given the subject property is not allowed to construct a septic system on the property and is required to connect to water and sewer services provided by FPUA.

Chair Kreisl asked if it would be more appropriate to assign a different zoning instead of having a non-conforming lot. Mr. Suneson explained that the R-1 zoning district allows the smallest lot size and the parcel needs to be consistent with the density.

Mr. Johnson asked if the Hutchinson Island Overlay District covers all of South Beach. Mr. Suneson explained that anytime there is an annexation in the Hutchinson Island Overlay District, the boundary is extended. He said the overlay district has more regulations regarding height as opposed to lot area.

Mr. Suneson noted that the four (4) annexations on the agenda near 2528 Ocean Drive are in a particular order so that each could be considered.

Mr. Johnson asked if all the annexations would follow the commercial annexation of services. Mr. Suneson said there is existing water through FPUA, and they have to have a sewer, which can be extended to the other lots being annexed.

Mr. Johnson asked if the residential use could be changed to commercial. Mr. Suneson said the owner could always rezone, but the land use does not allow commercial, and the lot size makes it hard even to build a single-family home.

Tony Acerra, property owner, stated annexing his properties is the only way to have a buildable lot. He is working with FPUA to set up a funding mechanism that will hold his money in an escrow account to build a sewer line. Mr. Acerra said he has approval from the Florida Fish and Wildlife to build a sewer for only the lots facing A1A. He noted the mitigation is done, and he has Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) approval.

Mr. Johnson asked once the utilities are in place, would it allow all the other vacant lots in that area to be annexed and get services. Mr. Suneson said the sewer line is being extended to the four lots requesting annexation plus one additional lot. He said all lots on the west side of A1A could have some kind of sewer service. Mr. Johnson asked about service to the county properties. Mr. Suneson said the subdivision has been around a long time and roads have not been built. FPUA would need an easement to service the lots and a road is needed to provide access.

He also said removing the mangroves requires permits and there is a possibility of permitting hurdles and cost prohibition to develop beyond A1A. Mr. Suneson said all the annexed lots would require FDEP approval, but this is not a requirement for annexation.

Mr. Acerra said there are 10 lots in the county and if the annexations are approved only six (6) county lots remain. He highlighted that the lots have been there for 75 years and the county cost for a sewer line is very expensive and keeps increasing in cost.

Motion was made by Ryan Collins, and seconded by Alexander Edwards to forward a recommendation of approval of the proposed annexation of Parcel ID: 2413-501-0154-000-6 to the City Commission.

AYE: Alexander Edwards, Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Chairman Anton Kreisl

NAY: Clayton Johnson

Passed

b. **PZANN2025-00008**

Annexation

Alberti Property

Parcel ID: 2413-501-0155-000-3

Mr. Suneson stated that the request was for a voluntary annexation by the owner, John Alberti, to extend the territorial limits of the City of Fort Pierce to include one parcel containing 0.19 acres, generally located at or near 2528 South Ocean Drive. He said this parcel immediately joins the Tony Acerra parcel in item 7a. Mr. Suneson stated, if annexed, the property would have a City Future Land Use Designation of RL, Low Density Residential, and a City Zoning of R-1, Single-Family Low-Density Zone. The subject property has a St. Lucie County Future Land Use Designation of RS, Residential Suburban, 2 du/ac, and a St. Lucie County Zoning designation of HIRD, Hutchinson Island Residential District. Mr. Suneson said the subject property is currently vacant and the current taxable value of the property is approximately \$27,860.

He said the parcel meets the statutory eligibility tests and the comprehensive plan policies. Mr. Suneson stated the subject parcel lies within the Fort Pierce Utility Authority (FPUA) service boundary and is therefore eligible for annexation under Objective 1.11. He stated there is no increase or decrease in density in the Future Land Use comparison for the maximum build-out potential. Mr. Suneson noted the lot is non-conforming with regard to the lot area and width and the owner would be allowed to construct a single-family residence. Mr. Suneson stated the application meets the annexation review criteria and all departments have supported the annexation, given the subject property is not allowed to construct a septic system on the property and is required to connect to water and sewer services provided by FPUA.

Chair Kreisl asked to see a map showing the service area boundary.

