



Meeting Minutes

City Commission Workshop

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

7:00 PM

Commission Chambers

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order on the above date by Mayor Todd Drosky at 7:03 p.m., in the City Commission Chambers, City Hall, Deerfield Beach.

Present:

Commissioner Tom Plaut
Commissioner Ben Preston
Commissioner Daniel Shanetzky
Vice Mayor Michael Hudak
Mayor Todd Drosky

Also Present:

City Manager Rodney Brimlow
City Attorney Anthony Soroka
City Clerk Heather Montemayor

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

There was a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CITY COMMISSION AGENDA

July 15, 2026

MOTION was made by Vice Mayor Hudak, seconded by Commissioner Preston, to approve the agenda as amended to reconsider Item G. Voice Vote:

Yeas: 4 - Commissioner Plaut, Commissioner Preston, Vice Mayor Hudak, and Mayor Drosky
Nays: 1 - Commissioner Shanetzky

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS

1. Discussion regarding potential Amendments to Charter Article XI.

Mayor Drosky stated that, after numerous conversations with residents, he believes there is a shared consensus that the community wants to protect and preserve the barrier island. He explained that preserving the barrier island and encouraging thoughtful reinvestment are not mutually exclusive goals, but rather complementary objectives. He emphasized that the community does not want high-rise development or Deerfield Beach to resemble neighboring coastal communities such as Boca Raton, Pompano Beach, or Fort Lauderdale. At the same time, he noted that certain properties on the barrier island have become obsolete or are in decline and, under the current Charter restrictions, cannot be redeveloped. Mayor Drosky stated that while it is important to address present-day concerns, the Commission also has a responsibility to consider the long-term future of the barrier island. He acknowledged that balancing preservation with responsible redevelopment is challenging but necessary to ensure the island remains vibrant without compromising its unique character. He further stated that it has become evident that many residents oppose the proposed height recommendation. In light of that feedback, he expressed support for retaining the

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

existing height restrictions in the Charter; however, he recommended amending Section 11.01 by removing the floor area ratio (FAR) limitation. He described it as the least intrusive amendment that would allow for appropriate reinvestment while preserving the community's vision for the barrier island. Mayor Drosky stated that the Commission is committed to doing what is in the best interest of Deerfield Beach and must also position the City to address future challenges, including potential impacts associated with the Live Local Act. Lastly, he reiterated his recommendation to amend Section 11.01 by removing the FAR limitation while leaving the existing height restrictions unchanged.

Vice Mayor Hudak agreed with Mayor Drosky and emphasized that the Commission is not making the final decision; rather, the voters are. While he disagreed with the Charter Review Board's recommendation to remove Section 11.01 from the City Charter, he supported allowing the 2026 voters to determine whether the section should be amended. Vice Mayor Hudak explained that the United States Constitution was amended shortly after its adoption. He stated that each generation has its own values, and those values should be respected if the City is to continue to evolve and thrive. He explained that charters and constitutional documents are intended to be living documents that should be reaffirmed and, when appropriate, updated to reflect changing circumstances and community values. He acknowledged that Section 11.01 has successfully protected the barrier island from overdevelopment over the past 24 years but questioned whether it continues to reflect the will of the voters in 2026. As an example, he referenced the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution, noting that although it was approved by a significant majority in 1919, it was repealed in 1933 after public sentiment had changed. He reiterated that he does not support repealing Section 11.01 but believes voters should have the opportunity to determine whether targeted amendments better reflect the community's current values.

Continuing, Vice Mayor Hudak further stated that during his time in office, some barrier island residents opposed the installation of dunes because they believed they would detract from the appearance of the beach and obstruct ocean views from the roadway. As a result, the City initially installed a temporary sand fence. He noted that the recently completed Dune Restoration Project has received positive feedback from beachgoers, many of whom expressed appreciation for the completed project and questioned why it had not been undertaken sooner. He stated that this demonstrates how public perspectives can evolve over time and that responsible, well-planned change should be thoughtfully considered and, if approved by the voters, implemented. Vice Mayor Hudak stated that Deerfield Beach voters have not had the opportunity to directly express their views on Section 11.01 since its adoption 24 years ago. He stated that voters should have the opportunity to determine whether the section continues to reflect their values and to provide guidance to current and future Commissions. As an example, he noted that townhomes are currently being developed north of the pier under the existing RM-25 zoning designation and suggested that some residents may instead prefer portions of the barrier island north of the pier to be rezoned for single-family residential use; however, the Charter's requirement that land use regulations remain consistent with those in effect in 2002 prevents the City from considering such changes. Vice Mayor Hudak reiterated that he supports retaining Section 11.01 in the Charter while allowing the voters to decide whether it should be amended to reflect current community values. He recommended removing Sections 11.01(3), (4), (7), and (8), and amending Sections 11.01(9) and (10) to align with the City's current land use regulations. Lastly, he reiterated that voters have not had the opportunity to directly consider amendments to Section 11.01 for the past 24 years and stated that they deserve the opportunity to have their voices heard and their values reflected in the City Charter.

