

North Merritt Island Dependent Special District Board

The North Merritt Island Dependent Special District Board met on Thursday, February 12, 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 6:19 p.m.

Board members present: Mary Hillberg, Chris Cook, Gina Lindhorst, and John Speck.

Staff members present: Trina Gilliam, Planning and Zoning Manager; Derrick Hughey, Planner; Darcie McGee, Environmental Policy & Resilience Admin; Jane Hart, Environmental Specialist; and Alice Randall, Operations Support Specialist.

Approval of January 08, 2026, NMI Minutes

Motion by Gina Lindhorst, seconded by John Speck, to approve the NMI Dependent Special District Board minutes of January 08, 2026. The motion passed unanimously

Item H.1. Spacewalk Groves, Inc. (Kim Rezanka) requests a CUP for Land Alteration of 37.5 acres within a parent tract in PIP zoning classification. (25Z00057) (Tax Account 2315318) (District 2)

Trina Gilliam read the application into the record.

Kim Rezanka spoke to the application. She explained this is an existing borrow pit for sand and most of it is used at the Space Center. It has been in operation for more than 25 years. Asking to go from 10 acres to approximately 37.5 acres. The conditional use permit required is for land alterations and this is just for the conditional use permit. We must have 5 acres minimum, which we do. We must have a land alteration permit; there is one there currently. We are now looking for a new one. That is reviewed by Natural Resources, and the Natural Resources Director issues the land alteration permit. We have a conceptual site plan. There have been questions raised about traffic and transportation, the trucks. There is a dedicated medium in front of access to the site, under agreement with FDOT. There is a further agreement that Spacewalk will put in 150' of asphalt in the median. Right now, there are asphalt millings. It's an FDOT maintained road. In 1999 when the land alteration permits and conditional use permit first came up the county development engineer issued this letter saying State Road 3 right-of-way is under the jurisdiction of the county, but it is being used for this process. I have a letter from Phillips about Spacewalk Groves and how this is important to their operation for Blue Origin. Blue Origin is looking forward to this expansion because they need more of the materials. The 4-page land alteration permit shows where the existing site is, where the remainder is to be dug, and has the access road around the side. There are more details on pages 2, 3 and 4. Again, these are for the land alteration permit. Based upon the staff report and our application there's no material violations of any relevant policies of the comprehensive plan. This land alteration permit, if granted, when completed there would be a private retention system, a private lake. The traffic capacity is within limits. No new roadway impacts, existing impacts to continue with expansion request. There are no wetlands on this site. Operational hours are 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The applicant will not be using any explosives. This is a conditional use permit so if there are conditions you wish to be stated that no explosives will be used, you can put that in the conditional use approval request. We are unaware of agricultural operations nearby. The vacant land to the west is also owned by Spacewalk and not being used for agriculture.

Chris Cook asked why the CUP wasn't issued for the whole plot of land.

Ms. Rezanka stated a lot of times they start with 5-acre tracts and then they move on from there, but I don't know....

Brian Hamilton stated they wanted to limit it to what was proposed at that time under that CUP. At that time, we only had a plan for that size borrow area.

Mr. Cook inquired about the picture in the packet on page 37, it shows 3 lakes, and another picture shows no lakes. The picture in the addendum shows 2 lakes. Are you pumping out the water, are you filling.....

Mr. Hamilton responded with we're active now, yes. We started another borrow area with Magruder-Smith Farms. We idled this one so we could come back later and start over again. We had to come back with a St. John's Water Management permit, a consumptive use permit and then we could start back with Spacewalk Groves. We're flipping back and forth. We finished the Magruder-Smith Farms one, then came back with the new consumptive use permit to start excavating this one again. The consumptive use permit is an extension of the Magruder-Smith Farms joint permit. It was approved in 2007 for St. John's Water Management and then we excavate a borrow pit on the Magruder-Smith Farms parcel. We then came back and started this one, using that as part of our consumptive use permit. A lot of the water goes over there.

Mr. Cook stated the water goes to another borrow pit.

Mr. Hamilton responded yes.

Mary Hillberg asked where that was.

Mr. Hamilton responded that it's on the Magruder-Smith Farms property, to the west.

Ms. Hillberg inquired is Magruder-Smith Farms is attached to our.....

Mr. Hamilton responded we have no off-site. Magruder-Smith Farms are almost 200 acres, and we hold our water on site per our consumptive use permit. It's been in effect, and we've been using it since 2007.

John Speck inquired "Do you haul the water?" Or you pump it out.

Mr. Hamilton responded there's an existing 30' wide canal that joins Spacewalk Grove with that. No offsite discharge.

Mr. Cook asked how deep do you go?

Mr. Hamilton said we're allowed to go 35' depending on the materials. 35' from ground elevation.

Mr. Speck asked how long they plan to continue digging in this pit.

Mr. Hamilton said there's a lot of variables. About 10 – 12 years. Phillip Heavy Civil has been the prime site developer for Blue Origin since 2016.

Ms. Hillberg stated this is a coastal high hazard area included in that area. Is it not?

Mr. Hamilton responded yes.

Ms. Hillberg stated it's also a floodplain in that area. Estuarian floodplain.

