

ST. JOHNS COUNTY
Planning & Zoning Agency
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
County Auditorium
500 San Sebastian View

Thursday, November 06, 2025, 1:30:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Meagan Perkins, District 4, Chair
Dr. Richard A. Hilsenbeck, District 3, Vice-Chair
Gregory Matovina, District 1
Judy Spiegel, District 3
Chuck Labanowski, District 2
Robert Olson, District 5

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Henry F. Green, District 5

STAFF PRESENT:

Jacob Smith, Planning Division Manager
Lex Taylor III. Deputy County Attorney
Marie Colee, Assistant Program Manager
Jennifer Gutt, Planning Coordinator

- Call meeting to order at 1.30pm
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Reading of the Public Notice Statement by Dr. Hilsenbeck
- Public Comments: None

Agency moved item number 5 to item number 1 due to third party consultant time constraints.

AGENCY ITEMS

5. **MINMOD 2025-03 St. Johns Parkway Antenna Tower (aka TOWER 2025-02).** Request for Minor Modification to the Durbin Crossing PUD (Ord. 2004-07, as amended) to allow for the construction of a 170-foot Monopole Antenna Tower, specifically located at 2050 Saint Johns Parkway.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Wester presented details pertaining to the Minor Modification request. Explained that Towers are an allowed use on the Property, known as “Cell Tower/Equipment Site A” in the PUD, per MDP 2017-14. The proposed tower is within 250 feet of OR Zoned lands, which includes the St. Johns Parkway ROW that abuts the Property. As a result of the OR Zoning proximity, the proposed tower on the approved “Cell Tower/Equipment Site A” will be reviewed as a MINMOD.

Agency clarification and discussion regarding the drainage in the area which has a natural drainage system in place and the applicant will incorporate into existing system.

Motion to approve by Mr. Matovina seconded by Mr. Olson (Motion Passes 6/0; Absent: Mr. Green) MINMOD 2025-03 St. Johns Parkway Antenna Tower based upon eleven (11) findings of fact and subject to ten (10) conditions, as provided within the Staff Report.

1. **SUPMAJ 2025-17 Commanders Shellfish Camp 4COP.** Request for a Special Use Permit, pursuant to Section 2.03.02 of the Land Development Code, to allow for an increase in series for the on-site sale and consumption of Alcoholic Beverages under the State of Florida from Type 2COP/SFS to 4COP/SFS beverage license in connection with an existing restaurant, located within Commercial Highway Tourist (CHT) zoning, specifically located at 7579 A1A South.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Sullivan presented details pertaining to the Special Use Permit request.

No Agency discussion.

Public Comment: None

Motion to approve by Mr. Labanowski, seconded by Dr. Hilsenbeck (Motion Passes 6/0; Absent: Mr. Green) SUPMAJ 2025-17 Commanders Shellfish Camp, based upon eight (8) findings of fact and eleven (11) conditions as provided in the Staff Report.

2. **ZVAR 2025-12 6951 Charles Street.** ZVAR 2025-12 6951 Charles Street, request for a Zoning Variance to Section 6.01.03.E.3 of the Land Development Code to allow for a reduced second Front Yard setback of three (3) feet in lieu of the required 15 feet for a Corner Lot located in Residential, Single Family (RS-2) zoning to accommodate construction of a detached garage, and Section 2.02.04.B.12 of the Land Development Code to allow for a wall height of eight (8) feet in lieu of the six (6) foot requirement, specifically located at 6951 Charles Street.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Nick Severt presented details pertaining to the Zoning Variance request. Provided letters of support from the neighbors residing either side of the property.

Agency discussion and clarification with the applicant occurred regarding site plans which illustrate the less desirable options that meet the setbacks. Discussion and questions about the number of residences being built in Charles Street, and the number of cars and traffic flow were queried by the Agency. Agency questioned hardship regarding access points and drainage. Discussion occurred regarding the eight-foot wall and the grade change with the fill. Discussion regarding reducing the wall to six feet versus the eight-foot wall. Clarification was requested regarding impervious surface ratio and the possibility of being over the allotted percentage.

Public Comment

- Patrick Hamilton: Opposition. Considered the design is not consistent with the other homes in the street as the garage appears too big. It is not a hardship.

- Bill Hamilton: Opposition. Concerned about road safety issues.
- Peggy Cook: Opposition. Would appreciate the builder following the rules. Wall is too high on her side at eight feet tall.
- Catey Smith: Opposition. Traffic issues from Charles Street.
- Kathleen Belleville: Opposition. Traffic issues have already occurred getting in and out of Charles Street.
- Dylan Handcock: Works with the building company. Explained points of reasoning with regard to the hardship. That the lot is non-conforming and the building is only 27 feet in width. The building will discharge over 70 percent of water flow into the Matanzas River. They are working with neighbors. Explained they are within their right to have the driveway onto Charles Street as that is the address, so they are moving the garage onto the secondary setback because Gracie Street neighbors would be affected. The Gracie Street neighbors have written letters of support.

