

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

1:30 PM

**Broward Center for the Performing Arts - Mary N. Porter Riverview
Ballroom - 201 SW 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33312**

City Commission Conference Meeting

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor
BEN SORENSEN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 4
JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District 1
STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2
PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3

RICHELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager
SHARI L. McCARTNEY, City Attorney
PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor
DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Commission Members Present: Commissioner John C. Herbst, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Vice Mayor Ben Sorensen, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Also Present: City Manager Rickelle Williams, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Shari L. McCartney, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

CITY COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commission Members announced recent and upcoming community events and expounded on related information.

Commissioner Herbst announced a public workshop to solicit community feedback on the Lockhart Park site plan redesign scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at the Kaplan Building located in District 1. Commissioner Herbst encouraged residents and stakeholders to attend and noted that City staff, including City Manager Williams and AECOM representatives, would participate and present information on the redesign effort. Mayor Trantalis indicated his interest in attending. City Attorney McCartney advised that proper public notice would be needed to comply with the Sunshine Law. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding related meeting notice.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman requested that the Commission honor the passing of Levi Henry, founder and CEO of the Westside Gazette, with a Moment of Silence at tonight's Regular Meeting and remarked on Mr. Henry's contributions to the community and local journalism.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman provided an update on regional redevelopment efforts along the U.S. 441 corridor in coordination with the City of Plantation.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman discussed the completion of the Historic Dorsey-Riverbend stormwater pump station improvement project anticipated to enhance neighborhood resilience.

Commissioner Glassman remarked on two (2) upcoming public panel forums he will be attending focused on population growth, neighborhood character, historic preservation, redevelopment, and impacts of development on property values and the community.

Commissioner Glassman discussed an upcoming meeting at Holiday Park with neighbors to discuss water billing. He noted an additional community meeting to obtain neighborhood input on the redesign of the Sunrise Lane and A1A area to achieve a more attractive and functional community space.

Vice Mayor Sorensen remarked on Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale being recognized as the eighth (8th) best Riverwalk in the country.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed his participation at the Broward County Solid Waste Disposal and Recyclable Materials Processing Authority Meeting where its Master Plan framework (framework) was unanimously approved and explained related information. Broward County municipalities are currently not obligated to participate. The framework will be reviewed by individual municipalities, which will evaluate and decide whether to join the initiative at a future meeting. In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams said that staff will bring a related presentation to the Commission at an upcoming Conference Meeting, which will allow the Commission to evaluate options before the August 2026 deadline.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed feedback received during a recent Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations (CFLCA) Meeting regarding the City's Lien Amnesty Program (Program). The CFLCA expressed concern that the Program may be too generous, with penalty reductions of up to eighty-five percent (85%), potentially undermining code enforcement efforts. Vice Mayor Sorensen suggested that staff evaluate alternate approaches that would strengthen compliance incentives while still providing relief for residents facing genuine hardships.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding clarification on the Program automatically providing an eight-five percent (85%) reduction in penalties, City Manager Williams said that the City maintains an ongoing amnesty process and remarked that other cities offer amnesty only during designated periods. City Manager Williams said staff could bring this topic back to the Commission for discussion with the goal of evaluating whether the Program balances compliance incentives and enforcement. Mayor Trantalis commented on the City of Wilton Manors' amnesty program percentages and expounded on past practices and related information. Further comment and

discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Porshia Garcia, Community Services Department Director. Ms. Garcia clarified that the Program no longer grants an automatic eight-five percent (85%) reduction for all violations. Since September 2025, nuisance violations, repeat offenders, noise violations, and vacation rental violations have been limited to a fifty percent (50%) reduction. The Program expires September 30, 2026, and staff will return in June 2026 with recommendations on whether to continue or modify the Program.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's request for clarification regarding when a property owner becomes eligible for the Program and whether multiple violations are required before receiving a reduction, Ms. Garcia explained that eligibility is not based on the number of violations. Any property owner who has brought all of their violations into full compliance may apply for the Program, regardless of whether there was only one violation or multiple violations. She noted that once a violation is classified as a repeat offense, the property owner becomes subject to the reduced amnesty benefit, receiving only a fifty-percent (50%) reduction rather than the standard eighty-five percent (85%) Program reduction. Vice Mayor Sorensen confirmed his request for the Commission to review the Program at an upcoming Conference Meeting.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question regarding the status of the proposed Living Seawall Ordinance (Ordinance), Todd Hiteshow, Public Works Department Deputy Director, confirmed that a budget amendment to fund the permit fee assistance program would be presented on May 5, 2026, and that the First Reading of the Ordinance will be heard during the May 19, 2026, Regular Meeting.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions regarding Florida Power & Light's (FPL) utility undergrounding efforts and whether the City has a role in determining which neighborhoods are selected for conversion, City Manager Williams explained that FPL independently evaluates and prioritizes neighborhoods based on system reliability, storm performance, and infrastructure hardening needs and expounded on related information. The City coordinates closely with FPL, but the City does not participate in FPL's neighborhood selection process. Commissioner Glassman clarified that neighborhood-funded utility undergrounding projects are broader in scope and typically involve burying all utility lines, not just FPL infrastructure.

Vice Mayor Sorensen recommended staff to take a proactive role in communicating with FPL regarding undergrounding and offering input

regarding neighborhoods that may require additional infrastructure hardening and resiliency improvements.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed the need for an advanced inspection scheduling system that incorporates online appointment booking and real-time inspector tracking to enhance convenience for residents, contractors, and businesses awaiting building inspections. Anthony Fajardo, Development Services Department (DSD) Director, stated that DSD is actively evaluating technology upgrades and noted that some technology solutions, such as a text-based communication platform, are already available but have experienced limited customer adoption. Further comment and discussion ensued.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Trantalis announced recent and upcoming community events and expounded on related information.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the success of the *2026 Battle of the Paddles Pickleball Tournament* event at *The Fort*, noting strong attendance and the event's fundraising efforts for mental health.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his participation as a panel member at the Smart City Expo held in Palm Beach County, where he had the opportunity to highlight the City's accomplishments in flood mitigation and infrastructure projects.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

MGR-1 [26-0328](#)

City Commission Follow-up Action Items and Letters to the Commission (LTC) - City Manager's Office (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Williams acknowledged Daphnee Sainvil, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, for receiving the *Florida League of Cities' Home Rule Hero Award* for a second consecutive year.

City Manager Williams commended Assistant Police Department Chief Lynette Falzone for serving as President of the *National Association of Law Enforcement Executives*.

City Manager Williams discussed her Letter to the Commission addressing the School Board of Broward County's (School Board) plans to phase out Fort Lauderdale's School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. Seagull School SRO services will end in August 2026, and all remaining SRO assignments will end by January 2027, due to the

School Board creating its own SRO Program. The City intends to retain all affected SRO officers and staff is developing plans to reassign them rather than reduce staffing levels.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding how many SRO officers would become available for reassignment, City Manager Williams said twelve (12) and remarked on related budget information. Staff is evaluating options to absorb the funding gap with the goal of retaining all SROs. Potential opportunities include filling existing vacancies or assigning officers to specialized units, teams, or public safety initiatives that are in need of additional resources.

