

**REGULAR MEETING
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2026
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 Bobby Wagner
Councilmember Torey Geile
Councilmember Jim Bagby

Councilmember Dewey Destin
Councilmember Rodney Braden
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt

Destin City Staff

City Manager Larry Jones
Public Works Director Michael Burgess
Public Information Director Tamara Young
City Engineer Robert Tomasek
Community Development Director David Prichard
HR Director Jaime Haynes
Projects/Grants/Contract Manager Jeffrey Cozadd
City Attorney Kimberly Kopp

City Clerk Rey Bailey
Parks & Recreation Director Lisa Firth
Principal Planner Daniel Butler
Finance Director Krystal Strickland
Code Compliance Manager Christopher Koch
Senior Planner Jesse Hernandez
IT Specialist James Lauria

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bobby Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Pastor Steve Farris of the First Baptist Church of Destin gave the invocation, which was then followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Agenda item 6H(2) – “*One Million Oyster Project*” was moved to the top of the agenda and listed as agenda item 1B.

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to approve the agenda, as amended, passed 4-0. Councilmember Geile was not present during the voting. Council members Hebert and Trammell were absent from the meeting.

1. PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS / SPECIAL / PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Parks and Recreation Committee Annual Report

The Parks & Recreation Committee presented their annual report and workplan.

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to approve the Parks & Recreation Committee’s Workplan passed 5-0.

The Parks & Recreation Committee, led by Committee Chair Autumn Weidenhamer, presented the committee's 2025 annual report and work plan to the city council:

The committee outlined ongoing work plans including the Adopt-a-Park effort (regular cleanups and reporting needed improvements at the dog park), twice-yearly park inspections with maintenance and improvement recommendations, and support of Tree City USA efforts through the annual Arbor Day ceremony and tree planting. The committee also discussed improving the community "adopt-a-tree/bench" process to make it more accessible through the city website and to help raise funds for parks and recreation.

The committee highlighted new and returning initiatives, including the return of Pooch Palooza (which raised over \$1,000 through the Parks Foundation for dog park improvements), a renewed focus on making one substantial visible improvement per year at a park, installation of Little Free Libraries beginning at the dog park, efforts to bring back bike helmet and road safety programming, and planning a community grand opening for the long-awaited pickleball courts. The committee also noted key motions and priorities advanced during the year, including support for breakwater and oyster gardening concepts, support for Destin Little League improvements including and continued work with the Perez Planning process for park improvements and long-term park visioning.

The committee emphasized its measurable impact through inspections, staff collaboration, community engagement, and participation in master plan design phases to ensure resident voices are reflected in long-term planning.

Councilmember Bagby thanked the committee for an organized, effective report and asked the committee to assist the council by prioritizing needs. He noted the city receives many different ideas and requests ranging from skate parks and dog park expansion to turf fields, pocket parks, and numerous other proposals. He encouraged the committee to bring forward two or three top priorities as a committee to help guide council decision-making and focus effort and resources.

Mayor Wagner asked the committee to identify recurring issues they see across multiple parks – issues that might indicate a need for additional funding, staffing, or new approaches. The mayor also referenced the council's visioning session and noted that one shared theme was beautification of the city, encouraging the committee to continue elevating what they observe consistently in the parks as part of improving the overall look of Destin.

Councilmember Schmidt complimented the presentation and expressed strong support for parks and recreation. He highlighted the committee's mention of a recreation registration calendar as an important step and emphasized that Destin's recreation programs and facilities appear to be over capacity across the city. He encouraged the committee to help evaluate and better understand community needs for recreation across all ages – both for City programming and rentals.

Councilmember Schmidt also urged the committee to engage early in discussions about the city's long-term recreational facility needs, including what a future community center or expanded recreational facility might look like in two, five, and ten years. He referenced the significant costs being discussed for repairs and replacements at existing facilities and noted that with new parks and facilities being added, the Parks & Recreation Department will face increasing demand. He encouraged ongoing workshop-style discussion by the committee so that recommendations can feed into council planning and help address both immediate needs and long-term capacity challenges.