Motion was made by Nichelle Clemons, and seconded by Ryan Collins to forward a recommendation of approval of the annexation of Parcel ID: 2413-501-0155-000-3 to the City Commission.

AYE: Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Chairman Anton Kreisl

NAY: Clayton Johnson

Passed

c. **PZANN2025-00009**

Annexation

Fowler/Murray Property

Parcel ID: 2413-501-0102-000-7

Mr. Suneson stated that the request was for a voluntary annexation by the owners, Michael Fowler and Sean Murray, to extend the territorial limits of the City of Fort Pierce to include one parcel containing 1.42 acres, generally located at or near 2528 South Ocean Drive. He said, if annexed, the property would have a City Future Land Use Designation of GC, General Commercial, and a City Zoning of C-3, General Commercial. The subject property has a St. Lucie County Future Land Use Designation of RU, Residential Urban, 5 du/ac and the balance of the property located along South Ocean Drive / State Highway A1A is classified as COM, Commercial. The parcel has a St. Lucie County Zoning designation of HIRD, Hutchinson Island Residential District and the balance of the property located along South Ocean Drive / State Highway A1A is zoned as CG, Commercial General. Mr. Suneson said the subject property is currently vacant and the current taxable value of the property is approximately \$125,601.

He said the parcel meets the statutory eligibility tests and the comprehensive plan policies. Mr. Suneson stated the subject parcel lies within the Fort Pierce Utility Authority (FPUA) service boundary and is therefore eligible for annexation under Objective 1.11. He stated there is a decrease in density of three (3) residential units in the Future Land Use comparison for the maximum build-out potential. Mr. Suneson stated the application meets the annexation review criteria and all departments have supported the annexation, given the subject property is not allowed to

construct a septic system on the property and is required to connect to water and sewer services provided by FPUA.

Chair Kreisl asked if the current St. Lucie County dual zoning applies to the entire property or is it split in half. Mr. Suneson explained that in the past, the smaller lots were assembled into one large lot with the eastern portion being residential and the A1A portion being more commercial. He suggested that St. Lucie County hasn't updated their maps.

Ms. Clemons asked if commercial parcels are included in the overlay district. Mr. Suneson said yes, and the parcel is subject to the 45-foot height restrictions of the overlay district.

Mr. Johnson asked if the property had to be annexed to get services. Mr. Jonson also asked what other parcels are commercial in the area. Mr. Suneson said there are commercial parcels to the south and all the way up to the Pie Hole restaurant. He noted that further north there is a massing of commercial uses. Mr. Johnson asked if county sites to the south could be annexed if the subject parcel was annexed. He also asked what the city gains from annexing the property. Mr. Suneson said the annexation would allow the owners to use the property. Mr. Johnson had concerns about FDEP cutting off the ability to build because of the mangroves and more non-conforming lots being created. Mr. Suneson addressed Mr. Johnson's concerns about further development. He speculated that road construction through the mangroves would be difficult and expensive. He noted 75 years of platting has been accomplished, and roads have not been built. Mr. Suneson said a less ambitious person may not want to go through the paperwork to construct a home. He highlighted that there are inherent barriers to further development. Mr. Johnson asked if the FPUA services could open up to the south side of Coconut Drive, if the annexation occurs. Mr. Suneson said it could occur right now based on the services that are already in place.

Mr. Widing noted that Pie Hole restaurant is very popular, and the commercial properties already exist in a lot of other spots.

Chair Kreisl said the rationalization of the annexion is getting a congruent plan. He said he shares Mr. Johnson's concerns with development on the island, but the Board does not have any say as to what happens to anything on the property. Chair Kreisl said there is no guarantee that the rules won't change. He said he is not apprehensive about the annexation compared to what could happen with the parcel being in St. Lucie County. He said there is a clear trend towards properties on the west side and there is not much reason to be apprehensive about closing the loop that is already there.

Mr. Acerra, the applicant's representative, answered questions from the Board about how the commercial properties are being joined. He said he thought the lot was zoned for multifamily development.

Mr. Suneson said any development on vacant land will come back to the board as a major site plan.

Mr. Widing noted there has not been any development for so many decades, and he is encouraged that someone wants to develop.

