

North Merritt Island Dependent Special District Board

The North Merritt Island Dependent Special District Board met on Thursday, April 09, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., at the Merritt Island Service Complex, 2575 N. Courtenay Pkwy., Second Floor, Merritt Island, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Board members present: Mary Hillberg, Chris Cook, Gina Lindhorst, and Jim Carbonneau.

Staff members present: Trina Gilliam, Planning and Zoning Manager; Tania Ramos, Planner; and Alice Randall, Operations Support Specialist.

Item H.1. Turtle Mound Ventures (Kim Rezanka) are requesting a Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment (26S.01) to change the Future Land Use designation from PUB, RES-1, and RES-2-DIR to CC. (26SS00001) (Tax Account 2315413, 2316247, 2316451, and 2316452) (District 2)

Item H.2. Turtle Mount Ventures (Kim Rezanka) are requesting a zoning classification change from GML(I) and TR-1 to RVP. (26Z00007) (Tax Account 2315413, 2316247, 2316451, and 2316452) (District 2)

Trina Gilliam read both applications into the record as they are companion applications but will need separate motions.

Jake Wise spoke to the application. He explained he is the civil engineer for the project. Nathan Wise is also present to take notes. We don't have a site plan; we are proposing a land use change and rezoning. We just want to hear the feedback and go through the process. And if approved we would later come back with a site plan. We think it is a good project for the area. And we just want to hear your feedback. We're asking for the Community Commercial underlying land use and the RVP zoning. Our intent is to do a high-end rental RV park. RV park is considered commercial not residential so density and things like that don't apply with commercial projects. We know we are adding trips to the roads, more people going across the bridge, and we know that's always a concern in North Merritt Island. I have some photos to give you an idea of what they're trying to do. This property used to be owned by the school board. They decided they didn't need it for educational purposes, so our client purchased it. RVP is specific to a recreational vehicle park; the zoning code has some very strict guidelines. No one can be there for more than 180 days. The maximum is 10 sites per acre. Normally we're much less than that with the RV parks we've designed in the past. We would do an environmental assessment. If there are any wetlands we would work around them. The county has very strict regulations about not impacting wetlands. We preserve the wetlands and provide an average 25-foot upland buffer around them. We provide nice amenities such as a swimming pool, pickle ball courts, and things like that for the residents of the RV park. We would also like to have some commercial type of accessory that would be open to the public like a convenience store, laundromat, nail salon, things like that that are community type benefits. Access would be off Courtenay and not off any of the residential roads. We would tie it into utilities, water and sewer. No septic systems. We plan a nice buffer along the northern edge for the residential off McGruder. Anything that would be public or commercial would have Courtenay frontage and would be in the southeast corner, furthest away from the single-family houses. To the east we have a canal and an

existing church. The code limits anyone to staying a maximum of 180 days; these are not year-round residents. We expect more launches so we believe this RV park would be very good for that type of tourist coming and seasonal residents. We are very comfortable and used to coastal high hazard zones. Flood zone AE and flood zone X are both on the property. We are comfortable and used to working through those requirements. We also know about the compensatory storage requirements, and we will comply with those.

Mary Hillberg inquired about the type of drainage that is proposed for the project. Are you going to have cement pads?

Mr. Wise responded as you can see in the pictures we'll do the driveways in asphalt, typically the campsites are concrete. Each will have a pad for a table or something like that. Some have awnings that come out of them. So, a percentage will be the RV park, the other will be the amenities, also the storm water compensatory storage. The base flood elevation is AE3, which means everything must be an elevation of 3 or higher. We'll make sure we're out of that coastal high hazard area, which is 12" above elevation 3 for this site.

Ms. Hillberg stated the picture looks like everything is cemented.

Mr. Wise states the pictures are from a project that is out of state and doesn't represent what we do. See the mountains? That's definitely not Florida.

Ms. Hillberg continued I see that, but what I'm saying is that it wouldn't be this hard.

Mr. Wise responded no, it couldn't be. And we don't want that. We want to make sure there are a lot of amenities, green, wetland preservation, upland buffers, stormwater treatment, and that's a big part of it. We'll mostly use those to be buffers to the north.

Ms. Hillberg inquired about a plan for how they plan to arrange it.

Mr. Wise responded we haven't taken it as far as the site plan because we're not at the point where we have zoning and land use. We're just not there yet because of the process we have to go through.

Ms. Hillberg inquired how many they wanted there.

Mr. Wise responded we don't have a number because we don't have a site plan. Code doesn't allow more than 10 per acre, but we're going to be much less than that. Other RV parks we've done in the past are usually around 4 or 5 sites per acre. I think this one will be even less because of some of the green preservation things I mentioned earlier.

Ms. Hillberg inquired if they would leave some of the vegetation.

Mr. Wise responded absolutely. They make the best buffers. There are trees that have been there for hundreds of years. We want it to look and feel mature the day we open.

Gina Lindhorst stated it looks more than 10 per acre based on the picture here.

Mr. Wise responded I believe this is a site in the state of Washington. They don't have stormwater rules, it was an open valley, there were no trees. This was just to give you the flavor of trying to be a high-end RV park.

