

**MINUTES OF THE
HARBOR AND WATERWAYS BOARD MEETING
DESTIN CITY HALL ANNEX
FEBRUARY 26, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Stephens called the meeting of the Thursday, February 26, 2026, Destin Harbor and Waterways Board meeting to at approximately 5:30 p.m., at Destin City Hall Annex, with the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

John Stephens
Guy Tadlock
Jerrod Hayden
Ryan Holloway
Bill McKissick

Members Absent:

Capt. Jim Green

Staff:

Kim Montgomery Deputy City Clerk
Daniel Butler Principle Planner
Jesse Hernandez Senior Planner
Sherry Burney Planner
Kim Kopp City Attorney

3. AGENDA APPROVAL:

Motion to amend the agenda to add discussion of spare parts for the harbor flushing pump and to approve the amended agenda was made by Board member Tadlock, with Board member Holloway providing the second. The motion passed 5-0.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

➤ **January 22, 2026**

Motion by Board member Tadlock, seconded by Committee member Holloway to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting, as written, the motion passed 5-0.

5. CURRENT BUSINESS:

➤ **627 Calhoun Avenue – Residential Marine Construction (Board No. 001669-2025)**

- City Planner Sherry Burney presented the request for the removal of the existing dock and construction of a new residential dock with boathouse totaling approximately 1,180 square feet with slip density of one.
- The applicant’s representative Derek Cottingham, on behalf of Eric Fleischman, was present for any questions.
- Chairman Stephens asked whether any grass beds would be affected; the applicant’s representative stated they would not be affected as the structure would pass over them and built to the State requirements of 5-feet in height and the boards to be spaced appropriately to allow sunlight.

Motion by Board member Hayden, seconded by Board member Tadlock, the motion passed 5-0 to recommend City Council approve the proposed residential marine construction project at 627 Calhoun Avenue for the removal of the existing dock, and the construction of a

new residential dock with a boat house, totaling approximately 1,180 square feet, with the following conditions:

- **All applicable federal and state approvals shall be submitted with the marine construction permit application and be consistent with the city-approved dock plans, including the proposed dock length.**
- **All regulations of the City’s marine siting requirements under LDC Section 11.05.00 shall be followed at all times.**

➤ **605 Choctaw Drive – Residential Marine Construction (PZ-2026-5)**

- Planner Sherry Burney presented the request for construction of a new marginal dock measuring approximately 59 linear feet by 6 feet wide along the seawall, with a slip density of two with upland cuts.
- The applicant’s representative, Elise Wittenberg with Compass Marine Group, was present.
- Brief discussion confirmed that the project included one covered slip and one uncovered slip, and that the cut-in area had not yet been constructed.

Motion by Board member Tadlock, seconded by Board member Holloway, the members voted 5-0 to recommend City Council approve the proposed residential marine construction project at 605 Choctaw Drive, for the construction of a new marginal dock measuring approximately 59 linear feet by 6 feet wide along the seawall, with a slip density of two with upland cuts., with the following conditions:

- **All applicable Federal or State approvals shall be submitted with the Marine Construction Permit application and shall be consistent with the City approved dock plans, including the proposed dock length; and**
- **All regulations of the City’s Marina Siting LDC Section 11.05.00 shall be followed at all times.**

➤ **82 Indian Bayou Drive – Residential Marine Construction (PZ-2026-15)**

- Planner Sherry Burney presented the request for construction of a new residential dock totaling approximately 490 square feet with slip density of two.
- The applicant, Josh Riker, was present.
- Chairman Stephens noted that the submitted drawings were not included in the packet and reviewed a copy provided by the applicant at the meeting.
- Discussion occurred regarding the proposed dock length. The drawing provided by the applicant at the meeting appeared to show a 66-foot dock from the mean high waterline, while the staff report reflected a 60-foot dock.
- Mr. Butler explained that based on the 304-foot bayou width, the maximum allowable dock length, under the 20% dock allowance, is 60 linear feet, and a 66-foot dock would exceed that allowance, and why staff requested the applicant to submit plans with a 60-foot dock.
- The applicant agreed to proceed with the 60-foot dock as submitted in the packet.

- Chairman Stephens verified with the applicant that there are no grass beds present.

Motion by Board member Holloway, second provided by Board member Tadlock, the member voted 5-0 that the Harbor & Waterways Board recommends City Council approval of the project request located at approve the proposed residential marine construction project located at 82 Indian Bayou Dr. for the construction of a new residential dock, totaling approximately 490 square feet, subject to the following conditions:

- All applicable federal and state approvals shall be submitted with the marine construction permit application.
- All regulations of the City’s marine siting requirements under LDC Section 11.05.00 shall be followed at all times.
- The dock shall not exceed 60 feet in length into the bayou.

