

**REGULAR MEETING  
DESTIN CITY COUNCIL  
JUNE 1, 2026  
ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
6:00 PM**

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

**Destin City Council**

Mayor Bobby Wagner  
Mayor Pro-Tem Teresa Herbert  
Councilmember Jim Bagby  
Councilmember Rodney Braden

Councilmember Dewey Destin  
Councilmember Chatham Morgan  
Councilmember Sandy Trammell  
Councilmember Kevin Schmidt

**Destin City Staff**

City Manager Larry Jones  
Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Firth  
Public Information Director Tamara Young  
Public Works Director Michael Burgess  
Community Development Director Tina Deater  
Projects and Grants Manager Jeff Cozadd  
City Attorney Kimberly Kopp

City Clerk Lisa Wallace  
Operations Supervisor Chris Koch  
City Engineer Robert Tomesek  
Finance Director Krystal Strickland  
Systems Administrator James Lauria  
Principal Planner Daniel Butler

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bobby Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Pastor David J. Butler of Faith Assembly Christian Church gave the invocation which was then followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Motion by Councilmember Hebert, seconded by Councilmember Bagby, to approve the agenda. Motion passed 7-0.**

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

**A. Request to Speak about Safety – Wesley Poole**

Mr. Wesley Poole, a long-time resident, stated that Destin has grown significantly from its days as a small fishing village and expressed concerns about pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the city. He described a recent bicycle accident caused by a walkway issue and cited numerous hazards along sidewalks and pathways, including cracked or missing pavement, sand accumulation, exposed utility wires and anchors, drainage structures, overgrown vegetation, construction-related obstructions, and other maintenance concerns. He also raised concerns about

traffic conditions along U.S. Highway 98, the safety of bike lanes, and the impacts of continued growth and tourism on local infrastructure. He encouraged the City to improve walkway conditions, address safety hazards, and consider measures to manage growth and reduce traffic impacts.

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mayor Wagner announced that public comments regarding Item 4B, Update of State-Acquired Land, would be heard at the time the item is presented to keep all discussion consolidated. He then called for any other public comments.

Ricky Lyn Grant stated that he has been reflecting on ways to become more involved in helping the community and expressed interest in participating in local volunteer efforts, including environmental cleanups that he was unable to attend. He discussed an interest in environmental stewardship and organizations focused on conservation and suggested he may be able to contribute through public works or similar efforts. Mr. Grant also shared personal updates regarding employment, stating that he is seeking work with a wholesale company and focusing on gaining practical life skills and knowledge. He described challenges related to his current living situation and his goal of improving his circumstances while remaining engaged in the community.

Dave Clausen, President of Choctawhatchee Audubon Society, spoke in support of replacing a Fourth of July fireworks display with a drone show, citing concerns about impacts on nesting shorebirds at Noriego Point. He explained that least terns and black skimmers, both state-threatened species, are currently nesting at the site and that loud disturbances can cause birds to abandon nests and leave chicks vulnerable. He noted that Noriego Point has become an important nesting area for these species and emphasized the conservation value of protecting the habitat. Mr. Clausen stated that a drone show would provide a community celebration while minimizing impacts on wildlife, and he encouraged the City Council to support a drone show as a conservation-focused alternative to fireworks.

Misty Pounders, a representative of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society, also spoke in support of replacing the City's Fourth of July fireworks display with a drone show and making the change permanent. She stated that fireworks can negatively affect nesting shorebirds by causing adults to leave nests, exposing chicks to predators and environmental stress, and noted concerns about debris left on beaches and in coastal waters. She also highlighted drone shows as a quieter and more environmentally friendly alternative that may also benefit individuals sensitive to loud noises, including veterans with PTSD. She emphasized the importance of protecting local wildlife and natural resources and urged the city to proceed with a drone show as a long-term tradition.

Penelope Main, a member of the Audubon Society and a volunteer shorebird steward, spoke in favor of a drone show in place of fireworks. She described the sensitivity of nesting shorebirds to disturbances and shared observations of fireworks debris within protected nesting areas. Ms. Main emphasized the significance of Noriego Point as an important nesting site for least terns and black skimmers and noted the area's value for wildlife viewing and ecotourism. She encouraged the city to support a drone show to help protect nesting birds and promote conservation efforts.