Commissioner Plaut stated that he does not support high-rise development or transforming Deerfield Beach into communities such as Boca Raton, Pompano Beach, or Fort Lauderdale. He expressed support for the original adoption of Section 11.01, noting that it has protected the barrier island and ensured that any amendments must be approved by the voters; however, he acknowledged that circumstances and community needs evolve over time. Commissioner Plaut commented on changes to FEMA flood elevation requirements over the years, explaining that when the Surfdrider was constructed, the required flood elevation was five feet, whereas, FEMA now requires a 13-foot flood elevation for Deerfield Beach. He expressed support for retaining the existing height restrictions while removing the FAR requirement, noting that the FAR limitation applies only to the barrier island and is not used elsewhere in the City. He also supported removing Sections 11.01(7) and (8), stating that allowing mixed-use development would promote greater walkability. Commissioner Plaut concluded that these proposed amendments are reasonable and should be presented to the voters for their consideration.

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Commissioner Shanetzky stated that he is not opposed to amending Section 11.01; however, he believes the City should first establish a clear, long-term vision for the future of the barrier island before considering any modifications. He emphasized that developing such a vision is essential to ensuring any future changes are thoughtful and well-informed. He acknowledged that the current Charter restrictions may not prevent redevelopment but believes they help moderate the pace and intensity of development. He expressed concern that removing the FAR limitation could result in a significant increase in residential density. Further, he stated that additional time is needed to fully evaluate the potential impacts of any proposed amendments, particularly in light of the barrier island's aging infrastructure. He cited concerns regarding limited access to and from the island, aging utility infrastructure that has contributed to water pressure issues, and the need to carefully consider hurricane evacuation capabilities before permitting additional development. Commissioner Shanetzky commented on the strict development regulations in Key West as an example of a community that has prioritized preservation while managing growth. He reiterated that, although amendments to Section 11.01 could be considered in the future, he does not support making changes at this time and believes additional research and planning are warranted before moving forward.

Commissioner Preston stated that the current Charter provisions intentionally limit development, as they reflect the will of the voters who adopted them. He disagreed with the argument that the existing restrictions discourage redevelopment, stating that developers will continue to pursue projects by finding creative ways to work within the established regulations. Commissioner Preston referenced several Florida coastal communities, including Holmes Beach, Siesta Key, Anna Maria Island, and the Town of Longboat Key, noting that although they experienced significant hurricane impacts, officials from those communities indicated they continue to thrive. He further stated that those communities have height restrictions that are more restrictive than Deerfield Beach's, while also maintaining development standards that guide redevelopment. Commissioner Preston expressed concern that placing amendments to Section 11.01 on the ballot could reduce the ability of barrier island residents to maintain the existing protections because the outcome would ultimately be determined by the citywide electorate. He stated that, in his view, the most effective way to preserve the current height restrictions is to leave Section 11.01 unchanged. With respect to the FAR, Commissioner Preston stated that the issue warrants further discussion and a comprehensive public debate. He noted that if a developer is unable to complete a project under the existing regulations, the developer may present its proposal to the Commission and request appropriate relief, such as a variance, as has occurred in the past. Lastly, he reiterated that opportunities for responsible redevelopment exist and that the City should continue to identify appropriate ways to accommodate such development while preserving the community's character.

Commissioner Shanetzky commented on the proposed property tax amendment that is expected to appear on the ballot, expressing concern that its adoption could have a significant financial impact on the City. He stated that the amendment could reduce City revenues by approximately 18%, resulting in the loss of funds. He further expressed concern that, if approved, the City would have less local control over its finances and could be required to seek assistance from the State to address infrastructure-related emergencies. Commissioner Shanetzky also noted that the November 2026 ballot will include several significant statewide and federal races, including those for Governor, United States Senator, and members of Congress. Lastly, he reiterated that any proposed amendments to Section 11.01 not be placed on the November 2026 ballot.