➤ **702 Harbor Boulevard – Residential Marine Construction (PZ-2026-19)**

- Mrs. Burney presented the request for removal of an existing dock and construction of a new residential dock with covered boat slip totaling approximately 1,090 square feet with slip density of one.
- The applicant’s representative, Scott Shackley of W.F. Davis Marine, was present.
- Board discussion included concern regarding the dock extending over submerged vegetation/grass beds.
- The applicant’s representative stated that the depiction of grass in the aerial was not fully indicative of actual site conditions and confirmed the dock meets FDEP requirements, including height clearance and deck spacing.
- A question was raised regarding whether the proposed dock size, being over 1,000 square feet, complied with City requirements.
- Mr. Butler explained that the city does not have a maximum dock square footage allowance, though FDEP may have self-certification limits; staff confirmed the project complied with the Land Development Code requirements related to dock length, dock density, and slip density.

The recommended motion was made by Board member Hayden, with Board member Holloway providing the second, the board voted unanimously 5-0, to recommend City Council approve the proposed residential marine construction project at 702 Harbor Blvd, for the removal of the existing dock, and the construction of a new residential dock with a covered boat slip, totaling approximately 1,090 square feet with the following conditions:

- All applicable federal and state approvals shall be submitted with the marine construction permit application.
- All regulations of the City’s Marine Siting requirements under LDC Section 11.05.00 shall be followed at all times.

➤ **823 Cross Street – Residential Marine Construction**

- Mrs. Burney presented the request for an addition of approximately 404 square feet of new residential marine construction to the existing dock.
- Staff clarified that while the staff report showed zero slip density, the correct total would be two slips after the proposed addition of the additional slip.
- The applicant was not present.

Motion by Chairman Stephens, second by Board member Holloway the Board voted unanimously 5-0 to recommend City Council approve the request approve the proposed residential marine construction project at 823 Cross St, for the addition of approximately 404 square feet to the existing residential dock, subject to the following conditions:

- **All applicable federal and state approvals shall be submitted with the marine construction permit application.**
- **All regulations of the City’s Marine Siting requirements under LDC Section 11.05.00 shall be followed at all times.**

Chairman Stephens opened the meeting to the public for additional comments, with no one coming forward, he closed the public portion of the meeting.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS:

❖ **Board member Tadlock – Harbor Flushing Pump – Spare Parts / Backup Equipment Discussion**

- Board member Tadlock raised the issue of maintaining the Destin Harbor pump and the need to keep it operational.
- He referenced a prior discussion regarding the need to obtain and keep spare parts on hand to minimize future pump downtime.
- He recalled how the pump had been down for several weeks or possibly months in the past while waiting for a drive shaft to be ordered and repaired.
- He stated that identifying critical spare parts in advance could reduce downtime and allow local repair contractors to service it more quickly.
 - Critical replacement parts such as an impeller, drive shaft, and possibly electrical/control components; or
 - A fully assembled backup pump that could be swapped out if a major component failed so there would be no lengthy down time.
- Board members discussion emphasized:
 - The pump is essential to harbor operations and water quality.
 - Downtime of more than a week is undesirable, especially during warmer months.
 - Not every component needs to be stocked, but the necessary parts should identified that could potentially cause extended outages.
- Board member McKissick noted that the harbor budget is narrow and that cost information is needed before making decisions.

- Mr. Butler reported that this subject had come up late in the prior year and that staff had previously contacted Mr. Burgess for input. He then read from a prior email response from Mr. Burgess indicating that the issue is complicated because the pump system contains hundreds of mechanical, electrical, and control components.
- Staff stated that a request for updated information had been sent including requests for:
 - Operating costs;
 - Repair costs; and
 - Life expectancy of the harbor pump.
- Staff suggests that Mr. Burgess attend a future meeting to present the requested information so the Board could make a more informed recommendation.

Motion by Board member Tadlock, seconded by Board member Holloway to request that Mr. Burgess attend a future meeting to identify critical spare parts or equipment needed to keep the harbor flushing pump operational and to facilitate timely repairs. In discussion, Chairman Stephens asked Board member Tadlock if he would be agreeable to add the funding sources to his motion. Both Board members Tadlock and Holloway agreed to amend the motion to add the following: **providing potential funding sources for such items. With no further discussion, the motion passed with a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

❖ **Board member McKissick - Harbor Budget / NPEB Fee Discussion**

- Board member McKissick asked for an update on a previously requested analysis regarding:
 - The annual cost to operate the harbor; and
 - The amount of money collected in the related harbor fund through dock construction fees.
- Board member McKissick mentioned how the Board needs actual data to determine whether current revenues are sufficient to operate the harbor without requiring additional City subsidies.
 - According to Mr. Butler, staff is currently gathering the necessary data on harbor pump operating and repair costs; and
 - Staff could also provide the current NPEB fee balance at the next meeting.
- Mr. Butler spoke of how currently:
 - The Harbor and Waterways Board had recommended one methodology for calculating the NPEB fees;
 - The Local Planning Agency (LPA) has recommended a different methodology.
 - Staff is still working through the Article 7 LDC rewrite.
- According to Mr. Butler, the LPA had recently reaffirmed its recommendation to City Council that:
 - The annual fee for residential slips be \$50 per slip per year;
 - The annual fee for non-residential slips be \$100 per slip per year; and
 - Homesteaded properties be exempt from the fee.