Alan Osborne commented on wildlife preservation efforts on Holiday Isle and then raised concerns about a seaplane he observed landing and picking up passengers near the East Pass, which he believed created a potential public safety hazard. He suggested the City consider whether additional regulations may be needed to address such activities. Mr. Osborne also expressed concern about disruptive and inappropriate behavior that occurred during a recent memorial procession at Crab Island, including interference from recreational boaters and personal watercraft

operators. He encouraged the city and enforcement agencies to consider measures to improve safety, respect, and order during similar events in the future.

Danny Davis stated that he was not opposed to a drone show but questioned whether drones present environmental and safety concerns of their own, including the potential impacts of crashed drones and batteries on local ecosystems. He also expressed skepticism regarding some of the arguments presented against fireworks and suggested that additional information be considered when evaluating alternatives. Mr. Davis further commented on recent activities at Crab Island, describing the situation as problematic and urging greater enforcement and management to address behavior that could negatively impact the community's reputation and local businesses.

Holly LaBar, a local charter boat operator, spoke in support of continuing a Fourth of July fireworks display. She stated that fireworks are a longstanding attraction that visitors expect when coming to Destin for the holiday and expressed her belief that existing fireworks displays have not prevented shorebirds from returning to Noriego Point. She also noted that the area regularly experiences other sources of noise, including aircraft traffic. Ms. LaBar encouraged the city to continue and potentially expand Independence Day festivities, including a larger fireworks display and additional patriotic entertainment.

Joe Fitzpatrick spoke about the ongoing drainage issue affecting his property and presented photographs and videos showing stormwater infrastructure and drainage flow during rain events. He described how runoff from surrounding areas, including Indian Woods and Indian Trail Estates, is conveyed through a network of inlets, pipes, culverts, and ditches before discharging onto or through his property and ultimately into the bay. He referenced City drainage records and asserted that significant volumes of stormwater are being directed through the system. He requested an update on the status of the study, expressed concern about a lack of communication and visible field activity to date, and asked that the project remain on schedule.

Andrea Ansley, a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, stated that the committee voted at its May 26 meeting to recommend that the city proceed with the Fourth of July fireworks display as previously planned and supplement it with a drone show. She noted that committee members also expressed concern about potential closures or restricted access at Noriego Point during a drone show and the possible impact on visitors.

Alan Meyers, Executive Director of The Village of Baytowne Wharf, stated that he has worked with companies providing both fireworks and drone shows and believes both are professional and effective at attracting visitors. He expressed support for a traditional fireworks display for the nation's upcoming 250th anniversary celebration, describing fireworks as a more impactful experience. Mr. Meyers also suggested that if a professional fireworks display is not offered, individuals may instead use personal fireworks, potentially resulting in increased noise and activity throughout the night.

### **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Wide-Format Community Development/Engineering Scanner Lease
- B. Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2026 Special Council Meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- C. Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2026 Special Council Meeting at 5:45 p.m.
- D. Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2026 Regular City Council Meeting

**Councilmember Trammell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed 7-0.**

### **4. CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

A. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks

**Councilmember Trammell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to reconsider the action taken regarding 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks at the last council meeting. The motion passed 7-0.**

**Councilmember Bagby made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morgan, to approve option #3 which was the \$10,000 drone show add-on to the fireworks show and shorebird permit with the caveat that the Parks Foundation provide the \$10,000 for the drone show. No vote was taken on this matter.**

**Councilmember Bagby made an alternate motion, seconded by Councilmember Morgan, to approve option #2 including the extension of the fireworks contract for 1 year and applying for the shorebird permit. The motion passed 7-0.**

**Council member Bagby made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to direct staff to bring back a proposed plan finalizing logistics for the fireworks/drone show, including a recommended funding source for the additional \$10,000 and to invite representatives from the drone show and the Parks Foundation to the next meeting. The motion passed 6-1 with Councilmembers Schmidt, Morgan, Hebert, Bagby, Destin, Trammell voting “yes” and Councilmember Braden voting “no”.**

B. Update on State-Acquired Land in Holiday Isle Adjacent to City’s Norriego Point Park

City Attorney Kopp gave an update on the latest information regarding the State-acquired land in Holiday Isle adjacent to Norriego Point Park.

Mayor Wagner called for any public comments on this issue.