Next item discussed was agenda item 6H(2) - "One Million Oyster Project"

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Bateman of 631 Mountain Drive, introduced himself as an active-duty Army warrant officer retiring within 60 days. He shared that he has lived in/near Destin since 2019, earned Florida fire credentials, worked part-time as a firefighter, became a local divemaster, and volunteers at Shoreline Church. He stated that he recently applied for an open City of Destin job and wanted council to “put a face to a name” in case there are questions.

Carrie Harbarger of 307 Mountain Drive warned council about alleged contamination at the former concrete plant property being discussed in relation to parks/development. She claimed eight containers/barrels of fly ash remain buried on-site and said the city received a credit at purchase to remove them but they were never removed or fully tested. She urged that the containers be removed before the land is developed or used by children.

Ricky Lynn Grant Jr. of 175 Main Street mentioned a real estate deal involving a large farm property in Tennessee and related ambitions including potential high-value home plans. He described a dispute at the Destin Library that resulted in him being trespassed for one year after law enforcement involvement. He said the ban is expected to be up around May 22 and explained he uses library computers for work but considers the situation a “toxic environment,” while acknowledging the staff member’s rights.

Joe Fitzpatrick of 3879 Indian Trail raised ongoing drainage and stormwater problems affecting his parcel, stating the issues are documented and have reduced the property’s usability and marketability. He noted that stormwater abatements were on the agenda and said his situation aligns with areas identified in city planning documents. He expressed optimism that recent engagement with city leadership could lead to a practical resolution and offered to provide updates.

Don Dulles of 442 Snapper Drive described recurring flooding impacting his home/garage and said he has been raising the issue for about four years. He argued his street did not receive promised drainage work from prior projects (referencing 2017 improvements), and criticized inconsistent standards in drain/swale depth compared with nearby streets. He cited city/public documents and regulatory obligations (including NPDES/MS4 references) to argue the city is responsible for managing runoff and preventing flooding. He urged council to prioritize funding and fix Snapper Drive flooding, noting an agenda item that he hopes addresses it.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Resolution 26-01 and TRIP Supplemental Agreement - Crosstown Connector
- B. RFB 26-01-PW Community Center Roof Replacement
- C. 619 Choctaw Drive Residential Marine Construction, PZ-2025-27
- D. Resolution 26-03 Financial Institution Signature Authority
- E. Approval of minutes of January 23, 2026, Council Strategic Visioning Session
- F. Approval of minutes of January 5, 2025, Council Executive Session

Councilmember Destin moved for the approval of Consent Agenda items 3A through 3F, as printed above, seconded by Councilmember Bagby. Motion passed 5-0.

4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- A) RFB 25-17-CM Crosstown Phase 2 Construction Contract

The City Manager noted that the city council previously awarded the Phase 2 Cross Town Connector project to C.W. Roberts as the lowest responsive bidder. This item approves the construction contract with C.W. Roberts in the amount of \$5,642,445.10 to complete the work as specified in the bid documents. The City Manager also noted there was a change in the contract: the liquidated damages amount shown in the agreement as \$500 per day was a misprint, and the correct amount is \$1,500 per day. Staff has conveyed this to the contractor and the contract will be revised accordingly. Staff recommends approval.

Councilmember Bagby moved to approve the contract with CWR for RFB 25-17-CM and direct the City Manager to execute the contract and issue a notice to proceed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Destin and passed 5-0.

- B) RFB 25-14-PW, Fire Equipment, Alarm Monitoring, and Life Safety Systems, authorization to execute a contract

The City Manager explained that this item involves executing a contract for fire equipment alarm monitoring and life safety systems. He noted the item had been presented at the prior meeting, but staff needed additional work before bringing it forward again. He reported that, through the Public Works Director's efforts, that follow-up work reduced the contract cost by an additional \$500, and he recommended the city council approve the award and authorize execution of the agreement.

Councilmember Bagby moved to authorize the City Manager to execute the continuing services contract with B&C Fire Safety for a three-year term with two optional one-year renewals. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Destin and passed 5-0.

- C) Review of Existing Code Requirements for City Lien Reduction Applications

The City Attorney introduced the agenda item as a review of the city's existing code requirements for lien reduction applications. She explained that, under Florida law, the city can place code enforcement liens on properties that remain non-compliant after the required statutory process is followed, including proceedings before the Special Magistrate.

