

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD/LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MINUTES

The Brevard County Planning & Zoning Board met in regular session on **Monday, August 17, 2026**, at **3:00 p.m.**, in the Florida Room, Building C, Brevard County Government Center, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Board members present were Mark Wadsworth, Chair (D4); Henry Minneboo, Vice-Chair (D2); Ruth Amato (D1); Ron Bartcher (D2); Neal Johnson (D4); Erika Orriss (D3); Jerrad Atkins (D1); Robert Brothers (D5); Tracy Overton (D3); Robert Wise (D2); Debbie Thomas (D4); and Melissa Jackson (D5).

Staff members present were Trina Gilliam, Planning and Zoning Manager; Paul Body, Planner; Jane Hart, Natural Resources; Alex Esseeesse, Deputy County Attorney; and Alice Randall, Operations Support Specialist.

Mark Wadsworth stated that if any Board Member has had any ex-parte communication regarding any application, please disclose now.

EXCERPT OF COMPLETE AGENDA

H.4. Request for Recommendations RE: Amendments to Section 62-182 “[Planning and Zoning Board] Membership; Appointment and Term of Members”

Paul Body read item H.4. into the record.

Alex Esseeesse gave some context to the item. On August 4th, 2026, the board of county commissioners directed staff to make amendments to that section of code dealing with both P and Z composition as well as the LPA and to modify the quorum requirements for that respective board. We're just bringing forward the proposal. It looks like we're going to 10 members for P&Z/LPA and reducing the quorum to three members to conduct official business.

Ron Bartcher began by saying that the current organization has a possibility of 17 members and in this physical space we can't work with it. We either must keep the same organization and find a different place to meet, or we change the membership and organization of our board. He would propose going back to the organization where each district had two members and an alternate. He commended the current members for their diligence in attending meetings. It's nice to know that those people when they were appointed made the commitment to come to the meetings. He also commended commissioners for appointing people and keeping them appointed to the boards. He talked about times in the past when a quorum of 6 was only met after calling alternates in at the last minute. He would recommend keeping it at six. He had a couple of recommendations for voting. He recommended training and that alternates need to attend meetings, with staff keeping track of the alternates attendance and having them attend meetings at least twice a year. He apologized to Alice stating that he knows that this would give her another take and she's good at doing things now, but it's something

that would be useful. Essentially Alice would contact all the members, determining which will be in attendance and which will not, then contact the alternate to ensure that there are at least 10 people representing the districts.

Ms. Amato stated she likes the idea of a 10-member board and 3 alternates, and training. I think that it would be a great asset to anybody who's being appointed to the board to have that even if they had it to read on their own, just to have that information and guidance. I think six for a quorum would be more accurate than three.

Ms. Orriss stated she also thinks 10 members, 2 per district would be fine, and a quorum of either 5 or 6 is plenty. But if people are willing to be an alternate for their district, we could always make sure that we had enough people for a quorum. I'm just suggesting maybe each district has an alternate.

Mr. Esseeesse clarified that it's 10 voting members and Patrick Space Force Base and School Board appointees that do not have a vote. It's still 10 voting members. Ideally a quorum would be an odd number.

Mr. Wise agrees with 5 or 7 for a quorum. But should it be one member from each district for the quorum.

Numerous members answered "yes."

Ms. Amato discussed the possibility of a 72-hour deadline after receipt of the meeting notice, to respond to staff if they will attend or the alternate will stand in.

Mr. Wadsworth responded I don't know if that would be needed if we only need five for a quorum and we're going to have 10 here. I'm just trying to make Alice's life simpler. We did have issues, but we haven't had one in 6 or 7 years.

Mr. Esseeesse added it's been a while since the change where we combined both P&Z and LPA to take place on the same day also. That was another change that helped. Currently there are no alternates considered under the proposed ordinance. It's just two per commission district. So, there are a total of 10 voting members currently. The item still must go to the board for consideration. So, currently that's what the direction was assumed to be.

Mr. Minneboo stated I sometimes think we can operate without an alternate. You put a load on them and then they can't vote. They get disappointed. So, if you don't have one, you're not going to have any disappointment.

Ms. Orriss stated that's a good point. If it's 10, and 5 is a quorum we should be able to have a quorum every time.

Mr. Wadsworth added we're going to have two representatives from each district.

Mr. Minneboo stated that in the old days we were paid \$15 for a meeting. They took that away from us. It used to be very difficult to get people. Everybody here is dedicated,

today is a very short period but a lot of these people have been here for the four- and five-hour meetings. So, let's set it at 10 members and 5 for a quorum.

Mr. Esseeesse stated the Board of County Commissioners is slated to review the ordinance at its next meeting, which is the 25th. The ordinance has already been advertised. So, technically by the next P&Z meeting, you could have 10 members.

Ms. Amato added I like the 10 voting members and the five for the quorum since it needs to be uneven. She again mentioned needing some onboarding and training.

Mr. Barcher stated there was at one time some actual training, a separate, it was an all-day class. It was given by the county and funded for county personnel who were in the planning department. And as part of that training, they invited board members to attend. The training was not specific to Brevard County but was more general to the subject of planning and zoning. I found it very beneficial, and it would be nice if the county could do something like that.

