

**REGULAR MEETING
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 3, 2025
ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Council of the City of Destin met in regular session with the following members and staff present:

Destin City Council

Mayor Pro Tem Dewey Destin (6:24)
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt
Councilmember Sandy Trammell

Councilmember Jim Bagby
Councilmember Torey Geile
Councilmember Rodney Braden

Destin City Staff

City Manager Larry Jones
IT Director Andy Peters
Community Development Director David Prichard
Public Information Director Tamara Young
Finance Director Krystal Strickland
Projects/Grants/Contract Manager Jeffrey Cozadd
Dep Comm Development Director Steve O'Connor
City Attorney Kimberly Kopp

City Clerk Rey Bailey
Public Works Director Michael Burgess
HR Director Jaime Haynes
Building Official Noell Bell
City Engineer Robert Tomasek
Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth
Principal Planner Daniel Butler

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Jim Bagby called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Pastor Kevin Wendt of Grace Lutheran Church gave the invocation, which was then followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Consent Agenda item 3D was pulled for further discussion.

Motion by Councilmember Schmidt, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to approve the agenda, as amended, passed 5-0 (Councilmember Hebert was absent from the meeting. Councilmember Destin was not present during the voting.

- 1. PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS / SPECIAL / PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Dan Dulles expressed ongoing frustration with severe flooding at his home, an issue he says has persisted for nearly four years. He stated that the city attempted a fix, but it failed and caused additional damage, including ruined carpeting and rusting appliances. He noted he previously submitted his information for a promised grant but never heard back. He questioned why his street was excluded from earlier flood-mitigation projects, emphasized the health and safety

risks from mold and standing water, and stated that his rising flood-insurance costs are directly related to repeated flooding. He urged the city to prioritize fixing Snapper Drive.

Mr. Potter of 536 Juanita Avenue reported broken asphalt at the corner of Anderson and Juanita that poses a safety hazard, especially to children and pedestrians. Despite reporting the issue 40 days ago, no repairs have been made. He stated he is willing to repair it himself and send the city the bill if necessary. He also commented on the general decline in the city's appearance and infrastructure, noting that Destin has lost national recognition while nearby Panama City has improved. He urged the city to address cleanup, enforcement, and unchecked residential commercial activity.

Mr. Ricky Lynn Grant, Jr., 175 Main Street (Denegal Deliver), introduced himself as a real estate agent working toward becoming a broker. He regularly speaks at public meetings to stay engaged with local government. He discussed maintaining his license, his brokerage plans, and his interest in staying informed on real estate laws and regulations.

Mr. Michael Vaname of 3898 Gulf Mist Court spoke on behalf of a neighbor regarding an illegally installed basketball goal placed in the public right-of-way. Code enforcement had already determined the goal violated city rules and ordered its removal, but the property owner received a 30-day extension in hopes of seeking a council waiver. Due to a personal injunction between neighbors, the complainant could not attend the meeting. Mr. Vaname asked the council not to approve any waiver that would allow the goal to remain and sought clarification on how such an item would be placed on a council agenda.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Flood Protection/Mitigation Report for 2025, CRS Requirement
- B. David Kidd (Live Stream/Videographer) Contract
- C. Approval of Microsoft Licensing Renewal for FY 2026
- D. Destin Fishing Fleet 2nd Amendment to Riparian Lease
- E. 722 Harbor Blvd, Residential Marine Construction, HWB-001666-2025
- F. 510 Norriego Rd, Residential Marine Construction, HWB-001671-2025
- G. 602 Lagoon Dr, Residential Marine Construction, HWB-001682-2025
- H. Approval of minutes of October 20, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting

Consent Agenda item 3D was pulled for further discussion.

Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Braden, to approve Consent Agenda items 3A thru 3C, and 3E thru 3H, passed 5-0.

Motion by Councilmember Braden, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to approve Consent Agenda item 3D, passed 5-0.

4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- A. Crosstown Connector Construction Phase 2 RFB 25-17-CM

The City Manager provided an update on the Cross Town Connector Phase 2 bid request, noting it is ready for release pending approval. Two amendments will be made: adjusting construction times in the procurement documents to comply with code, and adding language to ensure the underground drainage components are protected during construction. Once approved, the bid will be released.

Councilmember Braden moved to approve RFB 25-17-CM, seconded by Councilmember Bagby. Motion passed 6-0.

B. LDC Rewrite Timeline

The City Manager provided an informational update on LDC rewrite timeline, noting that after discussions with staff, a proposed schedule was considered attainable, with a target completion date around June. He emphasized that while delays could occur, staff would keep the council informed throughout the process.

C. Community Rating System (CRS) Update: Draft Repetitive Loss Area Analysis

The City Manager discussed the CRS update, specifically the Repetitive Loss Analysis. He explained that progress had been delayed due to the federal government shutdown, which postponed the required Community Assistance Visit originally scheduled for October 22. Once the federal government reopens, the city will reschedule the visit and continue identifying repetitive loss areas, flood causes, and potential mitigation actions.