It was the consensus to remove Sections 11.01(3), (4), (7), and (8), and amending Sections 11.01(9) and (10) to align with the City's current land use regulations.

Mayor Drosky stated that he does not support removing Section 11.02 from the City Charter but believes it should be amended to better reflect the current needs and future vision of Deerfield Beach. Thereafter, he expressed his support for the recommendations presented by Vice Mayor Hudak during the July 6th workshop.

Vice Mayor Hudak stated that he does not support the Charter Review Board's recommendation to remove Section 11.02 from the City Charter; however, he expressed support for allowing the 2026 voters to determine whether the section should be amended. Vice Mayor Hudak stated that, because of its location, the Main Beach Parking Lot primarily serves beachgoers rather than patrons of nearby businesses. As such, he reiterated that he does not believe a parking garage is necessary at that location. He further stated that the voters should have the opportunity to determine whether Section 11.02 continues to reflect the

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

community's values or whether, after 24 years, it should be amended to reflect changing circumstances. To that end, he recommended removing the references to the 2002 land use regulations in Section 11.02(a)(2) and replacing them with references to the City's current land use regulations. He also recommended removing Section 11.02(a)(3) to allow accommodations for compact vehicles, golf carts, motorcycles, and personal scooters. Additionally, he recommended removing Sections 11.02(a)(5) and (7), stating that those provisions unnecessarily restrict the types of events that may be held on the property.

Commissioner Shanetzky stated that the only amendment he supports to Section 11.02 is a modification to Section 11.02(a)(5) to increase the number of days the property may be used for commercial purposes beyond the current limit of fifteen (15) days per year to either 30 or 45 annually. Thereafter, he commented on his experience in Riviera Beach.

Commissioner Plaut expressed support for the recommendations presented by Vice Mayor Hudak. During his research, he initially interpreted Section 11.02(a)(5) as relating to commercial development rather than commercial use, but staff clarified that the provision governs commercial use of the property and does not pertain to commercial development.

G. Removal of Referendum Election Requirement for the Sale, Transfer, or Lease of City-Owned Property [CRB Recommended - Vote: 5-0]

The Charter requires voter approval at a referendum election in order for the City to sell, gift, trade, transfer or lease all or a portion of, or an interest in, city-owned real property with a fair market value in excess of \$750,000.00, with limited exceptions for a pier restaurant lease or contracts for pier and beach amenity rental operations. Shall the Charter be amended to remove this referendum election approval requirement from the Charter?

Mayor Drosky stated that Section 7.09 governs not only the sale and transfer of City-owned property, but also the lease of City-owned property. He explained that this distinction is particularly important because the Commission agrees that the City's fire stations require significant upgrades, with estimated costs ranging from \$75 million to \$100 million. Mayor Drosky stated that the City does not have the financial resources to fund these improvements outright and would likely need to pursue either a bond or a public-private partnership (P3). He explained that a bond would require voter approval and would be repaid by taxpayers over time, including interest costs; however, a P3 could allow a private developer to finance and construct the new fire stations at no direct cost to taxpayers. He noted that public-private partnerships were not commonly utilized when Section 7.09 was adopted. Mayor Drosky expressed concern that, because Section 7.09 requires voter approval for the lease of city-owned property, a P3 involving a lease would also require a referendum. He questioned whether a developer would be willing to delay a project of that magnitude while awaiting the outcome of a referendum. He stated that the current Charter provision may unnecessarily limit the City's ability to pursue cost-effective financing options and provide the greatest value to taxpayers. Lastly, he encouraged his colleagues to reconsider the provision and allow the voters to determine whether Section 7.09 should remain in its current form.

Commissioner Shanetzky stated that developers are generally willing to wait for opportunities to develop property because developable land, particularly accessible land in Deerfield Beach, is limited. Thereafter, he spoke in opposition to eliminating Section 7.09.

Commissioner Plaut stated that the \$750,000 threshold established in Section 7.09 is equivalent to approximately \$1.5 million today; however, given the significant increase in real estate values, he believes the threshold would need to be adjusted even higher to reflect current market conditions. Commissioner Plaut expressed opposition to relying on bonds as a primary funding mechanism, noting that bond obligations ultimately place the financial burden on taxpayers and require repayment over an extended period. He stated that public-private partnerships may provide a more effective approach when the City is undertaking major capital projects, such as the construction of new fire stations or other infrastructure improvements. Lastly, he spoke in support of placing the Charter Review Board's recommendation on the ballot for voter consideration.

