

**LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.
DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Wood called the Meeting of the Local Planning Agency to order on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the Destin City Hall Boardroom; with the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present

James T. Wood, Jr.
Todd Buhr
Marcie Bell
Ken Wampler
Jay Purut

Members Absent

Bree Uptigrove
Tammy Weidenhamer

Staff Members Present

Kim Montgomery Deputy City Clerk
Jesse Hernandez Senior Planner
Chris Rush Planner

3. AGENDA APPROVAL:

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Vice Chair Buhr with Agency member Wampler providing the second. The motion passed 5-0.

4. MINUTES:

- July 16, 2026 Regular Meeting
- July 30, 2026 Special Meeting

Motion to approve both sets of minutes from the July 16th & the July 30th Local Planning Agency Meetings was made by Vice Chairman Buhr with Agency member Wampler providing the second. The motion passed 5-0.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- Proposed Ordinance 26-01-LC

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DESTIN, FLORIDA, DELETING ARTICLE 7 - LAND USE, TYPE, DENSITY, INTENSITY, ZONING AND REGULATORY CONTROLS, AND ARTICLE 8, SECTION 8.06.10 - NUMBER OF VEHICLE AND BICYCLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED, AND ARTICLE 9, SECTIONS 9.00.00 - RESIDENTIAL HOUSING PROVISIONS, 9.01.00. - DEVELOPMENT DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS, 9.02.00. - CRITERIA FOR THE LOCATION OF SPECIAL HOUSING, 9.03.00 - PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF HOUSING

STOCK AND REHABILITATION ON SUBSTANDARD HOUSING, AND 9.06.00 - ACCESSORY STRUCTURES AND USES, OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND REPLACE WITH A NEW ARTICLE 4 - ZONING DISTRICTS, OVERLAYS, AND ON-SITE 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.

➤ **Current Business – Land Development Code Rewrite**

- Mr. Hernandez spoke of how the goal for the meeting was to continue the review of the proposed Land Development Code (LDC), beginning with the commercial and industrial zoning districts.
- Before proceeding to those districts, he requested for the LPA revisit the previous discussions regarding guest houses, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and Elderly Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) units.
- He spoke of how previous LPA discussions supported allowing guest houses/ADUs within the Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district and requested direction regarding whether three separate definitions were still necessary.

• **Guest Houses, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and ECHO Housing**

- Mr. Hernandez provided background regarding ECHO housing, explaining that:
 - ECHO housing originated from a state/federal program dating back to approximately the late 1980s and 1990s.
 - The original program is no longer in effect.
 - Some municipalities continue to regulate ECHO units, typically requiring the unit to be occupied by an elderly or otherwise qualifying individual and removed when that qualifying occupancy ends.
 - Destin's existing regulations are comparatively vague and do not contain those types of occupancy or removal requirements.
 - Because the proposed LDC would allow additional dwelling units/guest houses within residential zoning districts, staff questioned whether a separate ECHO housing category remained necessary.
- Staff reviewed the existing distinctions between guest houses and ADUs:
 - Under the current code, a guest house may generally be up to 1,000 square feet or 50% of the principal structure, whichever is less.
 - A guest house cannot be separately rented and is subject to deed restrictions.
 - An ADU under the existing code may be larger and may contain 220-volt electrical service or gas for cooking.
 - ADUs may be rented where permitted by the applicable density and zoning requirements, subject to deed restrictions and owner-occupancy requirements.
 - The proposed rewrite had already made the permitted size of guest houses and ADUs substantially the same, with a proposed maximum of 1,000 square feet.
- Mr. Hernandez recommended simplifying the regulations by eliminating the separate guest house and ECHO terminology and using Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as the single term.

- The Agency Members discussed whether distinctions based upon 220-volt electrical service or gas cooking facilities were necessary.
- Mr. Hernandez explained that an ADU would still be required to satisfy the definition of a dwelling unit by providing complete and independent facilities for:
 - Living;
 - Sleeping;
 - Eating;
 - Cooking; and
 - Sanitation.
- The Agency Members generally expressed support for simplifying the terminology rather than distinguishing between similar structures based primarily on electrical service or cooking facilities.
- Discussion included concerns regarding:
 - Ensuring structures used as ADUs meet appropriate habitability and safety standards.
 - Preventing garages or other marginal spaces from being converted into substandard rental units.
 - The potential impact of additional dwelling units on neighborhood density.
 - Parking requirements associated with ADUs and separately rented units.
 - Enforcement of rental and owner-occupancy requirements.
 - Potential abuse of ADU provisions beyond their intended purpose.

