



City of Venice

401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
www.venicegov.com

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

9:00 AM

Community Hall Room 165

[25-0114](#)

Instructions on How to Watch and/or Participate in the Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pachota called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Nick Pachota, Ms. Joan Farrell, Vice Mayor Jim Boldt, Mrs. Rachel Frank, Mr. Ron Smith, Mr. Rick Howard and Mr. Kevin Engelke

ALSO PRESENT

City Attorney Kelly Fernandez, City Clerk Kelly Michaels, City Manager Ed Lavallee, Assistant City Manager James Clinch, Deputy City Clerk Toni Cone, and for certain items on the agenda: Police Chief Andy Leisenring, Police Captain Eric Hill, Police Captain Louis White, Planning and Zoning Director Roger Clark, Senior Planner Nicole Tremblay, Assistant City Engineer Jon Kramer, Stormwater Engineer Steve Behrens and Historical Resources Manager Harry Klinkhamer.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Clerk Michaels offered the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Howard.

I. RECOGNITION

Presentation of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) plaque

City Manager Lavallee and Mayor Pachota presented this recognition to CRS Coordinator Christina Rimes.

[25-0094](#)

Swearing in: Police Officers Courtney Chaco, Courtney Brady, and Milton Davis

This item was postponed to the April 8, 2025 Council meeting.

[25-0115](#)

Proclaim the Month of April 2025 as "Child Abuse Prevention Month", Presented to Captain Eric Hill and Representative from the Child

Protection Center

Mayor Pachota presented this proclamation to Police Chief Andy Leisenring and Captain Eric Hill.

Recess was taken from 9:13 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

II. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION will be limited to one hour.

Tim Pederson, 502 Everglades Drive, spoke on hurricanes, Flamingo Ditch, drainage, flooding, and mitigation.

Beat Lehman, 608 Gardenia Drive, spoke on Flamingo Ditch, stormwater drainage infrastructure, and mitigation.

Chris Derbak, 626 Hibiscus Drive, spoke on flooding, hurricanes, drainage infrastructure, and consultants.

Joan Iocono, 1132 Bird Bay Way, spoke on behalf of Venice Thrives, and against height exceptions over 35 feet.

Kelly Caldwell, 3320 Hardee Drive, spoke on airport tenants, hangar doors, and repairing hangars.

Richard Huttner, 900 Cooper Street, spoke against the proposed height exception for Ordinance No. 2025-08.

Jack Thacker, address not disclosed, spoke on Flamingo Ditch, flooding, outfalls, stormwater damage, and the consultant.

Steve Ulrey, 960 Cooper Street, spoke against the height exception for Ordinance No. 2025-08.

Peggy Parys, 589 Flamingo Drive, spoke on Flamingo Ditch, flood mitigation, and the consultant.

Jeanette Will, 940 Cooper Street, spoke against the height exception for Ordinance No. 2025-08, expressed concerns for increased traffic, impact of development, and recommended maintaining the 35 foot height limit.

Richard Cushing, 876 Golden Beach Boulevard, spoke on airport noise mitigation, and requested airport master plan include the neighbors involvement, and against the height exception.

Ed Martin, 409 Everglades Drive, spoke against the height exception and flood concerns, and expressed concerns about flooding and mitigation.

Bruce Caldwell, 613 Gardenia Drive, spoke on Flamingo Ditch flooding,

thanked Rotary and FEMA for their assistance after the storms, flood mitigation, costs, securing funding for drainage, and a search committee for city manager.

Jimmy Clifford, 908 Villas Drive, spoke on Flamingo Ditch, beach renourishment, and flooding.

Recess was taken from 10:26 a.m. to 10:36 a.m.

III. CONSENT SECTION:

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Boldt, seconded by Mr. Howard, to approve items in the Consent Section. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

CITY CLERK

[25-0116](#)

Minutes of the February 25, 2025 Regular Meeting

These minutes were approved in the Consent Section.