Mr. Hamilton said this is all upland. It's a 100-acre floodplain

Ms. Hillberg stated it's identified on the FEMA floodplain map. Special flood hazard area for this area.

Jane Hart responded in the floodplain code for the North Merritt Island area; new regulations were passed in 2019 requiring more stringent review of projects in the area. Compensatory storage is required. The engineer of record must certify that the development will not increase flood stages, not increase duration of peak flood stages within the area. They must provide reports to support that certification, including full engineering data and analysis in compliance with good engineering practices. Hydraulic and hydrologic modeling and analysis demonstrating there is no impact.

Ms. Hillberg stated the historic waterflow on North Merritt Island goes from south to north.

Darcie McGee stated it depends where you are. The county has a lot of structures.....

Ms. Hillberg continued essentially it does a little west to get to the pooling basin but essentially goes from south to north. When we're flooding, right now all the ditches and drainage areas are full, and we haven't had rain. The groundwater has come up. We need to move it northward. How will this impact that? Is there a system for lagoon basin management for that?

Ms. McGee responded we have a North Merritt Island flood model, aka Bach's model, which they'll have to use. Everything was ground truth out there, so it accounts for all that activity, and they'll have to use that modeling. It's cumulative. If a subdivision comes in they do it. The next person that comes in it builds on that model.

Ms. Hillberg asked where the model is now.

Ms. McGee responded that the model is north of the barge canal. Bach thought there was pumping going on over there and said that if there is going to be pumping into the system there could be a condition about not pumping water offsite until the system recovers from the other...

Ms. Rezanka asked if that would be in the land alteration permit.

Ms. McGee responded yes. We don't have the flood modeling yet, so we don't really know yet.

Jack Smith stated our CUP permit with St. John's there is a stipulation that we're not going to pump. We're stopping pumping 5 days before a large storm. All pumping stops and the water will be drawn down. We become a repository for additional stormwater. It's going to help the situation because we'll be able to accept water during large storms. We pump into the ditches surrounding the pit and the ditches flow to the lake on Magruder Farms and into those wetlands where it's stored.

Mr. Speck stated the water then flows back into the borrow pit, essentially.

Mr. Smith it would. If the tailwater rises outside it will flow back. A lot of the water is being recirculated.

Ms. McGee stated this is stuff that Jane will be reviewing as part of the land alteration permit.

Multiple conversations – unintelligible, unable to record.

Ms. Hillberg stated there's concern because on North Merritt Island the water keeps on moving.... ditches haven't gone down. They're up to the top. I want to make sure the water is still going where it's supposed to go, and we don't end up with a backup.

Ms. McGee responded they'll have to show that through their modeling.

Ms. Hillberg asked how that would be measured.

Ms. McGee responded there's a whole flood model that was done by the stormwater department that models all the different structures, pumps, ditches and everything else out there was ground truthed, so they know everywhere the water goes now.

Ms. Hillberg stated the things she has at home.....

Ms. McGee responded you're not going to see that in this application.

Ms. Hillberg continued with it always ends up going from south to north.

Ms. McGee stated they will not be able to increase the peak flood stage, so they can't cause the water to come higher, and they can't cause the water to flow faster.

Ms. Hillberg asked how that is measured.

Ms. McGee responded through the model....

Mr. Smith stated he spoke with Bach this morning and we're going to work out what he needs. I gave him our stormwater calculations that were approved by St. John's. We showed where the water leaves our site in the northwest corner, that was our compliance point. His model would affect the tailwater elevation at that point. We used a tailwater elevation to show that we are reducing the peak discharge for all storms. And we're creating additional floodplain storage on our site.

Ms. McGee stated the model looks offsite. It's not just a matter of his exit point from his property, but what's happening further down the road.

Ms. Hillberg stated that's our concern.

Mr. Smith responded, for example if we used 1.0 as a tailwater elevation for our calculations, he might have 1.0 during this storm, but 1.5, 1.8 or 2.0 in another storm and we'll have to account for that in our storms. I believe that's going to be the difference.

Mr. Speck stated your modeling; engineering will be done before you go to the County Commissioners. The whole package must be put together.

Mr. Smith responded no. There's zero impervious going down. We're expanding an existing lake. We're creating additional volume. It's connected through an outfall to the floodplain, so flood water will back up into the lake.

Mr. Speck stated he didn't see a problem right now, because it looks like you're pumping into Magruder and then if you must stop pumping it will just flow back into the pit. So, it's a reservoir. It's a good place for the water to go.

Mr. Smith continued with "I'll just have to work with the model."

Mr. Speck stated it seems logical that that engineering would be done before you go before the commissioners.

Gina Lindhorst inquired what the materials are used for.

Mr. Smith responded it's used for fill for development and structures for Blue Origin.

Mr. Speck said that Blue Origin is not done building.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion by John Speck, seconded by Chris Cook to recommend approval of the request, with no use of explosives. The motion passed unanimously.

Elections

Motion by Chris Cook, seconded by Gina Lindhorst to appoint John Speck Vice-Chair of the North Merritt Island Dependent Special District Board. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

DRAFT