She noted that property owners frequently ask the city council to reduce these liens because they typically accrue daily – generally ranging from \$50 to \$500 per day, depending on the lien. She reminded council that, at the prior meeting, council requested a recommendation on whether to change the current lien reduction process.

The City Attorney's recommendation was to keep the current code and criteria in place, but make one targeted change: remove Section 14-86(c), which contains a chart council previously imposed on itself that limits how much a lien may be reduced. She explained that removing the chart would still allow council to reduce liens by those same amounts – or any amount up to 100% - without the current self-imposed restrictions. She concluded by emphasizing that the decision is a council prerogative and that other options, including making no changes, could also be discussed.

Councilmember Destin moved to direct staff to bring back an ordinance for first reading that deletes Section 14-86(c) of the City Code of Ordinances, seconded by Councilmember Bagby. Motion passed 4-1, with Councilmember Geile dissenting.

D) Proposed City/County Interlocal for State Park Adjacent to Norriego Point Park

The City Attorney introduced the agenda item as a proposed city-county interlocal agreement related to the newly acquired state park adjacent to Norriego Point Park. She reminded council that on January 20 the council directed the mayor to attend the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, February 17 at 8:30 a.m. in Shalimar, accompanied by the City Attorney and City Manager, to request the county's support for an interlocal agreement recognizing collaboration on the park's future development.

She explained the agreement is intended to apply if the county obtains a legal interest in the state park (such as through a lease with the State's Board of Trustees or another state agency). At the time of the presentation, she stated she was not aware the county had secured a legal interest yet, and she did not believe a lease had been signed (or, if it had, the city had not been informed).

The City Attorney then briefly summarized what the interlocal provides, including that the city and county would work together on future management and development of the park. Key points included: recognition that the state park lies entirely within the City of Destin; that the city owns and controls the right-of-way serving the property as well as the adjacent city park; acknowledgement that the state intends the park to be developed and managed in collaboration with the city; a commitment that if the county gains a legal interest it will coordinate and collaborate with the city before submitting applications related to the park; agreement to collaborate on development plans consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code and to work jointly on a management plan for state consideration; and finally, that neither party would submit a proposed management plan to the state without approval from both the Destin City Council and the County BCC.

Councilmember Destin moved to approve the proposed interlocal agreement and to direct the City Manager to have the Public Information Director post the item on the appropriate public platforms and notify affected parties, including Holiday Isle residents through their Homeowners' Association. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schmidt and passed by a 5-0 vote.

E) Consideration of Proposed Initiatives Emerging from the Council Strategic Visioning Session held on January 23, 2026

The City Manager stated that the recent visioning session was successful and produced valuable ideas and clear direction. Staff used that direction to prepare specific items for discussion at tonight's meeting, while emphasizing this is not the full picture – work is ongoing, and they may contact members for clarification as they continue moving initiatives forward. He added that if anything requested for tonight was missed, members should speak up and identify what needs to be added next.

1) City Council Representatives to Local/Regional Committees

Okaloosa County Economic Development Council Policy Board

Councilmember Schmidt moved to reappoint Mayor Wagner as the City's primary representative to the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council Policy Board, with Councilmember Hebert serving as the alternate representative. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Destin and passed 5-0.

NW Florida League of Cities.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to reappoint Mayor Wagner as the City's primary representative to the NW Florida League of Cities Board of Directors with Councilmember Trammell serving as the alternate representative. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Geile and passed 5-0.

Okaloosa – Walton TPO

Councilmember Bagby moved to reconfirm Mayor Wagner as the City's primary representative to the Okaloosa–Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Board; to designate Councilmember Trammell as the City's second primary representative and voting member; and to appoint Councilmember Hebert as the alternate representative. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Geile and approved by a 5–0 vote.

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Geile, to adopt the following assignments as presented, passed 5-0.