IV. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT

There were none.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCES - FIRST READING

[ORD. NO.](#)
[2025-08](#)

An Ordinance of the City of Venice, Florida, Amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 87, Land Development Code, by Amending Table 2.3.6., Airport Avenue Development Standards, Pursuant to Text Amendment Petition No. 24-32AM, by Allowing a Height Exception up to 85 Feet for Parcels Located in the Airport Avenue Zoning District East of Avenida Del Circo, South and West of Ringling Drive, and North of Base Avenue; Providing for Repeal of All Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date

Mayor Pachota opened the public hearing.

Clerk Michaels read the ordinance by title only.

Written communications were provided in advance.

Senior Planner Nicole Tremblay presented on the project description, the strikethrough underline proposal, consistency with the comprehensive plan, compliance with the land development code, decision criteria, and conclusions and findings of fact.

Attorney Jeff Boone, Agent for Applicant, provided a presentation to

include modification to reduce the height from 85 feet to 79 feet, noting this allows for a request to be made; it does not secure the right for the future, requires a binding master plan, applies to one piece of property, surrounding properties, map of area, revised proposal, revised maximum that can be requested subject to approval, addressed concerns about facts and not setting a precedent, need for redevelopment, requested approval of the text amendment, and answered Council questions regarding the need for the height of 79 feet, rooftop amenities, airport standards and master plan, and responded there is not a proposed development at this time, but the height request would not be inconsistent with the airport master plan.

Discussion took place on whether there is a need for the 79 feet height, the possibility of amending it, and whether it is impacted by the Live Local text.

Thomas Tasca 960 Cooper Street, spoke against the height exception, and noted the preschool across the street and increased traffic, and recommended not deviating from the comprehensive plan and Land Development Regulations (LDRs).

Dennis Johnson, 177 Field Avenue East, spoke on height concerns, and the John Nolen plan.

Valerie Waters, 320 Gulf Drive, spoke against a height exception.

Larry Lubber, 405 Rio Terra, spoke against the building height, building projects, and expressed traffic concerns.

Carrie Lubber, 405 Rio Terra, spoke against the height exceptions, and referenced campaign literature of certain Council Members.

Nancy Lisco, 508 Everglades, spoke against the height exception, and expressed concerns about traffic, density, infrastructure, airport noise, and traffic patterns.

Nancy Deforge, 332 Laurel Hollow Drive, spoke against the height exception, encouraging Council to follow the Comprehensive Plan maintaining the 35 feet height limit.

Mayor Pachota closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Farrell, that Ordinance No. 2025-08 be denied.

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

Discussion took place regarding the height exception, controlling building

heights, resident concerns, the LDRs limiting exceptions to 57 feet, need for redevelopment, appropriate development, and compatibility.

The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

Recess was taken from 11:47 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

ORD. NO.
2025-11

An Ordinance of the City of Venice, Florida, Amending the 2017-2027 City of Venice Comprehensive Plan Pursuant to Petition No. 24-51CP by Amending Strategy LU 1.2.9.C, Corridor (MUC), to Clarify Permitted Ownership Forms in the Mixed Use Corridor Future Land Use Designation; Providing for Repeal of All Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date

Mayor Pachota opened the public hearing.

Clerk Michaels read the ordinance by title only.

There was a brief recess to address technology issues.

Senior Planner Tremblay presented on the project description, comprehensive text amendment, compliance with the Land Development Code, conclusions and findings of fact, and answered Council question regarding the comprehensive plan amendment, and zoning.

Marty Black, Agent for Applicant, presented inconsistencies in the language of the Comprehensive Plan, Strategy LU 1.2.9.c - Corridor (MUC).

Discussion took place on the text amendment, the Mixed Use Corridor, and home ownership.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Pachota closed the hearing.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Boldt, seconded by Mrs. Frank, that Ordinance No. 2025-11 be approved on first reading and transmitted to the Florida Department of Commerce for review. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Pachota, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

No: 2 - Ms. Farrell and Mr. Smith

ORD. NO.
2025-12

An Ordinance of the City of Venice, Florida, Providing for Placement of the Structure Known as the Venice Beach Pavilion Located at 101 The Esplanade South on The Local Register of Historical Resources Pursuant

to Chapter 87, Historic and Architectural Preservation, Section 7.7, Local Register and Landmarks, of the City of Venice Code of Ordinances; Providing for Conflicts; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date

Mayor Pachota opened the public hearing.