Alan Osborne expressed concerns regarding transparency, governance, and public trust. He questioned the handling of certain matters by Okaloosa County and state authorities, criticized perceived political influence in local affairs, and raised concerns about a proposed marina acquisition and its potential vulnerability to storm impacts. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the Comprehensive Plan, city regulations, and established governmental processes, and called for further investigation into financial matters involving approximately \$84 million spent on the property.

Penelope Main shared her personal connection to Destin, noting that she attended local schools and that her family owns property in the area. Ms. Main referenced a previously submitted letter expressing concerns about the expenditure of public funds for the acquisition of approximately four acres of beach property, suggesting that a larger tract of land could have been acquired with the same resources. She clarified that bird population data she had previously cited was from 2024 and acknowledged that current numbers of breeding and nesting terns may be lower.

**Councilmember Schimdt made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to direct the City Attorney to meet with the state (DEP), advise them of the actions taken by the City, and to, once again, request that they consider the City becoming the Lessee of the property. The motion passed 7-0.**

City Attorney Kopp added that she will draft a Resolution stating the City’s position and Home Rule authority for Mayor Wagner who will seek support from the other Mayors of Okaloosa County. Councilmember Hebert volunteered and agreed to be the legislative sponsor.

### C. Utility Underground Update

City Manager Jones gave an update on the status of the utility undergrounding reporting that Accurate Drilling Systems (ADS) received a notice to proceed for the utility undergrounding project under a 560-day contract with a substantial completion date of May 18, 2026. In May, ADS requested a 115-day extension due to design flaws identified by FPL that required revisions to the original plans. Additional delays occurred due to material procurement and sizing issues. Staff noted that the project was not substantially complete by the contractual deadline and that the contract provides for liquidated damages of \$1,500 per day for delays. Staff's position is that any extension would remain subject to liquidated damages unless the Council elects to provide relief. Representatives from Utility Consultants of Florida and FPL were present to provide additional information and project background.

**Councilmember Bagby made a motion seconded by, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to impose liquidated damages until the project is substantially complete and withhold collection to give the City Manager an opportunity to negotiate a mitigation plan for Council's consideration. The motion passed 7-0.**

### D. Property Tax Reform

City Manager Jones reported that the Florida Legislature had convened in special session to consider property tax proposals. While numerous amendments and changes are still being considered, it is likely that a proposal could emerge from both chambers and potentially be placed on a future ballot.

**Councilmember Destin made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Trammell, to approve and support the letter sent over the weekend by Mayor Wagner regarding the proposed property tax reform bill. The motion passed 6-1 with Councilmembers Schmidt, Morgan, Hebert, Destin, Trammell, and Braden voting "yes" and Councilmember Bagby voting "no".**

### E. Minutes of Standing Boards and Committees (Informational Only)

**Councilmember Trammell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to have the Public Works and Safety Committee also inspect sidewalks as they inspect the roads and to report those findings to the Public Works Committee. The motion passed 7-0.**

### F. Announcements

City Manager Jones reported that there have been ongoing parking and enforcement issues at Norriego Point during both Memorial Day weekend and the following non-holiday weekend, including parking conflicts and visitor behavior concerns that required assistance from code enforcement and the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. Staff discussed the option of hiring part-time sheriff's deputies to provide weekend enforcement coverage, noting the cost would be approximately \$350 per day for eight hours of service and recommended that the city proceed with this option.

**Councilmember Hebert made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Destin, to hire part-time deputies to help monitor parking at Norriego Point during the weekends through the tourist season. The motion passed 7-0.**

Public Information Director Young announced that the City's Finance Director Krystal Strickland was elected President of the Panhandle Chapter of the Florida Government Finance Officers Association, representing counties from Escambia through Gulf County. She also

announced that the City's annual Independence Day Bike Parade will be held at the Destin Elementary School track, with activities beginning at 4:00 p.m., including food trucks and live music, followed by the parade at 6:00 p.m. Finally, Director Young reminded the public that hurricane season has begun and noted that the City's annual hurricane preparedness guide is available on the City website, with printed copies to be distributed at City Hall, the Community Center, the Annex, and Public Works the following week.