Additional discussion from applicants occurred discussing that the variance is just for the garage. Applicant stated they have the right to have access from Charles Street.

Clarification was requested by the Agency regarding the location of the garage, along with the drainage and the filling, and how moving the garage would impact those things.

Agency members asked questions to try to determine a hardship and asked Staff if the site plan had been approved. Staff confirmed a site plan had only been approved for the front home. The builder does not have an approved site plan that includes the garage plans.

The applicant and builder advised that their hardship is the drainage with this location and the driveway access with the other neighbors located on Gracie Street as opposed to Charles Street.

Agency asked Staff about the space above the garage and if it was planned to be office space because it can't be an accessory dwelling unit or if it could be converted to a rentable apartment in the future.

Discussion regarding the dimensions of the garage and its uses occurred.

Agency requested confirmation of dimensions to the garage. The set back on the South side was confirmed by Staff as being 8 feet. Agency determined the garage could sit in the middle of the lot. Referenced the photo showing the electric poles at the entrance to Gracie Street. Asked what is keeping the applicant from placing the pole lines underground and improving the Gracie Lane entrance to make it have easier access.

Agency asked the applicant if they are willing to reduce the wall to 6 feet. Applicant agreed that it was possible. Applicant confirmed also that the impervious surface ratio would be built to code.

Agency queried why the need for an additional 4 to 6 feet to garage two cars. Applicant explained that the extra 4 to 6 feet was for a water heater and a utility sink and the extra depth allows for storage to the left and right of the garage.

DENY: Motion to deny by Mr. Olson, seconded by Mr. Labanowski (Motion passes 5/1; Dissent: Ms. Spiegel, Absent: Mr. Green) ZVAR 2025-12 6951 Charles Street based on four (4) findings of fact, as provided in the Staff Report.

3. **ZVAR 2025-25 Hansel Garage.** Request for a Zoning Variance to Section 2.02.04.B.4 of the Land Development Code to allow for the construction of a detached accessory garage for personal use & storage that will be larger in size and taller in eave height than the existing Main Use Structure, located specifically at 8875 A1A S.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Brian Amerson presented details pertaining to the Zoning Variance request. Explained the current hardship is no garage on the property. The existing home is an older single-story family home surrounded by larger multistorey homes. Mr. Jeff Hansel has no place to store his vehicles or yard equipment. Current existing home is well below the FEMA flood plain that is currently at 7 feet. Any new structure added would need to be at 8 feet elevation to meet FEMA requirements. The garage would go in front of the property. Applicant explained the existing house has been flooded twice in the past seven years so Mr. Hansel is planning to demolish the existing home after the garage is built with a bedroom on top of the garage so he can still enjoy the property while the new home is being built.

Agency discussion occurred regarding timeline before rebuilding the house possibly within five years. Discussion regarding neighbors to the north as well as the future height of the home being a two-story taller home.

Agency explained that this structure is in keeping with the structures in the neighborhood. That lot size and the setbacks have been met. Ultimately when the applicant builds a two-story house it will be complying with code. The hardship is also that they will need a place to stay as they have to rebuild the house on a flood plain.

Public Comment: None

Motion to approve by Ms. Spiegel, seconded by Mr. Labanowski (Motion Passes 6/0; Absent: Mr. Green) ZVAR 2025-25 Hansel Garage based upon six (6) findings of fact and six (6) conditions as provided in the Staff Report.

4. **NZVAR 2025-10 U-Haul of Mill Creek Wall Signs.** Request for a Non-Zoning Variance, pursuant to Section 7.02.04.B.6 of the Land Development Code, to allow for an Advertising Display Area (ADA) of 745.9 square feet on Building A and 566.8 square feet on Building B in lieu of the required maximum of 200 square feet for walls signs per building, as prescribed in the Bridle Ridge PUD, located at 6235 County Road 16A.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Mann presented details pertaining to the Non-Zoning Variance request. Explained that over 100 trees and over 350 bushes and shrubs have been planted.

Agency clarification and discussion regarding monument signs which are allowed versus usage. Applicants stated they are not applying for any monument sign or road signs just signage on the building.

Agency raised concerns over very large signs on very large buildings. Recommending high quality monument sign instead. Staff confirmed that the applicant can come through Staff for administrative approval for signs that meet regulations.

Applicant questioned if they should be able to go 200 square feet per building plus the monument sign.

