MINUTES
HARBOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 13, 2026 - 5:30 PM
DESTIN CITY HALL ANNEX CHAMBERS

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephens in the Destin City Hall Annex Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m., on May 13, 2026, followed immediately with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present	Absent	Staff Present
John Stephens	Casey Jones	Kim Montgomery, Deputy City Clerk
Lance Johnson	Mariam Paulino	Jesse Hernandez, Senior Planner
Guy Tadlock		Tina Deater Community Development Dir.
James Howard		Kim Kopp City Attorney
Jim Green		

3. AGENDA APPROVAL:

Motion by Committee member Green seconded by Committee member Tadlock to approve the agenda. The motion passed 5-0.

4. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: March 11, 2026 Minutes

Motion by Committee member Green, seconded by Committee member Tadlock, the members voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2026 meeting as written.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Development Project Update**

  - **Harbor Walk Village Compliance Hearing**

    - Harbor Walk Village is the only Harbor CRA-related item reviewed during April.
    - City Council determined that the current development plan was not in compliance.
    - Staff have since met with representatives of Harbor Walk Village.
    - Applicant is preparing a second resubmittal for another compliance review before City Council.

  - **Joe's Bayou Recreation Area Project**

    - The Joe's Bayou recreational project has officially been submitted.
    - Project scope includes:
      - Improvements to the existing boat launch area.
      - Upgrades to parking facilities.

- Construction of a public restroom.
- Stormwater management improvements.
- Additional stormwater conveyance infrastructure.
- Walking paths throughout the site.
- Improvements both at the launch area and park areas across the street and west of the launch are also included in the project.

➢ **Members Discussion**

- Questions were asked about whether grants were associated with the project.
- Mr. Hernandez indicated a DEP grant existed for the boat launch itself but is unsure of any additional grant sources.
- Members discussed concerns regarding possible closure of all boat ramps simultaneously during construction.
  - Maintaining adequate access during peak boating season.
  - Ensuring deeper ramps remain available for larger vessels.
  - Committee member Green emphasized how about half the boats that launch have to use that far south boat ramp because of how deep it is.
- Mr. Hernandez agreed to consult with other staff members involved in the project and provide updates at their next meeting.

➢ **Indian Bayou West Major Deviation Request**

- Mr. Hernandez reported a request for the proposed major deviation for Indian Bayou West development has been submitted by the developer.
- The developer proposes eliminating the previously approved roadway connection known as Old Creek Trail to Commons Drive.
- The original approved plans required:
  - Repaving the existing roadway.
  - Connecting Commons Drive to Indian Bayou Trail.
- Staff explained:
  - The roadway connection was part of the approved development order.
  - City Council approval is required to remove that requirement.
- Original development order was issued in 2021.
- Development was amended in 2022 reducing lots from approximately 96 to 45.
- The developer maintains with the revised plan to have fewer lots, reduces the need for the secondary road access.
- Question was asked if the road requirement was tied to any "net benefit."
- Staff clarified it was not tied to a specific benefit agreement.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:

❖ **Chairman Stephens - Revised Work Plan Program**

Ms. Deater explained how some confusion arose during a council meeting regarding how committee work plans and project funding requests should proceed. Staff worked with Councilmember Trammell, the City Manager, and the Finance Director to create a standardized process for advisory committees and boards. The new process applies broadly to committees and boards and the two separate CRA funding pathways were outlined:

- Projects fully funded through existing CRA trust fund resources.
- Projects without available CRA funding, which require an additional City Council authorization step before entering the budget process.

The following is the newly revised timeline that was established:

- December - target deadline for submitting projects for feasibility review.
- March - goal for finalizing and adopting work plans.
- April - goal for moving approved projects into the city budget process for the following fiscal year.

❖ Staff plans to develop a project feasibility review form to ensure committees provide sufficient project details for staff analysis.
    - The purpose of the review process is to identify major issues early and improve the likelihood that submitted projects can ultimately receive funding.

Ms. Deater emphasized that committees should prioritize and preliminarily vet projects before submitting them to staff, rather than overwhelming staff with numerous undeveloped ideas.

- Projects aligned with grants or dedicated funding sources—rather than relying on the general fund—would likely have a better chance of being funded.
- She referenced specialized funding sources, including infrastructure, public safety, and environmental-related funds.