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Vice Mayor Hudak stated that he believes Section 7.09 should remain in the City Charter, which is why he previously recommended increasing the threshold to \$1.5 million to reflect current 2026 values; however, he reiterated his strong support for the redevelopment of the City's fire stations, noting that the existing facilities are outdated and require significant investment. Vice Mayor Hudak acknowledged that the City does not currently have \$100 million available to fully fund the reconstruction of the fire stations and stated that he understands the need to consider alternative funding mechanism; therefore, he expressed support for placing the recommendation on the ballot to allow the voters to determine whether Section 7.09 should be amended.

Mayor Drosky stated that the Tam O'Shanter property, which has remained vacant for several years, represents another potential opportunity for a public-private partnership.

Commissioner Plaut stated that any proposed changes or public-private partnerships would be undertaken with full public involvement, ensuring the community is engaged throughout every stage of the process.

Commissioner Shanetzky stated that he supports public-private partnerships but stated that other city-owned properties, such as the portion of the Tam O'Shanter property that was converted into a cemetery, also be considered. He further expressed his support for retaining Section 7.09 in the Charter and indicated he would support increasing the threshold to \$1.5 million.

Commissioner Preston agreed with Mayor Drosky's position, acknowledging that while public-private partnerships have disadvantages, including long-term financing commitments and complex contractual arrangements, the benefits outweigh those challenges because the City does not have the necessary working capital to fund such projects independently. Thereafter, he expressed his support for placing the proposed Charter language on the ballot.

Mayor Drosky opened the workshop for public input.

Tom Connick, 441 E. Hillsboro Boulevard, Deerfield Beach, spoke in opposition to removing or amending Article XI.

April Bolowich, 899 NE 4th Street, Deerfield Beach, spoke in opposition to placing the proposed referendums on the November ballot and to changing the City's municipal election date from March to November.

Howard Haimowitz, 536 NE 20th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, spoke in support of retaining Section 11.02 but amending it to allow for the restriping of parking spaces to maximize their use. He stated that it is appropriate to adapt to changing times by providing greater flexibility to accommodate community events such as food truck nights and green markets.

Joy Sporleder, 1360 SE 4th Court, Deerfield Beach, stated that residents want the barrier island to retain its quaint character. She expressed support for developing a master plan to ensure that any future proposals reflect the desires and priorities of the community. Lastly, she stated that she feels the City is gradually chipping away at the Charter provisions, which she does not support.

Sofia Manolesco, 536 NE 20th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, stated that the Charter provisions are intended to protect the interests of residents; however, she expressed concern that they do not adequately protect the north side of the beach. She further stated that while changes may be appropriate, they should be carefully considered and tailored to the area to ensure its character and interests are preserved.

Elinda Kiss, 1627 Riverview Road, Deerfield Beach, spoke in opposition to amending Article XI.

Ellyce Miller-Plotkin, 1998 NE 7th Street, Deerfield Beach, requested that the proposed Charter amendments be placed on the March ballot rather than the November ballot. She also expressed opposition to hosting additional events in the main beach parking lot and stated that additional parking should have been provided in lieu of the Deerfield Beach Nature Center.

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

Claude Dubois, 2096 NE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, representing the Wyndham Deerfield Resort, commented on the impact of business closures and emphasized the importance of embracing change to support and sustain local businesses.

Jerry West, 514 NE 8th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, urged the Commission to listen and carefully consider the concerns expressed by residents.

Larry Koch, 1105 Little Harbor Drive, Deerfield Beach, commented on the approval process for the United States Constitution and emphasized that any proposed change to the City Charter should be carefully considered, thoroughly evaluated, and thoughtfully deliberated.

Bob DiChristopher, 517 NE 6th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, stated that public-private partnerships existed at the time the current Charter provisions were adopted. He further expressed concern that the zoning code and map cannot be solely relied upon, as he believes they serve only as guidelines rather than firm requirements.

Todd Moll, 1226 SE 13th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, stated that he does not believe the City Commission has the authority to grant variances to Charter provisions. Further, he said the barrier island has experienced limited growth and development and that modest changes may be necessary to encourage revitalization. He stated that choosing not to make a decision is, in itself, a decision, and that further delays only postpone addressing issues that have remained unresolved for more than 24 years. Lastly, he requested that the Commission allow the voters in 2026 to determine the future direction of the City, noting that the voters who approved the current provisions 24 years ago do not necessarily represent the current population and perspectives of Deerfield Beach.

Dan Herz, 330 SE 19th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, commented on moving the election from March to November. Further, he spoke in opposition to removing Section 7.09 from the City Charter.