Clerk Michaels read the ordinance by title only.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Pachota closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mr. Howard, seconded by Mr. Engelke, that Ordinance No. 2025-12 be approved on first reading and scheduled for final reading.

Discussion took place regarding the impressive roof, pictures, and the recommendation of a plaque.

The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. ORDINANCES

[ORD. NO. 2025-13](#)

An Ordinance of the City of Venice, Florida, Amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 46, Parks and Recreation, Article V, Camping and Storage of Personal Property on Public Property, By Amending Section 46-201, Definitions, and Section 46-202, Camping Prohibited; Exceptions; Providing for Repeal of All Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; Providing for Severability; and Providing an Effective Date

Mayor Pachota opened the public hearing.

Clerk Michaels read the ordinance by title only.

City Attorney Fernandez commented on the reason for the ordinance and compliance with state law.

Captain Louis White answered Council questions regarding Police Officer duties.

City Attorney Fernandez answered Council question regarding Police Officer duties, state law was made more restrictive, and items being in operating procedures.

City Manager Lavalley commented on the agreement with the Salvation

Army.

Captain White responded to a Council question about what residents should do if they see someone who may be camping and recommended calling the non-emergency line.

Discussion continued regarding the Venice Police Department accomplishments, and a recommendation of a summit for groups working on the homeless situation.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Boldt, seconded by Mr. Engelke, that Ordinance No. 2025-13 be approved on first reading and scheduled for final reading. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 6 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

No: 1 - Mr. Smith

B. RESOLUTIONS

[RES. NO. 2025-05](#)

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Venice, Florida, Amending Resolution No. 2021-31 to Adopt a Revised Use of Logo Policy; and Providing an Effective Date

Clerk Michaels read the resolution by title only.

There was no public comment.

Discussion took place about having more than one logo and the logo city entrances.

A motion was made by Mayor Pachota, seconded by Vice Mayor Boldt, that Resolution No. 2025-05 be approved and adopted. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Pachota, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

No: 2 - Ms. Farrell and Mr. Smith

Recess was taken from 2:17 p.m. until 2:25 p.m.

C. PRESENTATION WITH ACTION

[25-0117](#)

Planning & Zoning Director Roger Clark and Josh Frank, Consultant, Dover, Kohl & Partners: Venice Seaboard Master Plan

Josh Frank, Consultant with Dover, Kohl & Partners presented on initial impressions, the charrette process, the plan changing over time and being a long-term draft plan, the proposed waterfront area, and answered Council

questions regarding the urban forest.

Planning and Zoning Director Roger Clark commented on the future of the partnership, the first phase, and street design.

Discussion took place about the charrette, first steps, working on expanding the Venice Housing Authority in that area, pocket parks, Venice Area Beautification, Inc. (VABI), the Urban Forest, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation involvement, public involvement, need for a plan to get funding, focusing on City-owned property first, the Urban Forest, and historic downtown Venice.

Phillip Ellis, address not provided, spoke regarding VABI, the Urban Forest, and a Sarasota County Charette from 1993.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Vice Mayor Boldt, to adopt the Seaboard Master Plan. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

There was consensus to continue the meeting past 5:00 p.m.

D. PRESENTATION

[25-0118](#)

Thomas Pierro, PE, D.CE, Senior Project Manager & Principal Engineer, Michelle R. Pfeiffer, PE, Project Manager & Senior Coastal Engineer, and Capt. Joseph Morrow, PE, Senior Coastal Engineer, Coastal Protection Engineering (CPE): Flamingo Ditch Feasibility Study Update

Stormwater Engineer Steve Behrens provided a recent history of the storms in Venice, flooding in the Flamingo Ditch area, and introduced the consulting firm Coastal Protection Engineering (CPE).

Tom Pierro, PE, DCE, presented a progress update of the Flamingo Ditch Feasibility Study, including the study overview, model and data review, public comment summary, preliminary findings, and next steps.

Captain Joe Morrow, PE, commented on the Interconnected Pond and Channel Routing (ICPR) Model development, updates, and refinements.