A question was raised about funding specifically for water quality or environmental concerns in the harbor. Ms. Deater mentioned the NPEB funds and noted that additional discussions regarding the funds and related Land Development Code issues would occur at the upcoming May 18 council meeting.

➢ **Work Plan Items**

- Chairman Stephens stated that, after speaking with Ms. Deater, it appeared that some previously approved work plans did not fall within the Harbor CRA's purview.
- Two projects were specifically identified are:
    - The City of Destin Mooring Field Work Plan.
    - The Breakwater Snorkeling Location and Oyster Gardening Work Plan.

Motion by Chairman Stephens, seconded by Vice Chairman Johnson, to transfer the two work plans to the Harbor and Waterways Board for further review, evaluation, and development. The motion passed 5-0.

- It was clarified that the Breakwater project is near the park area but technically falls outside the Harbor CRA district, which means it does not qualify as a Harbor CRA project.

❖ **Committee member Green - Oil Disposal Facility**

- Discussed the need for a public used motor oil disposal facility for harbor businesses and vessel operators and noted the following:
    - Previous private collection sites no longer exist.
    - O'Reilly Auto Parts currently accepts limited quantities.
    - Improper disposal practices are occurring.
- Committee members expressed concern that:
    - Destin's tourism and marine industries generate significant oil waste.
    - Current disposal methods are inadequate for a city focused on water quality.

➢ **Proposed Concepts Discussed**

- Potential facility at Public Works property.
- Controlled-access disposal area.
- Permit or annual registration system for commercial users.
- Camera monitoring and stewardship requirements.
- Possible containment structures and collection tanks.

➢ **Grant Opportunities**

- Members discussed:
    - EPA grants.
    - Florida environmental grants.
    - Water quality funding opportunities.
- Ms. Deater advised that the project likely falls more appropriately under:
    - Harbor and Waterways Board jurisdiction.
    - With potential Public Works/Safety Committee collaboration.
- Staff encouraged committee members to:
    - Gather grant information.
    - Research comparable programs.
    - Identify oil collection contractors.

➢ **Camera Safety Work Plan**

- The board then discussed the security camera/safety work plan.
- Staff explained that the CRA currently does not have funding available for the security project.
- It was also noted that there were no documented safety or crime issues in the relevant CRA areas, such as parks, parking lots, or the boardwalk, which would make it difficult to justify public safety grant funding.
- Members discussed whether the security camera project should be continued, delayed, or removed from the current work plan list.
- The areas discussed in relation to the camera project included the boardwalk, Marler parking lot, Captain Leonard Destin Park, Captain Royal Melvin Heritage Park, Clement Taylor Park, and Joe's Bayou, though some locations were noted as being outside the CRA scope.
- Chairman Stephens recalled that private businesses in the harbor area may already have cameras that law enforcement can access or use when needed.

- The board considered putting the camera project on hold until more information could be gathered.
- A suggestion was made to receive periodic crime-statistics updates from law enforcement, possibly every six months.
- Staff said they could coordinate with the community resource deputy to provide a briefing on crime statistics within the CRA area.
- The board discussed inviting law enforcement to the next meeting and then deciding whether future six-month updates would be helpful.
- Members also discussed reaching out to property owners to learn whether they have experienced incidents that may not have resulted in formal crime reports.
- Property owners could also provide information about existing private camera systems, helping the board understand whether additional cameras are actually needed.
- The board agreed to delay further action on the camera system until after hearing from law enforcement.

➢ **Christmas Holiday Decorations**

- Chairman Stephens brought up the Christmas or holiday decorations work plan was then discussed.
- He noted how CRA funding is not available for the project and suggested that holiday decorations would likely require fundraising or private contributions.

Motion by Chairman Stephens, seconded by Committee member Green to stop working on the Christmas decorations work plan and to delay the camera system discussion until after law enforcement provides more information. The motion passed 5-0.