Mr. Minneboo responded with I'd like to say the training be the same day you have a meeting.

Mr. Esseeesse stated there's going to be a training at 2 o'clock, before the next P&Z meeting.

Mr. Minneboo inquired about the board transition in front of the commission in their November meeting.

Mr. Esseeesse responded the Board organizational meeting is a standalone meeting in November after the election.

Mr. Minneboo continued, I was wondering because we technically start in January. Whatever way this board goes that transition would occur in January of 27.

Mr. Esseeesse clarified that there is no P&Z meeting in December. January is when you guys select your chair and vice chair.

Rick Heffelfinger stated he wanted to seek what the board was thinking since this was a rapid occurrence, since Rita Pritchett is back. He understands the limitation on places to sit. But I'd like to thank all of you that show up. Public input is very important to me. Everybody wants to talk. We have 12 here now and could have 17. He pointed out that Robert Jordan replaced John Hopengarten on the board. He did not vote for Rita Pritchett and feels there's political stuff going on. You said that there were 10 voting, but you have 15 now, right? Does that mean all 15 could vote?

Mr. Esseeesse responded with yes.

Mr. Heffelfinger continued with so, you'd be a majority of 15. A quorum before was six because there should have been 10. I don't think the quorum got updated when the 15 number came out.

Mr. Esseeesse responded with it did. That was the direction of the Board. The quorum is still part of the code. It's at 6 right now.

Mr. Heffelfinger continued with six is 60% of 10. That would be quorum. I'm glad the quorum didn't go up to more than that because of the 15 because a year ago this was changed, and Rita Pritchett was one of the movers for that. She wanted to make sure you guys had enough people to meet quorum. She said instead of those alternates who feel like they didn't get to show up, they may not be able to vote, let them come in, participate and vote. So that would always guarantee you six. Before it was a problem of not being able to meet quorum. I would hope you'd go back to keep 10. But I think those alternates, you must have some system to make sure that they're there to stand up when they're needed. We need to make sure we have quorum, and we'd like to have the opportunity to inform the other members. If your district doesn't have one we need to call that alternate. I like 10, five alternates. One alternate per district. And, I like the idea of training. It's important that you be onboarded. Even commissioners sometimes complained they weren't onboarded properly.

END PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Minneboo stated he was going to go with 10 members, three quorum and no alternates. That way you don't have an overload.

Ms. Orriss responded with I would say 10, five, and no alternates because three is a small number.

Mr. Brothers stated we were at 10 and five alternates and a quorum of six. Then a year ago we went to 17 and no alternates and a quorum of six. So now they want to go back to the 10 and five and a quorum of 3.

Mr. Esseeesse clarified there's 10 voting members, three is a quorum and no alternates currently being proposed by, you know, based on board direction.

Mr. Bartcher responded with I can support 10 members with no alternates. I cannot support a quorum of three. That is far too little. Three people to make decisions on what we make decisions on. That is just not right.

Ms. Overton stated she has served on other boards and three is a very small number. I would support five versus three with 10.

Mr. Bartcher stated his reason for wanting alternates is because of the past history that we've had with this board and with County Commissioners not really appointing board members and having members that just only show up once and occasionally. We currently have a very good, dedicated group of people and if we have those kind of people 10 and no alternates works fine. I know that history tends to repeat itself and having gone through that history I'd prefer not to have to do it again.

Mr. Wadsworth responded with we haven't had that issue in six seven eight years. When I first started.....it's gotten a whole lot better.

Mr. Atkins asked if it's possible to set up the quorum, so you have one from each district, it's going to be 5. Because you might have five people from North Brevard that have no idea what's going on in South Brevard or vice versa.

Ms. Orriss commented she would agree. If you ask me questions about Mims, it's a struggle. You ask me questions about South Beaches, I'm there. The other thing I want to say about staff is they do a wonderful job. If I have not responded to them within two days they're hey Erica are you coming? They're on it immediately so I don't know if the problem of contacting an alternate if we don't have quorum would be a problem for you guys.

Mr. Bartcher added that having a representative from every district sounds like a good idea, but on the County Commission when there's no County Commission seat, that district does not get a vote. So, that's something to keep in mind. Why do we need to be stricter than what they are?

Ms. Amato stated that the state has a minimum of non-voting, but the commission could make them voting if they chose. Is that correct?

Mr. Esseeesse responded with yes.

Mr. Atkins inquired if you had 10 and you had a school board member, that would be a tiebreaker. No?

Ms. Amato responded only if they're allowed to be a voting member.

Mr. Johnson stated if I understand correctly, that's where we've been struggling, is getting the school board to appoint somebody as well as the Air Force because I don't think we've had anybody from either one of those for some time.

Mr. Esseeesse pointed out that Mr. Hopengarten started out as a school board appointee. Then we went to 15 members and got rid of the voting status of the school board position.

Mr. Johnson continued we still have room for a school board and an air force. They're just not filled.

Motion to recommend the following for item H.4.: 10 voting members (2 per district), 1 nonvoting school board representative, Quorum of 5, and training sessions by Ruth Amato, seconded by Henry Minneboo. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.