D. New State Park Working Group Discussion

The City Manager began the discussion by explaining that the county had initially proposed creating a joint working group with the city to address issues related to the new state park property. However, after differing opinions emerged between city and county staff regarding whether the meetings should fall under the Sunshine Law, a county staff member withdrew the request for the city to participate. He emphasized that this withdrawal came from staff, not from the County Commission itself. Council members asked for clarification regarding whether meetings would be public or private, and the City Attorney confirmed that public meetings must be recorded, while private meetings may only be recorded with the permission of the other party. She also reiterated that the city's position was that any such working group should operate as a public, Sunshine-covered meeting. When asked by council whether the state could override the city concerning the use of the parcel, the City Attorney responded that it could not.

Council members expressed concerns about transparency and recent interactions with county staff, noting that the process had seemed unusual or unclear. While the council affirmed its intention to work cooperatively with the County Commission, members reiterated the importance of transparency and emphasized that all future discussions should occur publicly.

Councilmember Bagby moved to appoint Mayor Pro Tem Dewey Destin as the city's representative to the Norriego Point State Park Working Group should such a committee be formed. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Trammell and passed unanimously, 6-0.

Councilmember Bagby moved to direct the City Manager to schedule a public workshop the week of January 12, 2026 to gather public input on the use of the state park parcel; and to invite the Okaloosa County Commissioners and staff to attend; but to proceed with the workshop with or without the county's participation. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Geile and passed 6-0.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to direct the City Manager to contact the FDEP and Senator Trumbull's office to clarify the state's intentions for the property and to ensure the city

is kept informed about the associated timelines. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Geile and passed unanimously, 6-0.

E. East Pass Bridge Committee - Resolution 25-23

The City Manager discussed the East Pass Bridge Committee, noting that the Florida Department of Transportation refers to the structure as the East Pass Bridge. He reported that the Harbor & Waterways Board, Harbor CRA Advisory Committee, and Public Works/Public Safety Committee had recently held a productive joint meeting to discuss potential aesthetic features of the new bridge. Based on the input from that meeting and on guidance from consultant Mr. Touchstone, the City Manager recommended formalizing a six-member steering committee composed of two members from each of the three advisory committees. The committee would function as a citizen advisory group that would generate recommendations for the city council and could participate in public meetings with the Department of Transportation. Mr. Touchstone would serve as a non-voting advisory member. A resolution establishing this committee was presented to the council for approval.

Motion by Councilmember Trammell, seconded by Councilmember Bagby, to approve Resolution 25-23, as presented, passed 6-0.

F. Lee Property (Parcel ID: 00-2S-22-0000-0001-A54B) Update

The City Manager provided an update regarding the Lee property, noting that he had contacted the owner to inquire about a potential purchase price. Mr. Lee indicated that the current asking price for the property is \$225,000.

Councilmember Schmidt noted that he had originally requested the information to gain a better understanding of the property's value and potential use. He shared that he had spoken with several residents in the Indian Trail area to gauge community interest in the City pursuing the property. The only concern expressed by residents was opposition to any potential road connection from Indian Trail through the property. He stated that some residents were supportive of a walking path or loop connection. He suggested that the city explore whether grants might be available for clearing the land and developing it into a usable outdoor space, such as a small gym area or walking trail like what exists in FWB. He requested a staff report on the property's usability and functionality to determine whether it would be feasible or worthwhile to acquire it for recreational or green space purposes.

Councilmember Braden commented that before the city considers purchasing the Lee property, attention should be given to existing city-owned land, particularly a large parcel on Joe's Bayou located near where Fourth Street meets Benning Drive. He suggested that this waterfront property could be cleared and developed into a usable public space with amenities such as a dock. He emphasized that developing property already owned by the city would be preferable to purchasing new land.

Other council members agreed with Councilmember Braden's suggestion. Councilmember Schmidt stated that he was not aware of the Joe's Bayou property but supported the idea of improving it, noting that it would be valuable to pursue development of that site. Discussion followed confirming that the Joe's Bayou parcel had previously been reviewed as part of an investigation into city-owned rights-of-way leading to the harbor – of which there are eight. The council agreed that it would be beneficial to take action to develop that area in the future.

No motions were made regarding this subject.

G. Visioning Session: Date Selection

Councilmember Schmidt moved to schedule the council's Strategic Visioning Session on Friday, January 23, 2026, seconded by Councilmember Bagby. Motion passed 6-0.