- According to the City Attorney, the Finance Director Krystal Strickland recently reported that only about 13% of properties within the city are homesteaded, making the lost revenue relatively small.
- Additionally, she stated that based on a rough analysis, the LPA methodology would be more solvent or self-sufficient than the current approach or the Harbor and Waterways Board methodology.
- Board member McKissick expressed concern that if harbor funding depends only on new dock construction, the fund would not remain self-sustaining in the long term.
- Discussion followed regarding whether costs associated with harbor management should be borne only by dock owners or shared more broadly among all harbor property owners and users.
- Several members expressed concern with a fee structure that places the full burden on dock owners alone, noting that harbor impacts and harbor use extend well beyond docks.

- Vice Chairman Stephens asked whether, when the NPEB fee proposal reaches City Council, there could be consideration for offsetting or reducing fees when applicants incorporate features beneficial to harbor water quality.
- Examples discussed included:
 - Use of environmentally friendly or sustainable materials; and
 - Installation of vertical oyster gardens beneath docks to help improve water quality.
- Staff responded that:
 - Prior Council workshop discussion had included the idea of fee reductions for environmentally friendly sustainable building materials;
 - Staff has included such language in the draft rewrite;
 - The Local Planning Agency (LPA) did not recommend approval of that portion, and the draft will be revised and brought back;
 - The issue could still be raised with the LPA or City Council.
- Staff advised that the Harbor and Waterways Board could potentially make a recommendation to the LPA on the issue.

Motion by Vice Chairman Stephens, seconded by Board member Hayden to recommend adding the ability to reduce NPEB fees for projects that use environmental materials and/or incorporate vertical oyster gardens to assist in water-quality-enhancing measures. During discussion, the Chair clarified that the intent was not to set a specific reduction amount, but rather to recommend the concept and leave the details to City Council to make the final decision. **With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.**

❖ **Vice Chair Stephens - Navigational Aids Update**

- The Vice Chair Stephens provided an update on the status of navigational light aids and recent communication with the U.S. Coast Guard.
 - He reported that:
 - One of the newly installed green navigational aid lights had already gone out;

- The Coast Guard repaired it as of February 24.
 - He also reported that the Coast Guard is considering adding red light to aid in navigating the channel.
- According to the Vice Chair, the Coast Guard's reasoning is that additional red would aid and helping draw mariners away from the jetties and the shoal, while avoiding confusion from over-lighting the channel.
- He stated that the Coast Guard is also considering future lighting improvements throughout the channel.
- He also noted, however, that once required paperwork is submitted, the process takes a minimum of 16 weeks to allow mariners time to respond and provide feedback on the proposed changes.
- He asked staff whether the city typically receives notice of navigational aid changes made by the Coast Guard.
- Mr. Butler stated that planning staff does not generally receive those notices, though Tamara Young, the Public Information Manger may. He then noted that the Board's earlier motion regarding navigational aids is what helped to get prompt action and commended the Board for its efforts.
- The discussion also touched on whether someone should monitor the status of navigational aids on an ongoing basis.
- Staff suggested that monitoring navigational aids could become part of a future work plan.
- Board member Hayden noted that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding issues could delay Coast Guard non-essential activities, since the Coast Guard falls under DHS.

❖ **Dredging and Bridge Repair Updates – Principle Planner Daniel Butler**

Mr. Butler reported that the harbor dredging project is currently underway and is close to being finalized. The repair work associated with the bridge, including prior damage involving the Alisons/fendering system. He noted that the dredging project falls under the purview of Engineering Dept. However, the City Engineer has indicated the dredging work should be finished soon, with little remaining work left to do. He then read an updated report from the City Engineer dated February 12 regarding the larger bridge project:

- FDOT is moving forward with 90% plans for bridge rehabilitation to be let in August;
- Plans must be completed for FHWA review by April.
- The current direction is to extend the bridge's useful life by 15 to 20 years.
- If the rehabilitation proceeds, the concept of a new bridge or PD&E effort may be delayed for approximately 10 years.

Mr. Butler clarified that the update was related to the larger bridge rehabilitation issue. When asked specifically about repairs related to the prior barge strike and the Alisons/fender system near the bridge, Mr. Butler stated that he had no additional information.

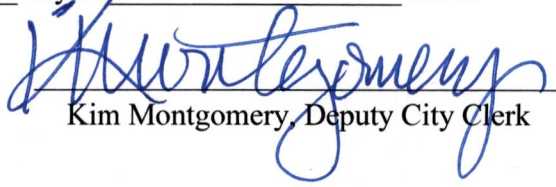
7. ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Adopted and approved this 26th day of March 2026.



John Stephens, Vice Chairman



Kim Montgomery, Deputy City Clerk