Okaloosa County League of Cities :

Primary: Mayor Wagner
Alternate: Councilmember Hebert

Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative:

Primary: Councilmember Braden
Alternate: Councilmember Trammell

Okaloosa County Public Transit Cooperative:

Primary: Mayor Wagner
Alternate: Councilmember Trammell

Tourist Development Council (TDC):

Primary: Councilmember Schmidt
Alternate: Councilmember Hebert

Walton/Okaloosa/Santa Rosa Regional Utility Authority (RUA):

Primary: Councilmember Destin
Alternate: Councilmember Bagby

Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC)

Primary: Councilmember Bagby
Alternate: Mayor Wagner

2) Available Funding Summary - Informational Only

Motion by Councilmember Schmidt, seconded by Councilmember Geile, to provide the Available Funding Summary List to the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee, Town Center CRA

Advisory Committee, Public Works/Safety Committee, and the Parks & Rec Committee, to review and discuss at their next meetings, and provide their feedback to the city council, passed 5-0.

- a) Consideration of Staff Salary Increases (Councilmember Geile's visioning item no. 1)

Councilmember Geile moved to direct staff to calculate and present to the council the total cost to the city of providing city employees with salary increases of 1%, 2%, and 3% for the council's review. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schmidt.

Councilmember Bagby said he didn't understand the "genesis" for considering mid-year raises and questioned why this was being done outside the normal budget and compensation process. He noted staff compensation has already increased since the budget was adopted and raised concerns that using a raise to offset the added employee deductions from the switch to FRS and Social Security would be unfair to employees who did not switch, could be prohibited by state law, and could expose the city to legal risk. He emphasized employees were informed of the costs before electing to switch, and he did not see a need for additional increases given recent COLAs, merit increases, and the city's competitive salary position.

Motion passed 3-2 (Council members Schmidt, Geile, and Braden voted "yes"; Council members Destin and Bagby dissenting voted "no").

- b) Potential Multi-story Parking Structure (Councilmember Geile's visioning session item no. 2)

Councilmember Geile moved to direct staff to return with a cost estimate for clearing the parking lot site and constructing the first level of a parking structure in a manner that would accommodate future expansion to additional levels. The estimate was also to include the projected cost to complete and operationalize only the first level of the structure. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schmidt.

During discussion, members questioned whether the request was premature due to the lack of revenue projections and uncertainty about Town Center plans, and noted that existing surface lots were not fully utilized. Councilmember Bagby asked for clarification on the level of accuracy needed and whether formal plans already existed or if only conceptual renderings were available. Staff indicated they were unsure whether full plans existed and requested time to verify what materials were on file. Discussion also referenced a separate FY27 capital improvement plan item to consolidate existing lots. Based on the need for additional information, Councilmember Geile withdrew the motion to revisit the matter at a future meeting.

- c) Stormwater Abatement Funding (Councilmember Geile visioning session item no. 3)

Councilmember Geile moved to direct the Public Works Director to identify and report back on any additional resources necessary to support expanded stormwater abatement efforts, including work on Snapper Drive and the Director's ongoing program, and to ensure the department is adequately supported in carrying out the stormwater abatement process. Councilmember Braden provided a second to the motion.

Councilmember Braden questioned the prior city work at Snapper Drive (about \$7,600), noted it did not achieve the desired result, and asked about moving to a "Plan B," including whether

the swale could be made deeper and how liability would be handled if it were significantly deepened. The City Manager and staff confirmed the cost and that the city implemented the homeowner-provided plan, explained depth limitations due to slope constraints, and noted a much larger, previously developed concept would be a major project costing several hundred thousand dollars, with liability concerns for any deeper excavation.

Councilmember Bagby emphasized the issue is in the city right-of-way but recommended addressing internal runoff sources first – particularly roof downspouts – before pursuing expensive large-scale solutions. He suggested using exfiltration tubing/rain barrels and installing French drains to infiltrate roof runoff, and cautioned that a very deep swale in the right-of-way would create public safety risks and city liability. Staff also referenced the City's 2022 Stormwater Master Plan identifying multiple flood mitigation projects. Councilmember Destin emphasized the city's responsibility for water coming off the right-of-way onto private property and supported getting the report to guide funding and next steps.

Motion passed 5-0.

