MAYOR
Brian West

MAYOR PRO TEM
Monty Parks

CITY COUNCIL
Bill Garbett
Spec Hosti
Tony Ploughe
Nick Sears
Kathryn Williams

CITY MANAGER
Bret Bell

CITY CLERK
Fabian Mann

ASST CITY MANAGER
Michelle Owens

CITY ATTORNEYS
Edward M. Hughes
Tracy O'Connell

CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

City Council Regular Meeting
March 13, 2025 — 6:30 PM

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order — The City of Tybee Island City Council held a regular city council meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 78 Van Horne Avenue, Tybee Island, GA 31328. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brian West at approximately 6:30 PM. Mayor Pro Tem Monty Parks, Councilmember Bill Garbett, Councilmember Michael "Spec" Hosti, Councilmember Tony Ploughe, Councilmember Nick Sears, and Councilmember Kathryn Williams were also present.
Administrative Staff Attendance — City Manager Bret Bell, Assistant City Manager Michelle Owens, City Clerk Fabian Mann, City Attorney Tracy O'Connell, and City Attorney Edward Hughes were present.

Invocation — The invocation was led by **Reverend Rob Grotheer**.

Pledge of Allegiance — The pledge of allegiance was led by **Mayor West.**

Announcements

- Tybee Island Irish Heritage Parade, March 15, 2025, 3:00 PM
- Tybee Island Offices closed on March 17, 2025, in observance of St. Patrick's Day
- Tybee Island Farmers Market, Every Monday, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM, Tybee Island Lighthouse
- 2025 Orange Crush Festival Town Hall, March 21, 2025, 11:00 AM, Tybee Island Public Safety Building
- ESPLOST special election voting, March 18, 2025, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM, regular polling location

Recognitions

- Sharon Shaver, Retirement from the City of Tybee Island after 13 years of employment
- Jay Burke, Proclamation issued designating March 15, 2025, as "Jay Burke Day"

Consideration of Items for Consent Agenda

- City Council Regular Meeting Minutes: February 27, 2025
- Alcohol and Entertainment License: Chapel by the Sea
- Alcohol and Entertainment License: JDough LLC
- Tybrisa Street Artwork Usage Purchase Agreement
- Environmental Products Group, Inc. Street Sweeper Lease Agreement

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Public Comments

- Dawn Shay expressed her desire for the City Council to wait until additional data regarding the number of short-term rentals is available prior to altering any current short-term rental ordinances.
- Robert Matkowski requested clarification regarding the designation of a touristy area on Tybee Island.
- Frank Kelly voiced concerns regarding the effectiveness of the city's Good Neighbor Policy.
- Tom Powers advised short-term rental opponents to be mindful of potential misinformation disseminated by the American Hotel and Lodging Association.
- Pat Leiby stated that citizens are not completely against short-term vacation rentals if they are not permitted in residential areas.
- Jenny Rutherford voiced concerns regarding the fairness of the proposed changes to the short-term rental ordinances.
- Dawn Willard voiced concerns regarding the affordability of property taxes on Tybee Island for future generations.
- Marcia Waldron spoke of regulation methods including noise ordinances.
- Keith Gay posed a question concerning Tybee Island's primary economic industry as tourism.

Consideration of Approval of Consent Agenda

Councilmember Parks made a motion to approve the consent agenda. **Councilmember Williams** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Public Hearing

Variance Application: 35' height requirement. 1105A Bay Street-Zone R-1 -PIN 40021 16062 – Kiem Cao Nguyon

Community Development Director Patricia Sinel approached the Mayor and Council and provided an overview of the height variance request for 1105A Bay Street. In April 2023, city staff approved the applicant's building plans with a top of roof height of 34'8.5" measured from the finished floor of the garage. In December 2024, the applicant provided a height verification stating the structure measures at 41.6' mean sea level or 35'7" above average grade, with the average calculated as 5.9 mean sea level. Instead of reducing the height of building below the 35' maximum height requirement, the applicant submitted this variance request. Director Sinel emphasized that the height of a building is measured from the average adjacent grade to the extreme high point of the building, and the average adjacent grade is measured preconstruction. Planning Commission and staff recommend denial of the variance, since the application fails to meet the defined criteria for a variance. Director Sinel further explained that denial of the variance would require the applicant to reduce the height of the building below 35' above 5.4' mean sea level.

A total of 12 individuals expressed their viewpoints during the public hearing. Eleven individuals including Pat Leiby, Holly Grell-Lawe, Ben Goggins, Jan Will, David Roberts, Dorothy Kluttz, Margaret Lewin, Frank Kelly, Dawn Shay, Frances Galloway, and Dee Matkowski requested the City Council to deny the variance, while Jenny Rutherford spoke in support of the variance request.

Councilmember Parks made a motion to deny the variance application. **Councilmember Ploughe** seconded the motion. **Councilmembers Parks, Garbett, Ploughe, Sears**, and **Willliams** voted to deny the variance application. **Councilmember Hosti** voted in opposition of the motion. **Motion passed 5-1**

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Council Considerations and Comments

*Councilmember Ploughe recused himself from the discussion.

Councilmember Williams: Direct city manager and staff to research and develop ordinance amendments to reduce restrictions on bed and breakfast properties and enable issuance of short-term rental permits for restored historic properties

- Councilmember Williams withdrew her request for the city manager and staff to research and develop ordinance amendments to enable the issuance of short-term rental permits for restored historic properties.
- Councilmember Williams withdrew her request for the city manager and staff to research and develop ordinance amendments to reduce restrictions on bed and breakfast properties. Councilmember Williams requested the item's consideration at an upcoming city council meeting.

Mayor West: Direct city manager and staff to research and develop ordinance amendments to enable issuance of short-term rental permits in residential zones that by design attract tourists

- Mayor West withdrew his request for the city manager and staff to research and develop ordinance amendments to enable issuance of short-term rental permits in residential zones that by design attract tourists. Mayor West requested the item's consideration at an upcoming city council meeting.

Executive Session

Councilmember Parks made a motion to move from the regular meeting into an executive session referencing personnel and real estate. **Councilmember Williams** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Councilmember Parks made a motion to return to the regular meeting from an executive session. **Councilmember Hosti** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Consideration to take any action needed arising from executive session **– No action taken**

Adjournment

Councilmember Parks made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Councilmember Ploughe** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

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City of Tybee Island

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Brian West, Mayor

Attest:

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Fabian Mann, Jr., City Clerk

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