Mr. Johnson asked if more landscaping would need to be added to regulate the loss of the wetlands. Mr. Suneson said that FDEP handles mangrove regulation and mitigation. Mr. Acerra said only properties on A1A have approval from FDEP to be developed. Mr. Johnson noted that if the properties had services and right-of-way, anyone could build what they want.

Mr. Freeman said there are many state permits needed, and the mangroves are well protected. He said the reason nothing has been developed in 75 years is purely environmental impacts. Mr. Freeman noted if the parcels were in the county there would be far more extensive uses and higher impact than what is allowed in the city. The city has much more control over what could be placed on a property. If not by right, a Conditional Use allows the Planning Board to look at the use and regulate. Mr. Freeman concluded that, from the staff's point of view, the city has the benefit of being in greater control of what goes on in the area and the property is part of the city's tax roll for commercial use. He noted the lesser intensity being by right between the city and the county zoning and land use. Mr. Freeman said he does not see the Federal regulations changing, so that the properties could be developed.

Motion was made by Christopher Widing, and seconded by Nichelle Clemons to forward a recommendation of approval of the annexation to the City Commission for Parcel ID:2413-501-0102-000-7.

AYE: Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Nichelle Clemons, Chairman Anton Kreisl

NAY: Clayton Johnson

Passed

- d. **PZANN2025-00007**
Annexation
Acerra Property
Parcel ID: 2413-501-158-000-4

Mr. Suneson stated that the request was for a second voluntary annexation by the owner, Tony Acerra, to extend the territorial limits of the City of Fort Pierce to include one parcel containing 0.21 acres, generally located at or near 2528 South Ocean Drive. He said the increased lot size is still non-conforming. Mr. Suneson stated if annexed, the

property would have a City Future Land Use Designation of RL, Low Density Residential, and a City Zoning of R-1, Single-Family Low-Density Zone. The subject property has a St. Lucie County Future Land Use Designation of RS, Residential Suburban, 2 du/ac, and a St. Lucie County Zoning designation of HIRD, Hutchinson Island Residential District. Mr. Suneson said the subject property is currently vacant and the current taxable value of the property is approximately \$31,726.

He said the parcel meets the statutory eligibility tests and the comprehensive plan policies. Mr. Suneson stated the subject parcel lies within the Fort Pierce Utility Authority (FPUA) service boundary and is therefore eligible for annexation under Objective 1.11. He stated there is no increase or decrease in density in the Future Land Use comparison for the maximum build-out potential. Mr. Suneson noted the lot is non-conforming with regard to the lot area and width and the owner would be allowed to construct a single-family residence. Mr. Suneson stated the application meets the annexation review criteria and all departments have supported the annexation, given the subject property is not allowed to construct a septic system on the property and is required to connect to water and sewer services provided by FPUA.

Chair Kreisl asked if the city is approaching the interpretation of establishing an enclave because the properties to the west are basically not able to be developed, and it is unlikely a right-of-way ever gets built. Mr. Suneson clarified the state statute definition, that an enclave is completely surrounded by city boundaries but not annexed in. He said the annexations would not create an enclave. Mr. Freeman noted a body of water, highway or railroad or canal is taken as being contiguous and not counted.

Motion was made by Nichelle Clemons, and seconded by Christopher Widing to forward a recommendation of approval of the annexation to the City Commission for Parcel ID: 2413-501-158-000-4.

AYE: Christopher Widing, Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Chairman Anton Kreisl

NAY: Clayton Johnson

Passed

e. **PZSITE2025-00025**

Major Site Plan

Lawnwood Hospital Parking Garage

1700 S. 23rd Street

Mr. Gilmore stated the request is for a Major Site Plan to construct a five-floor parking garage with surface parking and associated site improvements. He said the proposed multi-level (5-floor) parking garage will provide a total of 591 parking spaces, covering 50,432 square feet of gross floor area. Mr. Gilmore said it includes four (4) ADA-compliant surface parking spaces and 10 dedicated Electric Vehicle (EV) charging surface parking spaces, aligning with sustainability goals and anticipated future demand. Additionally, he said, the project includes the construction of 109 new surface parking spaces, which will supplement the structured parking and improve access across the medical center campus. The total gross area for the surface parking is 34,866 square feet.