3) Destin's Core Values: Prioritized Strategic Goals

- a) Amend Strategic Goal No. 6 (Councilmember Bagby's visioning item)

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to amend Destin's Core Values: Strategic Goal No. 6, changing the title to read, "Promote and protect our natural environment, passed 5-0.

4) Section 1: Council Objectives: Council's Critical, Important, and Desirable Priorities

- a) Remove Critical Priority No. 1.1 and adjust and renumber the remaining priorities, accordingly, including elevating items through 1.9 into the critical priorities list (Councilmember Bagby's visioning item)

Councilmember Bagby asked to remove "Critical Priority 1.1" and renumber the remaining priorities, emphasizing that the list should be true priorities (conceptual goals) rather than a CIP-style list tied to specific projects. He stressed that council must make a major near-term decision about the Destin City Center / "town center" concept because it will drive funding and capacity over the next five years. He stated the city cannot pursue two "main efforts" (both the proposed city center concept at the current site and a separate major effort at/near the existing community center), and he noted uncertainty about the name "city center," while acknowledging public input favored keeping "everything in one place" where the city already has land/resources.

Councilmember Bagby also noted that public waterfront acquisition should remain among the top priorities given Destin's identity as a water-based community, even after recent purchases, including property at the foot of the Marler Bridge and parcels in Crystal Beach. He also supported keeping undergrounding utilities as an ongoing priority beyond Phase 1, and recommended retaining a pedestrian access/underpass concept related to the Marler Bridge/Harbor area. On mobility, he suggested reframing the two-lane crosstown connector as a broader priority focused on improving crosstown transportation/mobility. He also referenced continuing needs for parking, annexation, sports park improvements, beach nourishment, and noted mixed support for items like regional transit/ferry and workforce housing depending on council preference.

Councilmember Schmidt cautioned against focusing only on “where” a town center would be without clarifying what is needed, arguing the core need may be a municipal recreational facility (indoor) and possibly combining facilities (as the City Hall replacement concept expanded the scope). The discussion connected this to Priority 1.9 (Threadgill Master Park Plan), with a suggestion to update 1.9 to explicitly include an indoor municipal recreational facility alongside outdoor sports center planning.

Ultimately, due to the scope and time required, Councilmember Destin suggests tabling this topic until March, requesting it be set aside as a dedicated agenda section, and potentially starting the meeting earlier.

Motion by Councilmember Destin, seconded by Councilmember Bagby, to table discussion of this item to the second meeting in March, and to schedule that meeting for 5:30 PM instead of 6 PM passed 5-0.

5) Projects Display Board (Councilmember Braden's visioning item)

At the visioning session, the City Manager explained that Councilmember Braden had requested an electronic message board to be placed in the Council Chambers area – potentially in the lobby and even at City Hall. The purpose of the board would be to track city projects and show where each project stands, including whether it is on schedule, on budget, or delayed. The City Manager noted that staff have already been working on the concept, credited the IT Director and his team for significant work so far, and said the board would be installed as soon as the remaining details are finalized.

Councilmember Braden expressed appreciation and said the board would be a useful reference for everyone. However, he also cautioned that the board should not include projects that the city has been working on for “20 years.”

F) Code Compliance Operating Guide

The Community Development Director presented the 2026 Code Compliance Operating Guide as a tool to educate code officers on city council priorities and to provide direction on how those priorities should be executed in the field. He explained that the guide would be updated whenever council changes its focus areas. He described the document as organized into five main sections: mission and focus including council’s highest code compliance priorities and the department’s broader responsibilities; organization and operations including staffing structure and a schedule designed to provide seven-day coverage with rotating sector patrols; prevention and outreach (public education through meetings, flyers, and media reminders, including pre-registration sessions for short-term rentals and livery registrations); enforcement and processes (a progressive approach beginning with education and voluntary compliance before escalating to citations, notices of violation, and hearings before a magistrate); and data-driven accountability (tracking cases to ensure they remain open until fully resolved, conducting periodic follow-ups, and regularly notifying property owners about liens and accrued amounts to prevent unresolved violations from being ignored).