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Second Reading of Ordinance 26-06-LC - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, RENUMBERING THE EXISTING ARTICLE 11 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AS ARTICLE 7; CHANGING THE NAME OF EXISTING "ARTICLE 11 COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION" TO "ARTICLE 7 - RESOURCE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION, RESILIENCY, AND SUSTAINABILITY"; ADDING THE FOLLOWING EXISTING SECTIONS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO "ARTICLE 7 - RESOURCE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION, RESILIENCY, AND SUSTAINABILITY": SECTION 7.05.00 - PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES, SECTION 7.17.04 - OUTDOOR LIGHTING STANDARDS FOR THE MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION ZONE, AND SECTION 7.20.00 - SMALL-SCALE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY GENERATION REGULATIONS; 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 called for any comments from the public. There being none offered, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

**Councilmember Destin made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to approve second reading of Ordinance 26-06-LC. The motion passed 7-0.**

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

- A. Councilmember Braden  
1) 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks
- B. Councilmember Trammell

**Councilmember Trammell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hebert, to revise the public comments policy, via Meeting Procedures Resolution, to include allowing public comments for each item on the agenda for council's consideration. The motion passed 6-1 with Councilmembers Schmidt, Morgan, Hebert, Bagby, Destin, Trammell voting "yes" and Councilmember Braden voting "no".**

- C. Councilmember Destin
- D. Councilmember Bagby
- D. Councilmember Hebert

F. Councilmember Morgan

E. Councilmember Schmidt

Councilmember Schmidt asked about the recent “Crab Island takeover” and asked what actions had been taken to address the events. Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Deputy explained that when such promotions are identified, they contact the organizers and advise them that a permit is required to conduct an organized event within National Park Service jurisdiction. The National Park Service investigates potential violations and may issue fines if organizers are found to have violated park regulations. He noted that additional law enforcement resources are deployed to Crab Island during large events based on anticipated attendance and booking information. During discussion, it was clarified that the City of Destin does not have jurisdiction over Crab Island and therefore cannot directly regulate activities there, with enforcement authority resting primarily with the National Park Service and other law enforcement agencies.

H. Mayor Wagner

I. City Attorney

1) 222 Sibert Litigation Update

City Attorney Kopp reported that the City prevailed in a motion for summary judgment hearing regarding the foreclosure case involving Gregory Marlor’s non-homestead property. The property will be scheduled for foreclosure sale; however, at Mr. Marlor’s request, the sale date will be delayed for several months to provide an additional opportunity for the property to be brought into compliance. She added that if the property is not brought into compliance, the sale will proceed, and only the City Council would have the authority to cancel the sale. Staff will continue to monitor the property and provide updates to the Council.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Alan Osborne expressed concerns about recent conditions at Crab Island, stating that unlawful and disruptive behavior was observed during the recent event and suggested that law enforcement resources were insufficient to address the activity. He urged the City and partner agencies to continue taking the issue seriously and to explore stronger enforcement measures where possible. He also encouraged the City to recognize an individual who exemplifies the values of the nation’s upcoming 250th anniversary, suggesting that a local veteran or distinguished resident could serve as an honorary representative for the community.

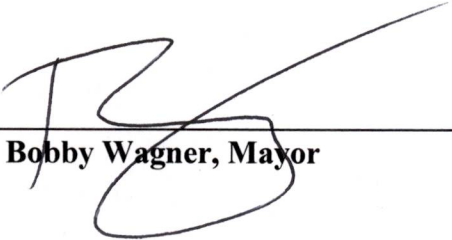
Danny Davis expressed concerns about conditions at Crab Island during the recent weekend, citing observations of marijuana use, public safety concerns, and what he perceived as insufficient law enforcement presence and response. He urged the City to work with the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office and other agencies to increase enforcement efforts, including consideration of additional marine patrol resources. Mr. Davis also described an incident involving a stranded individual who required assistance and questioned the adequacy of available law enforcement resources on the water. In addition, he raised concerns regarding the condition and adequacy of navigational aids in local waterways and encouraged the City to place greater emphasis on addressing those issues.

Joe Fitzpatrick expressed concerns regarding the progress of the ongoing study noting that approximately four weeks had passed since the study agreement and easement had been provided. He stated that, from his observations, no field work appeared to have occurred and emphasized the importance of transparency and timely resolution of the issue, particularly given continued interest

from prospective property buyers. In response, staff reported that the study remains in progress and advised that a preliminary update would be provided at the next Council meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.



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**Bobby Wagner, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**



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**Lisa Wallace, City Clerk**