➢ **Parking Agreements with Livery Vessel Businesses**

- The board then discussed parking agreement issues that had been raised at a prior meeting.
- Mr. Hernandez explained that staff is currently reviewing livery vessel registrations in the harbor area.
- That review includes confirming parking arrangements, vessel counts, vessel types, development orders, and shared parking agreements on file.
- Chairman Stephens asked whether the review would also include change of use and operating hours, since those could affect shared parking arrangements.
- Mr. Hernandez confirmed that they are reviewing both marina-related uses and upland businesses, such as restaurants or shops, because shared parking agreements may depend on hours of operation.
- Chairman Stephens noted that the advertised vessel capacity is generally on business websites, which may not always match what is shown in the submitted parking plans.
- Staff acknowledged that this discrepancy is part of what prompted the review.
- The members agreed to wait for a more complete staff update at the next meeting or when available.

- **One Calhoun Property**

- Members expressed concern that, with other work plans removed or transferred, the CRA needed to refocus on what could be done with the Calhoun property.
- It was mentioned that the property purchase has significantly limited the CRA's available funding.
- Prior conversations were brought up how the property may not be monetized under the financing structure restrictions.
- The board discussed the need to get clearer answers from the City Attorney Kim Kopp and/or the Finance Director Krystal Strickland regarding:
  - Whether the property can be monetized.
  - Whether any exceptions or partial-use options exist.
  - Whether financing would need to be restructured before improvements could be made.
  - What restrictions apply to future use of the property.
- Possible future uses for the property included:
  - Green space
  - A public park
  - Parking
  - A marina-related use
  - A boardwalk connection under the bridge
  - A combination of park amenities and limited revenue-generating features
- Members discussed the fact that with the bridge replacement now being delayed by 12 to 14 years, the property may remain available for public use for a significant period before any bridge-related impacts occur.
- Because the bridge may eventually affect the property, members agreed it may not make sense to build a substantial permanent structure.
- Members discussed the possibility of using portions of the property for parking, especially under or near the future bridge footprint.
- Committee member Howard noted how his architecture firm he works for had previously sketched out a concept showing approximately 28 to 30 potential parking spaces under the bridge footprint.
- Members discussed whether a boardwalk connection under the bridge could be built relatively simple and inexpensive.
- They also noted that lighting and improvements under the bridge could improve safety and access.
- Members expressed frustration that the city purchased a valuable waterfront property, but the public still cannot access or use it.
- The property was described as having excellent views and strong potential as part of the harbor front.
- The Florida Forever program was mentioned and how it could be explored as a potential option for the state to acquire the property, while allowing the city to manage or influence how it is used.
- Members suggested that if the state or FDOT may eventually need part of the property for a future bridge, it could make sense to explore a negotiated arrangement now.
- The idea was raised that selling or partially transferring the property could restore funds to the CRA Fund and potentially allow the CRA to move forward with other projects.

- Members emphasized that any proceeds from property purchased with CRA funds should be returned to the Harbor CRA.
- The board discussed asking staff to contact the City Engineer and/or FDOT to get a better understanding of how much of the property might be needed for future bridge construction for waterfront or right-of-way area.
- There was lengthy discussion about possible transportation-related improvements at the One Calhoun Avenue property and along the U.S. 98 corridor, including:
  - Sidewalk widening.
  - Possible bike lane relocation.
  - Sun Trail connections.
  - Shade trees.
  - Benches.
  - Trash receptacles.
  - Tunnels or pedestrian connections near Marler parking lot and Stahlman Avenue.
  - A boardwalk wraparound connection under the bridge.
- Members mentioned that the county may have already committed funding toward a tunnel near Stahlman Avenue and that other funding sources, including FDOT funding.
- The board also discussed following up with the TDC for possible assistance with repairing the seawall at the property.
  - This would be one possible step toward eventually opening the Calhoun property for public use.
- A member asked whether funding to turn the property into green space could be considered during the upcoming city budget process.
- Staff said they would speak with the Finance Director about whether any dedicated funding sources for open space or similar purposes might apply.
- The board acknowledged that the next meeting would be in June and that budget work sessions would taking place in July.
- Ms. Deater noted that it is never too late to make a case for budget consideration, though whether there is enough time for serious consideration would be another question.
- The board agreed to continue the Calhoun property discussion at a future meeting.

7. NEXT MEETING: June 10, 2026

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Adopted and approved this 8th day of July 2026.

Lance Johnson, Chairman

Kim Montgomery, Deputy City Clerk