Following the presentation, council members focused heavily on consistency, priorities, and how the guide would be applied in real-world enforcement situations. Councilmember Schmidt asked for confirmation that the guide would be the operating standard moving forward, and he posed an example involving a complaint at one property where a neighboring property has the same violation. Staff indicated the department’s intent is to apply enforcement consistently and not allow one property to remain unaddressed simply because the initial complaint named only one location.

Council discussion then revealed differing interpretations of how far that consistency extends – whether officers should cite only what they observe at or near the complaint location or whether they should proactively expand enforcement beyond what is immediately apparent. Councilmember Bagby emphasized that officers generally respond to specific complaints and are not expected to canvass entire neighborhoods for similar minor violations, but agreed that if an officer observes a similar violation nearby – either through observation on scene or because the complainant identifies it – then it should be addressed to maintain fairness and credibility.

A significant portion of the discussion centered on the guide's stated Council priorities – parking, signs, trash/debris, and permit violations – and whether beach vendor enforcement and harbor-related issues should be explicitly included as priorities if staffing is being dedicated to those areas. Councilmember Schmidt questioned why the plan assigned daily coverage to both the beach and harbor when beach vending was not listed among the priorities. He recommended that if beach vendors and similar enforcement issues are truly a council priority, they should be stated clearly in the guide so staffing decisions align directly with written policy.

In response, staff explained the beach and harbor coverage was based on prior council discussions and the volume of summer complaints, including beach vending concerns and harbor issues such as inadequate parking tied to livery operations. Councilmember Bagby stated he would support formally designating vendor enforcement as a proactive priority if council intends it to be enforced immediately rather than through the standard warning-and-escalation process, noting that resort-community dynamics – particularly short-term visitors – often require quicker enforcement responses. Another council member voiced strong support for focusing resources on the beach and harbor during the summer months, stating these areas are the city's priorities during peak season and offering to place the issue on a future agenda for clear direction and a vote if needed.

Council also discussed the difference between proactive enforcement and complaint-driven enforcement, and the practical challenges of applying strict consistency in "gray area" scenarios. Members acknowledged the need for discretion in one-time situations, such as holiday gatherings, Super Bowl parties, or occasional events where temporary right-of-way parking occurs, while also recognizing that recurring problems – such as habitual overflow parking tied to certain properties or operations – may warrant more direct enforcement. The discussion returned repeatedly to the shared goal of being consistent across the board while avoiding arbitrary enforcement decisions. Councilmember Geile cautioned that staff should prepare for a high volume of reports and communications from a particularly active citizen who frequently reports violations, especially in the Holiday Isle area, and urged the department to have a plan to handle that workload.

Several members underscored that stronger enforcement must also be paired with practical solutions that reduce pressure on neighborhoods. One council member noted that issuing tickets may not fully resolve persistent right-of-way parking complaints if the vehicles remain in place day after day, and suggested the city consider an overflow parking option referenced in the mobility plan – potentially a parking lot in the power line easement area – so officers can cite violations while also directing visitors or overflow vehicles to legal paid parking that costs less than repeated citations.

Councilmember Braden emphasized that the harbor is a critical priority for the community and argued that code compliance could be justified on the harbor at a near full-time level, noting historic issues where approvals and parking claims did not match actual conditions. He encouraged proactive review of development orders and conditions on the ground, and urged council to remain committed to enforcement consistency over time. Overall, council members expressed appreciation for having a formal guide in place, supported the emphasis on education and voluntary compliance, and encouraged clearer alignment between the written priority list and staffing/enforcement

practices – particularly for beach and harbor activity – so expectations are transparent for staff, residents, and visitors alike.

G) Announcements

- 1) Meeting with FDOT District Secretary (Tim Smith): A meeting is planned for next week in Chipley, with the Mayor and City Manager traveling to meet with Tim Smith and his staff.
- 2) Letters opposing oil drilling/energy exploration in the Eastern Gulf: The requested letters have been sent to the full federal delegation.
- 3) Harbor cameras – coordination with the Sheriff's Office: The city has spoken with the Sheriff's Office; there are opportunities to work together. City IT and Sheriff IT are now discussing technical integration/details.
- 4) Harbor One seawall — coordination with county staff and the TDC: A conversation was held with Mr. Coffey, and discussions will continue at a meeting later this week (still in progress).
- 5) Annexation survey results: Survey data is complete and has been shared with council. Highlights:
 - 151 completed surveys
 - 7.6% margin of error
 - 98% answered the annexation view question (2% did not answer)
 - 31.1% supported (strongly or somewhat)
 - 44.4% opposed (strongly or somewhat)
 - 22.5% unsure
 - Results are also broken down by area/neighborhood.
- 6) State of the City Address: Mayor Wagner will deliver the State of the City on Tuesday, February 17 at 5:00 PM in the Annex (public encouraged to attend or watch via livestream).
- 7) Regular Council Meeting (same night): The regular council meeting will follow on Tuesday, February 17 at 6:00 PM (not the usual Monday schedule).