Christina DiChristopher, 517 NE 6th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, stated that voter referendums are one of the primary ways residents can directly determine the future of their community; however, she expressed concern that several of the proposed amendments appear to reduce opportunities for voter involvement in the decision-making process. She further raised concerns regarding the proposed language for Section 11.01 and expressed opposition to removing the FAR, stating that it is one of the most important protections currently in place.

Rita Masi, 349 NE 19th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, stated that many new residents support the current Charter provisions. She further expressed concern that developers are already acquiring properties throughout Deerfield Beach and urged the Commission to postpone consideration of these issues until next year.

Joe Chancy, 4250 NE 4th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, requested that, regardless of the outcome, the Commission consider how significantly the City has grown since 2004. He further asked that the Commission allow the voters in 2026 to determine the future direction of the City, noting that a new generation of residents now calls Deerfield Beach home.

Mychal Estrada, 1431 SW 6th Way, Deerfield Beach, thanked the Commission for the discussion and commentary as he appreciated hearing the ideas, possibilities, and long-term vision for the City. He acknowledged that the City must continue to evolve but emphasized the importance of determining the appropriate path forward. He stated that before any changes are made, the City must establish ideas, a clear vision, and a plan to successfully implement that vision. Lastly, he expressed the importance of honoring those who helped build the community and working collaboratively to develop a shared vision before moving forward with a vote.

Bill Ganz, 19 NW 45th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, commented on the importance of understanding the history and circumstances behind past decisions. He referenced the discussion regarding the Tam O'Shanter property, noting that the land was privately owned in 2010 and that the City was approached with a proposal to exchange development rights for the donation of approximately 50 acres to the City. He stated that, after extensive public discussion, residents overwhelmingly supported accepting the property,

CITY COMMISSION BUSINESS - CONTINUED

with the cemetery use ultimately being a preference expressed by the community. Lastly, he emphasized the importance of considering the context and history behind decisions before evaluating their outcomes.

Pam Militello, 716 Emerald Way West, Deerfield Beach, commented on the City's development dashboard and noted that several proposed development projects are consistent with and comply with the current Charter provisions. Lastly, she asked that Article XI remain unchanged.

Sandra Jackson, 386 SW 35th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, requested clarification regarding the process for establishing public-private partnerships. She further questioned why the City could not sell the 50 acres and utilize the proceeds to fund repairs to the fire stations.

Roger Freitag, 418 SE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, commented on changes to flood elevations and stated that they should be considered in future planning discussions. He further referenced the presentation provided by the Urban Land Institute and questioned why other city-owned properties could not be considered for development. Lastly, he requested that Section 11.01 remain unchanged and stated that, if the City acquires additional property for development purposes, those properties should be properly maintained.

Katy Freitag, 418 SE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, requested that a master plan be developed before any changes are made to the Charter. She further stated that providing developers with opportunities to change zoning designations may result in those changes being pursued, whereas, maintaining the current commercial zoning designation, rather than allowing mixed-use development, would provide greater protection from potential impacts under the Live Local Act.

John Slattery, 1455 SE 5th Place, Deerfield Beach, questioned why the proposed referendums are being placed on the November ballot rather than the March ballot, stating that the timing has created unnecessary stress and confusion. He requested that the Commission slow the process and place the items on the March election ballot to allow for the additional focus and consideration they deserve.

Jon Ounjian, 1938 NE 6th Street, Deerfield Beach, stated that residents should have the opportunity to vote on these matters, noting that decisions made 25 years ago may not reflect the needs and perspectives of the community today. He further expressed support for moving the City's elections to November, stating that the change would likely result in greater voter turnout.

Commissioner Preston thanked residents for attending and sharing their opinions, emphasizing the importance of transparency and clear communication from the dais. He reiterated that he does not support moving municipal elections to November and stated that placing matters on the ballot allows residents the opportunity to decide. He addressed concerns that the Commission is "chipping away" at the Charter, stating that the Commission is having a discussion and evaluating potential changes. He emphasized the importance of listening to residents and stated that the Commission's goal is to make decisions in the best interest of the City.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no additional business to discuss.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Plaut, seconded by Commissioner Preston, to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. Voice Vote:

Yeas: 5 - Commissioner Plaut, Commissioner Preston, Commissioner Shanetzky, Vice Mayor Hudak, and Mayor Drosky

Nays: 0

CITY OF DEERFIELD BEACH

TODD DROSKY, MAYOR

Heather Montemayor, CMC, City Clerk