• **ADU Rental and Density Requirements**

- Mr. Hernandez explained that whether an ADU could be rented separately would continue to depend upon the property's zoning and density.
- In areas where the property does not have sufficient density for two dwelling units, the principal dwelling and ADU could not be rented separately.
- In such circumstances, the property would have to be rented as a whole.
- He also explained that short-term rental use would only be possible where:
 - Short-term rentals are otherwise permitted within the applicable zoning district; and
 - The property satisfies the applicable density requirements.
- Crystal Beach and Holiday Isle were discussed as examples of areas where existing short-term rental regulations and density requirements would affect the use of ADUs.
- The Agency Members discussed concerns regarding enforcement, particularly situations in which owners might occupy converted garage areas while separately short-term renting the principal residence.
- Parking was identified as an important issue requiring additional review.
- Staff was encouraged to examine whether the ADU provisions should contain stronger or more explicit parking language in addition to parking requirements located elsewhere within the LDC.

• **Owner Occupancy of ADUs**

- The Agency Members discussed whether the property owner should be required to live specifically in the principal dwelling or merely be required to reside in the ADU on the property.

- Concern was expressed that allowing an owner to reside in the ADU while renting a much larger principal residence could circumvent the intent of the owner-occupancy requirement.
- Conversely, members discussed legitimate situations in which an elderly or mobility-impaired property owner might no longer be able to maintain or occupy the larger principal residence and might reasonably choose to move into the smaller ADU.
- Other possible situations discussed included:
 - Older property owners downsizing into an ADU;
 - Family members occupying the principal residence;
 - Caregivers residing on the property; and
 - Disability or mobility circumstances that could warrant flexibility.
- Staff clarified that the Board of Adjustment could not simply grant a variance from an owner-occupancy requirement of this type unless the code established an appropriate process.
- Members therefore discussed creating a specific waiver or Conditional Use approval process for limited circumstances.

Motion by Vice Chairman Buhr to reduce the existing three definitions for ADU, guest house, and ECHO housing to a single Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) definition. Remove the specific reference to 220-volt electrical service, provided the unit meets the five identified dwelling-unit/habitability criteria for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. Staff review the existing deed-restriction language applicable to guest houses and ADUs and bring back consolidated language incorporating the strongest provisions and providing the greatest protection to the City of Destin. Agency member Wampler provided the second. During discussion, Florida Statute §163.31771 relating to accessory dwelling units was referenced by Agency member Bell, including statutory language addressing kitchens, bathrooms, sleeping areas, and affordable housing, questioning if they were meeting those requirements, as well as language to encourage affordable workforce housing. According to the Vice Chair, he feels that workforce housing language should be in something separate than the design criteria for ADU's.

The City Attorney spoke of having language dealing with policies for Affordable Housing in the Comprehensive Plan would make greater emphasis.

The Community Development Director, Ms. Deater advised that the City's Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) process was underway and that the affordable housing element would provide an opportunity for further discussion.

- Members agreed to revisit affordable housing during that process.
- Staff also advised that the City's community survey associated with the EAR process was live on the City's website and encouraged members and the public to participate.

With no further discussion, chairman Wood called for the vote, and the motion passed 5-0.

Vice Chairman Buhr made an additional motion asking for staff to develop language that would define the primary structure as the dwelling structure, having the larger square footage, and requiring the property owner to occupy the primary structure, and bring back for

their consideration a condition or a potential waiver process allowing the property owner, under appropriate circumstances, to occupy the ADU rather than the primary structure. Consider whether the waiver should be administered by the City Council, City Manager, Community Development Director, or another appropriate authority. Develop criteria addressing legitimate circumstances involving family members and similar situations. Agency member Bell provided the second.

Ms. Deater asked if they would also consider the waiver criteria to consider situations involving a caregiver who is not a family member. Vice Chairman Buhr agreed and amended his motion for staff to include language that would consider caregiver situations and any other criteria staff believed appropriate when developing the proposed waiver language. It was emphasized that the intent was to provide reasonable flexibility for legitimate circumstances while retaining sufficient safeguards to prevent unintended or abusive uses. **Agency member Bell accepted the amended language and reiterated her second. The motion passed 5-0.**

➤ **Food Trucks in High Density Residential (HDR) Zoning District**

- Mr. Hernandez revisited the previous discussion regarding food trucks serving multifamily residential developments within the HDR zoning district.
- He described situations in which apartments or condominiums communities bring a food truck onto the property for a limited period as an amenity for residents.
- Ms. Deater asked whether the LPA had interest in creating a limited use that could establish restrictions such as:
 - Limited hours of operation;
 - A limited number of occurrences;
 - Service to residents only; and
 - No advertising or solicitation of customers from outside the residential development.
- Staff distinguished between:
 - A catered event in which the association or property owner pays the food truck and no money is exchanged between residents and the vendor; and
 - Commercial activity in which individual residents purchase food directly from the food truck.
- Staff confirmed that commercial activity is generally not permitted within purely residential zoning districts.
- Vice Chairman Buhr noted that many multifamily developments are located in mixed-use zoning districts where commercial uses may already be permissible.
- The HDR district on Holiday Isle was identified as an example of a predominantly multifamily area that remains residentially zoned.
- Several members expressed concern and agreed that allowing direct commercial food-truck sales in residential zoning districts would blur the distinction between residential and mixed-use zoning.
- It was suggested that properties seeking mixed-use commercial activities could pursue an appropriate rezoning rather than expanding commercial uses within residential districts.