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Second reading of proposed Ordinance 25-13-PC - Making transportation-related amendments to Chapter 1 - Future Land Use Element, Chapter 2 - Transportation Element, Chapter 9 – Capital Improvements Element, Chapter 12 - Administration, and Chapter 13 - Glossary, of the city's comprehensive plan; deleting the Multimodal Transportation District; providing for goals, objectives, and policies relating to the city mobility plan and city mobility fees.

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-13-PC by title, and then presented it to the city council on second reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, MAKING TRANSPORTATION-RELATED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 1 – FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT, CHAPTER 2 –

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT, CHAPTER 9 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT, CHAPTER 12 - ADMINISTRATION, AND CHAPTER 13 - GLOSSARY, OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; DELETING THE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES RELATING TO THE CITY MOBILITY PLAN AND CITY MOBILITY FEES; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR A BUSINESS IMPACT ESTIMATE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Braden, to adopt Ordinance 25-13-PC passed 5-0.

- B. Second reading of Ordinance 25-26-LC - Deleting Section 7.13.00, "Nonconforming Uses and Structures" and Section 16.08.00, "Nonconforming Signs" of the Land Development Code and creating a new Article 3, "Nonconformities"; amending and updating regulations relating to nonconformities; creating an exception for structures located within the South Harbor Mixed Use (SHMU) that are damaged by natural disasters or certain other forces majeure by greater than fifty percent as set forth herein.

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 25-26-LC by title, and then presented it to the city council on second reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, DELETING SECTION 7.13.00. "NONCONFORMING USES AND STRUCTURES" AND SECTION 16.08.00. "NONCONFORMING SIGNS", OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND CREATING A NEW ARTICLE 3 "NONCONFORMITIES"; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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

Councilmember Bagby moved to adopt Ordinance 25-26-LC on second reading, seconded by Councilmember Destin. Motion passed 4-1, with Councilmember Braden dissenting.

- C. First reading of Ordinance 26-05-LC - Amending Article 8, "Transportation" of the Land Development Code; amending Section 8.06.00, "Vehicle and Parking Standard" and Section 8.09.00, "Multimodal Transportation District"; deleting multimodal Transportation District(MMTD) and replacing with "Parking Standards for Commercial Mixed-Use, Multifamily and Transit Oriented Development"; amending and removing parking reduction options; removing on-site parking maximums; removing alternative parking options as set forth herein; deleting Map 8-4 "Multimodal Transportation District Map."

The City Attorney read proposed Ordinance 26-05-LC by title, and then presented it to the city council on first reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, AMENDING ARTICLE 8, "TRANSPORTATION", OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; AMENDING SECTION 8.06.00 "VEHICLE AND PARKING STANDARDS" AND SECTION 8.09.00 "MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT"; DELETING MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT (MMTD) AND REPLACING WITH "PARKING STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE, MULTIFAMILY AND TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT"; AMENDING AND REMOVING PARKING REDUCTION OPTIONS; REMOVING ON-SITE PARKING MAXIMUMS; REMOVING ALTERNATIVE PARKING OPTIONS AS SET FORTH HEREIN; DELETING MAP 8-4 MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT MAP"; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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

Motion by Councilmember Bagby, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to approve Ordinance 26-05-LC on first reading passed 5-0.