H. Quarterly Investment Report - Informational Only

I. Minutes of City Board & Committees – Informational Only

J. Announcements

- 1) There had been progress in the City's partnership with the Department of Revenue's RISE (Registration Information Sharing Exchange) program. The city has been participating in the program for several months to enhance short-term rental registration compliance, particularly for condominium properties. Through data comparison with the Department of Revenue's database, the city identified 387 additional rental units that had not been previously captured in its registration system. Based on the \$500 registration fee, this discovery could result in approximately \$1.9 million in additional revenue for the city.
- 2) The city has already reached out to all previously identified property owners, with 188 applications received and several hundred registrations either issued or in process. The city has replicated the QR code registration cards used by the county, which will soon be distributed to registered short-term rental owners as part of the compliance and identification process. The RISE partnership also allows reciprocal data sharing, enabling both the city and the Department of Revenue to compare and update their respective databases to improve accuracy and compliance.
- 3) In response to a council request, staff had solicited public input on establishing a No-Wake Zone in Joe's Bayou: 17 responses had been received, with 15 respondents in favor of creating an ordinance for such a zone. Public outreach continues through radio, blogs, newspapers, and other communication channels, and responses are being shared with the City Manager and City Attorney.
- 4) City offices will be closed on Tuesday, November 11, in observance of Veterans Day.
- 5) The Holiday Craft Show at the Destin Community Center is scheduled for November 14-15, with details available on the city's official Facebook page and website.
- 6) The Public Works Department will begin tree trimming operations during the week, maintaining required clearances of 15 feet over roadways and 10 feet over sidewalks as part of the City's ongoing safety and beautification efforts.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A) First reading of Ordinance 25-19-CC - Amending Chapter 2 - Administration, of the Code of Ordinances relating to city membership in the Florida Retirement System (FRS); providing for membership in the FRS for the benefit of city employees.

The City Attorney read Ordinance 25-19-CC by title, and presented it to the city council on first reading.

The Mayor Pro Tem opened a public hearing to receive comments for or against the proposed ordinance. Having none, the Mayor Pro Tem closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the city council for their discussion and consideration.

Councilmember Trammell moved to approve proposed Ordinance 25-19-CC on first reading, seconded by Councilmember Bagby.

Councilmember Schmidt stated that he could not support the motion, citing concerns about spending approximately \$710,000 annually of public funds on the Florida Retirement System (FRS). He questioned the necessity of the change and emphasized fiscal responsibility to the residents of Destin, also clarifying that new hires would not have a choice in the retirement system.

Councilmember Braden expressed support for FRS, referencing a previous pay study that had significantly increased employee salaries with no pushback from the council, framing FRS as a way to retain staff in a competitive market.

Councilmember Schmidt suggested that, instead of funding FRS, the city could provide direct bonuses or pay raises, which might be more beneficial to employees.

Councilmember Trammell noted that staff had specifically requested participation in FRS, citing positive feedback from employees and their families.

Councilmember Bagby clarified that the motion does not increase costs or force current staff into FRS, but participating staff would contribute more to Social Security, slightly reducing their paychecks.

Councilmember Destin highlighted a retention issue, noting that trained staff often leave for higher-paying positions without FRS benefits, and emphasized that FRS is a small investment to retain trained employees.

Motion passed 5-1, with Councilmember Schmidt dissenting, and Councilmember Hebert absent from the meeting.

6. COMMENTS / PRESENTATIONS FROM MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITY ATTORNEY

A. Councilmember Braden

Councilmember Braden suggested finding work for former City Manager Louis Zunguze, such as assisting with the LDC rewrite and other tasks, noting that he could contribute from home.

Councilmember Braden was provided a brief overview of the Snapper Drive flooding issue. It was noted that the affected property is at the lowest point in the area, and while some improvements had been made, the flooding issue largely stems from the house's location. Councilmember Braden questioned whether a larger neighborhood solution or grant funding could address it.

Councilmember Braden received an update from staff on the Najarian property across from Clement Taylor Park. It was reported that two parcels were appraised around \$600,000 each.

B. Councilmember Trammell

Councilmember Trammell raised concerns about the 30-mph speed limit on Kelly Street near the Destin Elementary School and suggested reducing it to at least 25 mph. She also recommended that staff conduct a speed study.

Councilmember Trammell made a motion to formally send the matter to the Public Works/Safety Committee for their recommendation, seconded by Councilmember Bagby. Motion passed 6-0.

D. Councilmember Bagby

Councilmember Bagby thanked city staff, particularly the City Manager, Sheri Bethea, David Prichard, and Andy Peters, for their work on the RISE issue, which resulted in \$1.9 million coming to the city.

E. Councilmember Hebert

F. Councilmember Geile

- 1) Projects Status/Updates
- 2) Re-appointment of Mr. Casey Jones to the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee

Councilmember Geile moved to reappoint Mr. Casey Jones to the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee, seconded by Councilmember Schmidt. Motion passed 6-0.

G. Councilmember Schmidt

Councilmember Schmidt emphasized the need to hire a full-time code officer at the harbor.

H. Councilmember Destin

Councilmember Destin reiterated the request for the City Manager to investigate whether there are any projects or potential opportunities in which former City Manager Louis Zunguze could assist the city.

I. Mayor Wagner

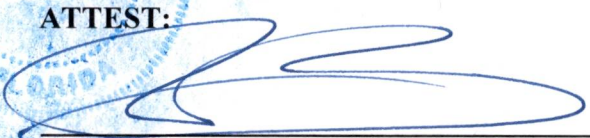
J. City Attorney

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

ATTEST:



Rey Bailey, City Clerk



Dewey Destin, Mayor Pro Tem