- The Agency Members also expressed concern about establishing a precedent that could result in additional commercial activities being requested within residential areas.
- Consensus was not to expand the LDC to permit direct commercial food-truck sales within residential/HDR zoning districts.
- Staff indicated that the feedback provided sufficient direction.

➤ **Commercial and Industrial Zoning District Review**

- **Commercial General (CG)**

- Mr. Hernandez reviewed the Commercial General zoning district.
- Explaining that the proposed LDC consolidation would incorporate:
 - The city's single Commercial Limited parcel; and
 - The city's two Bay Resort Mixed Use parcels into the Commercial General zoning district.
- He noted that the three parcels generally allow similar uses and that consolidating them into Commercial General was consistent with their previous direction to reduce unnecessary zoning districts.
- The Bay Resort Mixed Use property near the intersection of Regatta Bay and Emerald Coast Parkway and the Commercial Limited property near Hutchinson Street/Emerald Coast Parkway were discussed as examples.
- The Agency members reviewed the Commercial General use table and discussed the number of uses identified as conditional uses rather than permitted uses.
- Vice Chairman Buhr provided historical background regarding commercial properties adjacent to residential neighborhoods and explained that the conditional-use designations had been intentionally retained to protect nearby residential properties from potentially incompatible commercial activities.
- Examples of potential impacts included:
 - Lighting;
 - Noise;
 - Drive-through activity;
 - Amusement uses; and
 - Other intensive commercial activities immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- The Agency members agreed that the conditional-use process provides the city with additional tools to address compatibility, buffering, and impacts on neighboring residential properties.
- Mr. Hernandez specifically asked whether restaurants should continue to be conditional uses within Commercial General.
- The Agency members indicated support for retaining restaurants as conditional uses because of residential/commercial compatibility concerns.
- No additional changes to Commercial General were requested.

➤ **Commercial Trade and Services (CTS)**

- The Agency members reviewed the CTS table of allowable uses.
- Members noted that the listed uses were shown as permitted uses.

- No specific changes were requested.

➤ **Industrial**

- The LPA members reviewed the Industrial zoning district and its permitted and conditional uses.
- Vice Chairman Buhr noted that batting cages, previously addressed through Ordinance 26-12-LC, were not shown as a separate line item in the draft.
- Mr. Hernandez acknowledged the omission and advised that the matter had already been brought to staff's attention and would be corrected.
- He also advised that work on the zoning map is continuing by Daniel.
- Members discussed the listing of sexually oriented businesses and questioned whether strip clubs needed to be identified separately.
- Staff advised that the glossary definition of sexually oriented businesses encompasses the various individual types of such businesses, including the use being discussed.
- No additional changes to the Industrial district were requested.

➤ **Continuation of LDC Review**

- Staff confirmed that sufficient direction had been received from the LPA members and that their next review would begin with CMU Zoning District.

➤ **Public Comment**

Chairman Wood opened the public portion of the hearing for comment, with no one being present he closed the public.

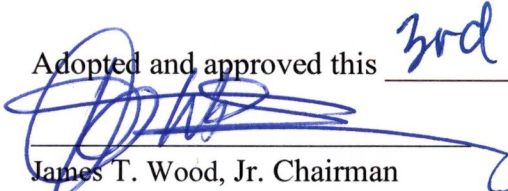
➤ **September Meeting Dates**

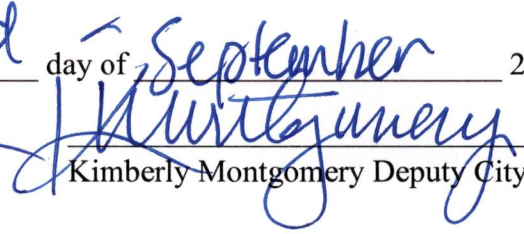
Mr. Hernandez mentioned the two dates for their next meetings being September 3rd & 17th. Agency member Bell let it be known in advance that she would not be able to attend the September 17th meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further discussion at this time, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Adopted and approved this 3rd day of September 2026.


James T. Wood, Jr. Chairman


Kimberly Montgomery Deputy City Clerk