Mayor Trantalis observed that the loss of School Board School SRO funding may not result in a full \$1,200,000 budget impact, as SRO officers could potentially fill existing, budgeted Police Department vacancies. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams confirmed that there are currently twenty-three (23) police officer vacancies. City Manager Williams acknowledged that those vacancies are a factor, but cautioned that future staffing levels, ongoing recruitment, and possible expansion of public safety services could introduce additional budget considerations. Further comment and discussion. City Manager Williams noted that additional police staffing requests from the Police Department are under evaluation and may involve more than filling current vacancies.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

None.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 [26-0335](#)

International Swimming Hall of Fame Project Update - Joint Attractions - City Manager's Office (Commission District 2)

Mayor Trantalis recognized Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager. Mr. Rogers provided an update on the phases and planned programming for the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) Complex West Building and the Fort Lauderdale Aquarium.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Mario Caprini, Capital Group P3 Developments of Florida. Mr. Caprini introduced Richard Waltzer, Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Commissioner of Broward County, and President and Chief Executive Officer of the Fort Lauderdale Aquarium (Aquarium). Mr. Waltzer thanked Commissioner Herbst and Commissioner Glassman for their support that brought the Aquarium to fruition.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Jon Whitehead, Deep Blue Attractions. Mr. Whitehead remarked on previous financial challenges at ISHOF and emphasized that its long-term viability requires developing a financially sustainable attraction. The integration of a Florida Reef-themed Aquarium is intended to increase visitation, generate operating revenue, advance the *Every Child A Swimmer* mission and establish a distinctive destination that highlights South Florida's marine environment. Mr. Whitehead narrated a presentation entitled *Our World is Water One destination, two incredible journeys*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Whitehead explained that Aquarium attractions will feature rotating exhibits and evolving content rather than a static experience, and that Aquarium construction will begin in July 2026.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Matthew Krystolic, Hensel Phelps. Mr. Krystolic said that the ISHOF project remains on schedule, and that deep foundation work for the next phase is expected to begin in June or July, pending final permits. The Ocean Rescue Building is substantially complete and on track for its July 2026, opening. The Living Seawall construction is nearing completion, marking the final stages of Phase 1 improvements.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the date for the Aquarium's ribbon cutting, Mr. Krystolic remarked that it is anticipated for the end of 2028.

BUS-2 [26-0374](#)

Prospect Lake Clean Water Center Progress Update - Utility Services Department (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis recognized Albert Carbon, Utility Services Department Director. Mr. Carbon introduced Joe Padron, Prospect Lake Clean Center (Center) Construction and Operations Team member. Mr. Padron provided an update on the Center that has entered the commissioning phase, marking a major transition from construction to operational testing. Mr. Padron narrated a presentation entitled, *Prospect Lake Clean Water Center - Project Update*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Padron explained that a nanofiltration skid is a complete membrane filtration unit containing the

membranes, piping, and associated equipment that treats water.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding when the Center will be operational, Mr. Padron confirmed that September 2026 is the anticipated date.

BUS-3 [26-0375](#)

Water and Wastewater Consent Orders Update and Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) Program Development - Utility Services Department (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis recognized Albert Carbon, Utility Services Department Director. Mr. Carbon provided an overview of this topic and narrated a presentation entitled *Water and Wastewater Consent Orders Update and Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Program Development*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding why the City was seeking an extension to a project schedule and whether it reflected a delay in meeting the overall requirements of the Consent Order, Mr. Carbon clarified that the extension does not extend the expiration date of the Consent Order. Staff is seeking approval to modify the internal schedule for one specific project within the Consent Order.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question regarding an update on the odor suppression project at the George T. Lohmeyer Wastewater Treatment Plant, Mr. Carbon said that he did not have a current status on that topic, clarified that the odor control effort is a separate initiative, and not part of the Consent Order projects.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding progress to address I&I within the wastewater system, Mr. Carbon explained that measuring I&I reduction is complex and noted that wastewater flows are influenced not only by system leaks but also by factors such as population growth and increased development. Comparing I&I flow volumes over time does not yield a direct measure of infiltration reduction.