Public Comment:

- Shane Morris: Opposed. Size of the sign and the lighting of an evening is an issue.
- Doug Burnett: Mentioned that the pictures the Agency are seeing are not reconciling with what is actually there. Where you see glass in the photos it is actually orange. In reality it is orange doors. The issue is that it is actually the color of the logo. The property appraisal area for the site is that there are 88 U-Haul vans, trucks, tractor-trailer type trucks with cubes on them along with box trucks. The orange color is more of a branding issue.

Additional discussion occurred with the Agency members and the applicant with regard to the clear glass that was originally installed being changed to a tint. This option to tint the windows to minimize the orange logo color from being so prominent was rejected by the applicant. Applicant explained the clear glass was approved by the building department at the time of the building. Discussion occurred around the applicant coming back to the Agency with smaller signs in January.

Motion to continue to the date of January 15, 2026, by Ms. Perkins second by Mr. Labanowski (Motion passes 6/0: Absent: Mr. Green)

5. **MINMOD 2025-03 St. Johns Parkway Antenna Tower (aka TOWER 2025-02).**
This item was moved to Item number 1 by the Agency due to a request due to third party consultant time constraints.
6. **MINMOD 2025-16 Silverleaf Waiver (Alcohol Sales within 300' of Church).** Request for a Minor Modification to the Silverleaf Planned Unit Development (Ordinance 2006-117, as amended) to add a site-specific waiver to allow Alcohol Sales within 300 feet of an established Church site in lieu of the required 1,000 feet of separation as required per Section 2.03.02.A of the Land Development Code, specifically located on the northwest corner of County Road 16A and Silverleaf Parkway.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Ms. Ellen Avery-Smith presented details pertaining to the Minor Modification request. Explained they were only discussing one parcel within the entirety of Silverleaf which is why this is a moderate modification. The application is to allow for the location of a grocery-affiliated liquor store. Site is located within 1000 feet of an establish church. The Episcopal church is located a little more than 300 feet, measured from property line to property line. The Episcopal church has written a letter of no opposition to the application.

Agency clarification and discussion regarding

Public Comment:

- Dr. Heath Warman, pastor of the Baptist Church at Fruit Cove. Last year the church purchased land that they initially owned on State Road 16. So, they are now owners of 6351 and 6490 on State Rd 16 and have road frontage at State Road 16A across the street. Not in opposition to the minor modification request. They are in a master planning conversation about how to use the 30 acres that front on State Road 16 and 16A. The property falls within the 300-foot distance that the Hudson Corporation is presenting. They are roughly 278 feet away. Raised the issue if they came in to request an establishment of a church and potentially a Christian High School, that the 300 feet would put them within that buffer. Their request is to allow this minor modification to continue without prohibiting what the church may want to do in the coming years by establishing a church and a school there.

Applicant requested a modification of the application to allow it to go forward with a minimum separation of 270 feet to include the property owned by the Episcopal church and the property owned by the Fruit Cove Baptist church so they would be included and not have to spend the time and money for a variance because they want to establish a school across from an existing approved project. Legal Staff mentioned they have no objection to this proposal if that is what the Agency decides to approve.

Additional Agency discussion occurred with regard to the modifications.

Motion to approve by Mr. Olson, seconded by Dr. Hilsenbeck (Motion Passes 5/1: Dissenting: Ms. Spiegel. Absent: Mr. Green) MINMOD 2025-16 Silverleaf Waiver to Alcohol Sales based upon five (5) findings of fact and ten (10) conditions as provided in the Staff Report with the amendment to providing a minimum of 270 feet to church owned property.

7. **WH 2025-01 Sebastian Oaks.** Request to amend the conditions of REZ 2023-16 (Ordinance 2024-09) to eliminate the requirement to construct a roundabout at the southern intersection of Old Lewis Speedway and Lewis Speedway and replace it with a condition that the developer shall adhere to St. Johns County's standard requirement for proportionate fair share transportation mitigation, as outlined within Part 11.09.00 of the Land Development Code.

Ex parte communication was disclosed.

Mr. Burnett presented details pertaining to the Workforce Housing request, stated that KB Homes owns the land and has other projects in the County. County engineering staff have voiced to KB Homes that they would prefer not to have the roundabout. Instead, they would prefer to pay the proportionate fair share payment instead of the construction. The reason is that the proportionate fair share payment instead of construction is better because there would not be any long-term maintenance and that a roundabout would interrupt the road to the sheriff's office and the fire station.

Agency clarification and discussion regarding the proportionate fair share agreements funds versus a roundabout and where the improvements are planned for. Applicant explained that it is mutually beneficial for both the County and the KB Homes to not construct the roundabout.

Staff (Mr. Dick D'Souza) explained the reason for not encouraging a roundabout mainly because there is more of a need versus a useability of those funds elsewhere. A roundabout in this particular location is not warranted and would not serve the purpose of improving any sort of traffic versus other locations where it is certainly advantageous.