Jim Carbonneau stated you're looking at approximately 1/4-acre size lots. You said 4 to 5 per acre.

Mr. Wise responded we usually get about that with a site of this size, with the green space being presented as well. It's 28 acres total. It will be a mix of the RV park, preservation, buffers, stormwater, and some of the commercial.

Mr. Carbonneau stated that you're looking at 9 acres of the 28 acres.

Mr. Wise responded no.

Chris Cook states 9 acres is what's out of the coastal high hazard zone.

Mr. Carbonneau inquired if these are rental spaces and not for purchase.

Mr. Wise responded correct, rental only.

Mr. Carbonneau stated the typical RV can be very long. Especially the class A motor homes that are towing boats, other trailers. The roads around this area, McGruder, North Tropical, especially that turn coming off Pine Island are very tight. Will there be road improvement and at who's cost will they be.

Mr. Wise responded we don't have any plans to have access to anything but Courtenay. We don't plan to access McGruder or North Tropical Trail at all. So, we wouldn't have any RV's going on those roads, unless they got lost.

Ms. Lindhorst stated you're trying to get it to community commercial zoning classification; it isn't limited to anything in particular.

Mr. Wise responded that the future land use does not, but the zoning does. And, if we try to do anything different at all, we'll be right back before you. The owner of the property is from the state of Washington and that's why he sent me photos from that area.

Ms. Lindhorst stated it looks like it's all covered in concrete and pavement to me. Wouldn't work out well with wetlands.

Mr. Wise responded we work around all that. Plus, the stormwater treatment, compensatory storage, coastal high hazard, we would work around all of those.

Mr. Cook stated state road 3 is a divided highway. So, with these big RV's coming in, where are they going to turn around?

Mr. Wise responded that it's a DOT road and we will work with DOT to provide a long-left turn lane, median cut. And that would be part of our site plan process.

Mr. Cook stated you are bringing sewer up there. The sewer line's not that far up.

Mr. Wise responded there's a moratorium, so we couldn't do septic even if we wanted to. We don't want to. Yes, it will definitely be water and sewer. No septic at all.

Mr. Cook inquired where it stops right now.

Mr. Wise responded he didn't bring the map with him. It's not that far up. We have to extend it. Which will be a benefit to that whole area, to extend the sewer up there.

Mr. Cook stated this says it's a rental RV park. Would that be RV's or cabins, or anything like that that would be located on there that people could just come up and rent?

Mr. Wise responded they could do tents and cabins per the zoning, but the intent is just to do the RV's.

Mr. Cook continued one of the problems with these RV parks is they become de facto Air BnB's, which is not allowed in North Merritt Island, unless you're in a resort area.

Ms. Gilliam stated multi-family. It can't abut single-family.

Mr. Wise stated there's not Air BnB.

Mr. Carbonneau stated that's a what-if situation. Is the 180 days limited to the trailer or vehicle specific or the occupants of the vehicle?

Mr. Wise responded it's the rental. You can only rent for 180 days and then you can't rent any longer than that. That's in the zoning code.

Ms. Hillberg stated if you rent for 180 days, left and took a ride, came back.....

Mr. Wise responded maybe they switch sites.....it's a rental park where we expect people to be there a short period of time.

Mr. Carbonneau inquired about what you do with a derelict trailer.

Mr. Wise responded that's a process. There is a process we must go through. That doesn't have a limitation of 180 days. You must go through the police department. Maybe work with the family.

Mr. Carbonneau inquired to prevent that piece of property from becoming derelict who maintains the trailer as you go through that process.

Mr. Wise responded that the owners of the RV park. Normally you find a family member that can come to help with it. It's unusual, but it happens.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rose Plummer stated based on the review by the North Merritt Island Homeowners Association she is here to speak in opposition to the requested small-scale comprehensive plan amendment. It is clear that the request to allow for an RV park does not meet the requirements for a small-scale comprehensive plan amendment. North Courtenay Parkway is not designated as a major multi-transportation corridor. For these reasons the site does not meet the locational criteria of policy 2.8.F with respect to interstate accessibility or corridor designation. For these reasons we respectfully ask that you deny the request.

Brian Bussin stated he is here at the request of a client that has an approved subdivision in the area. I haven't seen any aerial or anything that shows me where this parcel is and how close it is to the 164 unit upper-end subdivision. My client has strong concerns about this type of use that is close to a new subdivision that's high-end.

Ms. Hillberg inquired if the subdivision is to the south of this piece of property.

Mr. Bussin responded it is to the west on North Tropical Trail. The lots are a minimum half-acre in size, 164 units. Known as the Outback Reserve. So, I just want to express my client's concern about this type of use so close....