Mr. Gilmore said the existing future land use (FLU) designation is Institutional (INST), and the zoning classification is Planned Development Zone (PD). Mr. Gilmore noted on December 21, 2020, the subject property was approved by the City Commission to be rezoned to a Planned Development with a proposed Phase 1 Site Plan and five (5) sub-phases.

- Phase 1: The construction of a three (3) story Medical Tower
- Phase 2: A 3rd floor shell build out of the Medical Tower with an Emergency Department addition to the northern portion of the hospital
- Phase 3: A 4th Floor addition to the Medical Tower
- Phase 4: A 5th Floor addition to the Medical Tower
- Phase 5: A Parking Structure.

He explained the new parking garage will be constructed primarily of Architectural Precast Concrete and the total garage height will be approximately 58.6 feet. Mr. Gilmore stated the entire garage will be dedicated to staff and contain security gates at the ground floor entries and exits of the garage.

Ms. Clemons asked about the low number of handicapped accessible parking spaces and if the handicapped EV space counts as one of the four (4) handicapped accessible parking spots. Mr. Gilmore explained that the parking garage is for employees only and the electric vehicle handicapped space is in addition to the four (4) other spaces.

Mr. Widing asked the height of the hospital.

Michael Schwartz, applicant representative from Kimley Horn, stated the hospital is 72 feet in height.

Chair Kreisl asked if there would be any off-site parking during development. Mr. Schwartz said they are preparing a temporary use application for the offsite parking.

Motion was made by Ryan Collins, and seconded by Nichelle Clemons to forward a recommendation of approval to the City Commission with the following conditions:

1. A Landscape Maintenance Agreement will be required and approved by the Planning Department prior to the Final Certificate of Occupancy.
2. A Landscape Inspection will be required and approved by the Planning Department prior to the Final Certificate of Occupancy.
3. Prior to the issuance of any site clearing permits, the applicant shall provide a Tree Mitigation Survey and coordinate with the City of Ft. Pierce Arborist for the required mitigation of the City.

AYE: Clayton Johnson, Nichelle Clemons, Ryan Collins, Christopher Widing, Chairman Anton Kreisl
Passed

8. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Freeman said the city has yet to go through the City Commission strategic plan discussion as they are looking for a facilitator through the request for proposal (RFP) process.

In the interim, staff is working on codes and ordinances to get up to speed with what the state was doing last year. Mr. Freeman said this is especially for platting. He said internally, staff is looking at the Planned Development ordinance, to make the Master and Final PD more simple, straightforward and more understandable for the applicants, staff and Board members. The landscaping plan has been delayed slightly to look at what the state is doing with their restrictive ordinances for code changes.

Mr. Freeman said he had a Lincoln Park neighborhood meeting, and they were very encouraged by the movement of the city and city staff to look at the architectural catalog idea. He said the city wants to hold meetings in the community to get feedback and Lincoln Park will be the first area to look at.

Mr. Freeman said there are a lot of applications still in the pipeline that will be coming forward. He said the Causeway Cove application is nearing the final part of review. He received comments from the city's engineering department and the applicant has submitted comments back. Mr. Freeman said he is waiting for the Florida Department of Transportation to finalize their comments. He said it sounds like it is very close for a sign-off from all reviewing agencies. Mr. Freeman said he will report to the Planning Board and City Commission as soon as the application is signed off. He said it will not be reviewed by any boards or City Commission. He said they have reduced the number of residential units, but it is essentially the same.

Chair Kreisl asked about being able to view the Technical Review Committee (TRC) comments and the applicant's responses.

Mr. Freeman said he will put together a packet with the TRC comments for the Board.

10. BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Collins said this may be his last meeting. He said he enjoyed working with the Board, and he thinks everyone has their strengths and things to look out for, and it is good to have different backgrounds and ideas. He said Kev and Chris have done a great job. Mr. Collins said Fort Pierce is going to go through a lot of growing pains, and he doesn't envy some of the decisions the Board will make or come across. Mr. Collins concluded by saying he reviewed projects to see if they were going to benefit the people living in Fort Pierce and if the project is going to benefit the city, not just revenue wise, but by growing the city into something better than it is.

11. ADJOURNMENT