Agency and staff discussed the cost of building a roundabout that was previously presented as costing approximated \$1.4million.

Public Comment:

- Joe McAnarney: Opposed. Explained the history of denials on this property and changes made.
 - Property was submitted for 92 market rate units in 2022 with PZA and BCC denial.
 - Property was submitted for 110units with 33 workforce units without the roundabout in 2023 with PZA denial.
 - Property was submitted for 110 units with 33 workforce units with a roundabout in 2024 with BCC approval.Explained that the estimated difference in the cost of building the roundabout versus the funds going to the transport department is the reason there is a request to remove the roundabout today. If the roundabout is going, then the project should be gone too.
- Debbie James: Opposed. Raised concerns about the accidents at Lewis Speedway.
- Karla Maxwell: Opposed. Concerned about traffic issues if there is no roundabout.
- Fran Mitchell: Opposed. Knows roundabouts slow down traffic but does not want an increase in traffic.

Applicant explained that this project is already approved by the Board of County Commissioners. That the project was just a technical denial when it came before the PZA previously. Applicant explained the reason why the County needs the extra funds for road impact fees in the area.

Further discussion occurred within the Agency with regard to the roundabout.

Mr. Matovina thanked Mr. D'Souza, a Staff member, for his honesty about this project and his years of service working for the County.

Motion by Ms. Spiegel, seconded by Mr. Matovina, (Technical denial 3/3. Denied Mr. Olson, Dr. Hilsenbeck, Mr. Labanowski. Absent Mr. Green) to recommend approval of WH 2025-01 Sebastian Oaks based on four (4) findings of fact and four (4) conditions, as provided in the Staff Report.

8. **Sign Size Discussion.** The Planning and Zoning Agency (PZA) has directed staff to include a discussion topic on sign size and sign non-zoning variances as an agenda item. Planning staff have researched and provided analysis on past sign variances for PZA review and discussion, as provided within the attached staff report.

Staff (Mr. Jacob Smith) presented the discussion topic on sign size and sign non-zoning variances. Mentioned there have been about 15 non-zoning variances that have come before the Agency in the past three or four years. The majority of those were approved and the vast majority of those have come from Planned Unit Developments. They have the option to create their own sign code. It is called a Unified Sign Plan. The bulk of the signs were monument signs as opposed to monument signs.

Dr. Hilsenbeck asked for Staff's professional opinion on the exiting sign regulations.

Staff (Mr. Smith) Explained that the County's sign regulations are modest. They don't allow for excessive sign size yet do allow for reasonable sized signs. The County has another zoning district, Ponte Vedra, and it is minuscule. The current process the County has to review oversized signs appears to work effectively. It gives the Agency and Boards a set of eyes to determine if it fits the character of the neighborhood or if it is appropriate for the site. If we increase the size of the signs, we will still continue to have people requesting non-zoning variance and essentially creating sign pollution.

Dr. Hilsenbeck mentioned he was amenable to increasing the allowable signage by 15 to 20 percent. Staff (Mr. Smith) recommended increasing the current maximum of 200 square feet wall signs to 250 square feet maximum.

Ms. Spiegel mentioned that people now have GPS and seem to find the stores without having the need for large signs on the walls. That the large signage requests for some of the big box stores appear to be a branding issue.

Mr. Labanowski considered we had a lot of sign clutter. Gave the example of Bass Pro shop with massive signs. Suggested, the County may need to decrease the signs and allow applicants to apply for a sign variance.

Ms. Perkins mentioned we need large signs on I95. Not sure if increasing the sign size would reduce the number of variance requests coming forward.

Mr. Olson recommended researching other County signage size. That we have a more cohesive look and feel for the County's signage.

Mr. Matovina suggested we approach a few corporate branding companies to get their feedback on signage before making any code signage changes.

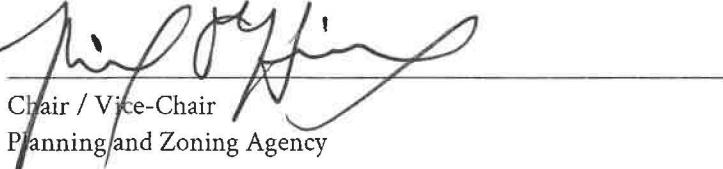
Staff (Mr. Taylor) mentioned that the County wants the Agency to make their own decisions with regard to the locations of the signs that is compatible with the area.

Staff (Mr. Smith) explained that the temporary signs over staying time limits need to be reported and addressed by Code Enforcement.

Agency members agreed to discuss signage further at another meeting.

- Staff Reports: None
- Agency Reports: None
- Meeting was adjourned by Ms. Perkins at 4:24pm

Minutes approved on the 4th day of December, 2025.


Chair / Vice-Chair
Planning and Zoning Agency