Michelle Pfeiffer, PE, spoke on the public comment period, and citizens' concerns.

Mr. Pierro summarized the preliminary findings, flooding, two-fold challenge, stormwater drainage, storm surge inundation, potential concepts to improve the system, long-term plan to improve drainage, short-term actions with potential strategies, and next steps.

Discussion took place on previous drainage structure, funding, eligibility for grants, backflow devices, storm surge, short-term options, and long-term solutions.

Mayor Pachota summarized the City will receive a more definitive report this summer, CPE will work with City staff on short-term solutions before coming back with long-term solutions, and will work with staff on grant opportunities.

Mr. Pierro noted the summary was correct and emphasized that in terms of seeing construction, in addition to ownership issues, funding issues, and grant issues, the regulatory component will be a major factor and permitting issues with the various agencies can take years.

Discussion continued on urgency, importance of getting solutions right, Elevate Florida and FEMA programs, and construction easements.

City Manager Lavallee commented on the grant process, and asked the consultant if they could work within this scope.

Mr. Pierro stated they could assist with the narrative for grants if the City meets eligibility components and answered Council questions regarding whether they have encountered private ownership of a drainage system before, and whether there were other solutions beyond Flamingo Ditch to address the drainage issues of the Golden Beach area. He noted the situation was unusual, and is similar to New Orleans physically due to the bowl-like terrain, and whatever solutions are implemented it must be ensured they are not an obstacle for future planning.

[25-0119](#)

Assistant City Engineer Jon Kramer: Bayshore/Laguna Drive Safety Alternatives Study Update

Assistant City Engineer Jon Kramer provided an update on the Bayshore/Laguna Drive Safety Alternatives Study, and Council questions regarding the contract.

Jim Leftwich, 329 Bayshore Drive, spoke on the proposed sidewalk, and speeding concerns.

[25-0120](#)

Presentation by Steve Carr, Central Venice Coalition Report (Mr. Howard)

This presentation was postponed to the April 22, 2025.

E. COUNCIL ACTION/DISCUSSION

[25-0121](#)

Agenda for the Joint Meeting of the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners and the Venice City Council (City Manager Lavallee)

City Manager Lavallee introduced the agenda for the joint meeting, reviewed interlocal agreement, parking on Harbor Drive, transit system, and limited anchorage system,

Discussion took place about other possible topics for the future, including Seaboard Master Plan, hurricane shelter, homeless summit, co-management of certain creeks, future joint meetings, and capital projects.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Boldt, seconded by Mr. Howard, to approve the agenda for the joint meeting of the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners and the Venice City Council. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

[25-0122](#)

Appoint Member to the Historic and Architectural Preservation Board to Complete the Unexpired Term of Bruce Weaver from March 14, 2025 to August 31, 2027

A motion was made by Mayor Pachota, seconded by Mr. Howard, to appoint Greg Watkins to the Historic and Architectural Preservation Board to complete the unexpired term of Bruce Weaver from March 14, 2025 to August 31, 2027. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 7 - Mayor Pachota, Ms. Farrell, Vice Mayor Boldt, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Smith, Mr. Howard and Mr. Engelke

VII. CHARTER OFFICER REPORTS

City Attorney

City Attorney Fernandez stated she was following various bills and would report back on those that pass at the end of the legislative session.

City Clerk

Clerk Michaels reminded Council there was not a meeting on March 25th, meetings would be back in the Council Chambers starting April 8th, and the ribbon cutting for Council Chambers is scheduled for April 2nd.

City Manager

VIII. COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Frank

Council Member Smith

Mr. Smith commended Ms. Farrell on the February 28th mini mobile home show at Harbor Lights.

Council Member Farrell***Council Member Engelke******Council Member Howard***

Mr. Howard indicated he attended Coastal Advisory Council, and commented on West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) reviews, anchorage limitations, and Florida League of Cities (FLC) Leadership conference.

Vice Mayor Boldt***Mayor Pachota***

Mayor Pachota reported on Washington D.C. meetings with legislators.

IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mayor - City of Venice

City Clerk