Mayor Trantalis clarified that his primary concern was the condition of the infrastructure and measures implemented to prevent stormwater and groundwater from entering deteriorated pipes, which could overwhelm the wastewater treatment system during rain events. Mr. Carbon elaborated on the three (3) main rehabilitation techniques currently in use, pipe lining, point repairs, and manhole rehabilitation.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' inquiry about whether staff has an estimate of the portion of the system that will ultimately be addressed through Consent Order projects, Mr. Carbon stated that staff did not have those figures available but could provide a geographic map showing completed and planned rehabilitation areas, as well as an estimate of the I&I reduction achieved. Mayor Trantalis requested that this information be provided to the Commission. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question regarding whether the pipelining program is intended to eventually line every pipe in the system or only those segments identified as needing rehabilitation, Mr. Carbon explained that staff uses a condition-based approach rather than a system wide lining program and expounded on information related to evaluating pipe condition.

BUS-4 [26-0410](#)

Outdoor Event Ordinance Presentation - Parks and Recreation
(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis recognized Carl Williams, Parks and Recreation Department Director. Mr. Williams provided an overview of this Agenda item and narrated a presentation entitled *OUTDOOR EVENT ORDINANCE*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question regarding how many special event applications are typically submitted with less than sixty (60) days' notice, Mr. Williams said that staff did not have an exact number available but indicated that such applications are uncommon. Exceptions are occasionally considered and require a case-by-case review and direction from the City Manager.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding whether the Tortuga Music Festival (Tortuga) qualifies as a charitable event for purposes of the City's event fee structure. Mr. Williams acknowledged that Tortuga does have a charitable component and supports philanthropic initiatives but clarified that under the proposed framework, Tortuga would be categorized as a signature event for fee-calculation purposes.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question regarding a proposal to limit barrier island events involving road closures to no more than one (1) per month and the current level of event activity, Mr. Williams reported that the barrier island hosted approximately one

hundred eighty-three (183) events in 2025, including nine (9) runs and walks with road closures. City Manager Williams clarified road closures on the barrier island, referenced in the materials, identifies nineteen (19) annual events that result in a road closure on the barrier island. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's question, Mr. Williams summarized the specific policy direction requested from the Commission about proposed changes to the Outdoor Events Program. These changes include deciding whether to raise application fees, using a clear Event Impact Fee Matrix with a point system to assess effects such as attendance, road closures, parking, and public safety needs; setting official event categories; identifying qualifying events and possibly offering fee limits or other benefits for events that meet the set criteria for Signature and Legacy Events. Vice Mayor Sorensen confirmed his support.

Commissioner Glassman remarked on his support for parts of the proposed outdoor event policy changes, including the fee limits and event classification system, but said more discussion is needed before deciding to limit how many events can happen and how often. He is in discussions with neighborhoods most affected by special events and wants more input before agreeing to limits on event numbers or timing. Further comment and discussion ensued.

There was Commission consensus that additional discussion is necessary regarding event restrictions and proposed event-limiting rules prior to adoption of an ordinance, and directed staff to return in May or early June 2026 with further information and a draft ordinance.

Commissioner Glassman remarked that major events such as the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (Boat Show) may warrant special consideration beyond standard event classifications because of their significant economic impact and close partnership with the City. It was noted that as a signature event, the Boat Show's fees would be capped at \$25,000. Commissioner Glassman suggested further discussion is needed regarding whether highly-impactful City-branded events, which generate significant economic benefits and enhance the City's brand and tourism, should be treated differently from other special events. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question regarding Legacy Events having priority if the City limits road-closure events, Mr. Williams acknowledged that adopting event caps could displace some newer events. Legacy events would receive preference as part of the strategy to reduce and better manage the total number of special

events.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mayor Trantalis discussed concerns regarding a press conference held earlier today by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) involving allegations against the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding whether staff had prior knowledge of the press conference, the nature of the allegations, and how the City intended to respond, City Manager Williams explained that she learned of the press conference that morning through a call from Police Chief Bill Schultz and subsequently notified the Commission that the event was scheduled for 11:00 a.m. City Manager Williams said that the allegations involved claims of a hostile work environment affecting Black and Hispanic police officers and expounded on related information.

Mayor Trantalis requested that the Commission be updated if the matter develops further. City Manager Williams confirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m.