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

- A. Councilmember Braden
- B. Councilmember Trammell
- C. Councilmember Destin

Councilmember Destin moved to direct staff to draft an ordinance sending it directly to the Local Planning Agency for review that would allow small recreational docks to be permitted through an administrative approval process. Under the proposed ordinance, docks meeting specified size criteria and receiving FDEP approval may be approved by staff without undergoing the full review process, with the ordinance to return to the city council for consideration. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Geile and approved 5-0.

- D. Councilmember Bagby
- E. Councilmember Hebert
- F. Councilmember Geile
 - 1) Projects Status/Updates
- G. Councilmember Schmidt

Councilmember Schmidt moved to direct staff to draft an ordinance amendment permitting recreational facilities within the Industrial zoning district and to submit the proposed amendment to the Local Planning Agency for review. The amendment is to include specific parking requirements, including provisions that address how batting cage square footage will be calculated for parking purposes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Braden and passed 5-0.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to direct the City Attorney to reopen negotiations with the owner of the property located at 446 Calhoun Avenue. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Braden and passed 5-0.

H. Mayor Wagner

- 1) Annexation approval of metes and bounds survey

Motion by Councilmember Destin, seconded by Councilmember Geile, to approve the metes and bounds survey required by Florida Statutes to begin the process of annexation for unincorporated Destin passed 5-0.

2) One Million Oyster Project

John Stephens, Vice Chairman of the Harbor & Waterways Board, presented the Million Oyster Project as a long-term environmental restoration effort for Destin Harbor designed to improve water quality, strengthen marine habitat, and engage the community in stewardship. Modeled after New York City's Billion Oyster Project but implemented at a smaller local scale, the initiative would be carried out in partnership with the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) with an initial goal of restoring one million oysters by the early 2030s. He explained that the project would combine bottom oyster beds, vertical oyster gardens (VOGs), and oyster shell recycling through local restaurants. He emphasized that the oysters are not intended for harvesting or eating, but instead serve as natural water filters and habitat builders, and that the program is designed to continue beyond the first million oysters. He described how VOGs would be deployed at private docks or businesses for one year, then relocated to a centralized harbor location to continue growing, while participants receive new VOGs annually – creating a cycle that builds cumulative impact over time.

Allyson McDowell, Director of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA), provided additional background and scientific context, noting that CBA was inspired by the Billion Oyster Project because many key components were already underway locally, including oyster shell recycling and small-scale oyster and vertical oyster gardening. She stated that one adult oyster can filter up to approximately 50 gallons of water per day under ideal conditions and that oyster reefs and hanging VOGs provide important habitat and feeding areas for fish and other organisms, making them a foundational element of a healthy harbor ecosystem. She emphasized that the hanging gardens portion would not require significant cost to the city because CBA already has shell supply, expertise, and the ability to ramp up quickly, while the next steps would involve identifying suitable locations for bottom oyster gardens. She explained that CBA already has an oyster habitat suitability model developed with university scientists to identify ecologically appropriate areas, but that site selection would also need to consider navigation and recreational use, followed by field confirmation using collection plates to measure oyster spat settlement before moving forward.

During discussion, Councilmember Bagby noted this project appeared to be associated with the Harbor & Waterways Board rather than the Harbor CRA Advisory Committee, and he expressed support for the concept, particularly because the initial phase carries minimal cost. He cautioned, however, that expenses are more likely during the later bottom-garden phase due to materials, design, and permitting requirements. He also advised against citing Triumph Gulf Coast as a likely funding source, stating that Triumph funding generally requires job creation or commercialization, and this project is non-commercial because the oysters cannot be harvested for consumption.

Mayor Wagner's comments focused on process and fiscal planning, confirming that the request at this stage was for direction and approval for the city to collaborate with Mr. Stephens and CBA, and acknowledging that while the initial hanging gardens work may be low-cost, future phases – particularly permitting and other implementation costs – would likely require budgeting as the project progresses.

Councilmember Schmidt moved to authorize the city to collaborate with Mr. John Stephens and the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance on the One Million Oyster Project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Destin and passed unanimously, 5-0.

Following this item, the council moved on to Agenda Item #2 - Public Comments

I. City Attorney

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.



ATTEST:

A blue ink signature of Rey Bailey, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Rey Bailey, City Clerk

A blue ink signature of Bobby Wagner, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Bobby Wagner, Mayor