John Hopengarten stated if he heard the gentleman correctly, he said they were going to put in a convenience store on his property. There was one that was started just across North Tropical Trail on the corner of Courtenay and North Tropical Trail, a Dollar General, I don't know if it's going to proceed or not, but it's there. One of my main concerns, since I live in that area, is flooding. You're putting a lot of impervious surfaces there and we already have a flooding problem up in that area. I'd like them to consider looking at that and see how they're going to handle it. This is a major route to go to the space center and I'm wondering if they can put a buffer along Courtenay so that we wouldn't see RV's, which would be quite unsightly to see from the road. Regarding access, how are they going to make a left turn to go into that sight? The only way to do it is at Pine Island Road if they're using Courtenay as their entrance. That will cause a real problem. The church doesn't have a left turn lane when you're going north, so Pine Island is the only way. Unless they're going to pay for a curb cut through the median. And, are they going to have on-site management of this property?

Joel Walrath inquired how many total RV spots will be on the whole section. McGruder Road has a ditch that is used as a junkyard. There's a lot of waste pouring into it. So, what's the plan for managing that? It's a big concern for us because we're having to deal with it on our road.

END PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Wise stated the convenience store would be accessory for the residents and for the public. We know flooding is a concern. We've been working on that here for decades to try and help with that. We not only have to meet the compensatory storage requirement, which is anything north of Hall Road, we must meet the flood zone, the compensatory storage, the high hazard. We have an AE flood zone on about half of the property. By state statute and Brevard County code we cannot impact our neighbors. We must reduce any discharge that goes off the site, so anything we do would only be positive when it comes to stormwater treatment, storage, anything like that. We want to do that, and we're required to. I promise you we will be held with our feet to the fire with all those agencies. We can only make it better; we can't make things worse. The buffer along North Courtenay is a great idea. Tree preservation, we try to maximize around the perimeter. Typically, we must raise the elevation of our sites. We want to look and feel like a mature site the day we open. Access would be only off Courtenay. We will not go on Tropical Trail or McGruder. We will work with DOT to make a median cut and a left turn lane; that is part of our plan. We are just in zoning and land use right now, so those are details that we'll work out down the road. Onsite management would be the case. We're not far enough along to know how many units we'll have. And, anything we can do to help clean up the area; we want our RV park and the people that rent there to want to be there. It will only be successful if it's cleaned up.

Ms. Lindhorst stated the FEMA flood zone map says AE is covering more than half the property. And, you say you're not going to build on the AE section.

Mr. Wise responded it is AE with a base flood elevation of 3. The AE means we have to build above elevation 3 and the coastal high hazard requires to be elevation 3 as well.

Ms. Lindhorst stated the coastal high hazard area is again almost exactly the same as AE. You're limited in building there. It's more than half the property.

Mr. Wise responded we still can build on it, we just have to meet all those requirements and restrictions. That's how we provide compensatory storage, storm water storage, and we want to bring it up out of the base flood elevation, so there won't be any flooding concerns on site or off site.

Ms. Lindhorst continued with concerns about buffers around the residential housing in the area. That's a lot of buffering to do.

Mr. Wise responded with “like I said, we want to make the site feel mature the day it opens, so we would have a preservation area with the trees that are out there. It’s a very heavily wooded site, so a great opportunity for preservation especially around the perimeter.”

Mr. Cook stated under the FLU policy 2.8.C it says community commercial clusters up to 10 acres in size should be spaced at least 2 miles apart. And, community commercial clusters up to 40 acres in size should be spaced at least 5 miles apart. So, according to you it says on the east side you have a CC is 0.1 mile away.

Ms. Gilliam responded with I believe the CC you’re referring to is less than 10 acres.

Mr. Cook continued with if they’re less than 10 acres they don’t have to be 5 miles apart. I’m focusing on the CC right now.

Ms. Gilliam responded that it would be something for the board to consider. You have these community commercial clusters so close together, so that’s a great question and something for them to consider whether the use is appropriate.

Mr. Carbonneau stated if you look at the use of those 2 CC properties to the south they’re totally different.

Mr. Cook continued with the CC you have a density of 10 per acre. That’s too high a density for this area. They get the CC then decide they don’t want to build an RV park, they want to build a high-density multi-family housing...

Ms. Gilliam responded they’d have to come back before the board, as he stated, and request a different zoning.

Mr. Cook or they could say we’re not going to do 10, we’re only going to do 5, so it will be better. My other concern is we have over 40 RV parks in the county, and they’re supposed to be close to the interstate or a major intra-county road not inter-county, and it doesn’t meet that criteria as well.

Ms. Gilliam responded it’s about 24 miles from 528.

Mr. Cook continued if you look at where all the RV parks are clustered they’re up in Titusville, on the interchange. That’s where they’re located. And, of course on the beach. Near a resort area, this is not a resort area. It’s a rural, agricultural area and it’s in transition to residential. I don’t think an RV park there is the proper use at this point in time. The other thing is what a lot of people do is rent these spaces in the RV parks and then list them on Air BnB and you end up having big parties and people there. And the county does not have the resources to police that.

Ms. Hillberg stated there are homes along there with a rural, quiet environment.

Mr. Cook stated it goes to the character of the neighborhood.

Motion to recommend denial of Item H.1. by Chris Cook, seconded by Gina Lindhorst. Motion passed 3:1.

Motion to recommend denial of Item H.2. by Jim Carbonneau, seconded by Gina Lindhorst. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.