



# City of Rockaway Beach

## Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

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**Date:** Thursday, April 17, 2025

**Location:** Rockaway Beach City Hall, 276 HWY 101 - Civic Facility

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Planning Commission President Hassell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 3. ROLL CALL

**Commissioners Present:** Bill Hassell, Sandra Johnson, Nancy Lanyon, Lydia Hess, and Jason Maxfield

**Commissioners Excused:** Stephanie Winchester

**Council Members Present:** Charles McNeilly, Mayor; and Mary McGinnis, Planning Commission Liaison

**Staff Present:** Luke Shepard, City Manager; Mary Mertz, City Planner; Melissa Thompson, City Recorder; and Elizabeth Avila, Administrative Assistant

**Consultants Present:** Rachel Cotton and Jamin Kimmell, Cascadia Partners

### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Start time: 5:01 p.m.

#### a. March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Johnson made a **motion**, seconded by Maxfield, to approve the March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented.

The **motion** carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

Nay: 0

### 5. PRESENTATIONS, GUESTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS – None Scheduled

### 6. STAFF REPORTS

Start time: 5:02 p.m.

City Planner Mertz provided the following updates:

- Salmonberry Trail project is back under consideration for funding
- Public Hearing next month for amendments to Flood Hazard Overlay (FHO) Zone

## **7. PUBLIC HEARING**

Start time: 5:03 p.m.

### **a. Consideration to Approve Proposed Amendments to the Rockaway Beach Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan Related to Middle Housing, and Recommend their Adoption to the City Council**

Hassell opened the public hearing at 5:04 p.m.

Hassell provided an introduction and read opening statements, public hearing disclosure statements and procedures, and testifying instructions.

Mertz presented the Staff Report.

Hassell invited Commissioners to ask questions of staff regarding the amendments.

Questions included:

- Question whether sink should be specified as part of provisions for sanitation, and related question regarding what constitutes a dwelling unit. Consultant's interpretation was that "provisions for sanitation" included a sink. Consultant advised that proposed amendments were intentionally more general, since the residential building code has more specific parameters.
- Commissioner general comment that the City may need to evaluate definitions of "steep" and "wetlands".
- Commissioner questioned the no density maximum. Staff confirmed it was a required change and Consultant noted that other design standards such as minimum lot size and setbacks would still apply.
- Staff confirmed that townhouse façade requirements would still have to meet setbacks.
- Commissioners questioned outdoor on-site parking and maneuvering area maximum of 12 feet. Consultant explained it was based on the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) model code, and referred to previous meeting discussions regarding pros and cons considered.
- Staff clarified cottage clusters setback requirements.
- Consultant clarified cottage cluster footprint vs. average unit size.
- Commissioner questioned cottage cluster process regarding the number of units developed within a specific timeframe and Consultant clarified that requirements would be subject to the building permit process.
- Staff confirmed that once a middle housing land division has taken place the land cannot be further divided to do another dwelling unit on it; it can only be used for that middle housing division.
- Commissioner noted correction on page 28 to change "family" to "unit".

Hassell invited public testimony.

Kristin Koptiuch, resident and member of County Housing Commission, testified in favor of the proposed amendments, expressing that multi-family housing is desperately needed as a modest way to increase local density.

Mertz reported that no written testimony was received.

Johnson made a **motion**, seconded by Hess, to close the Public Hearing at 5:41 p.m.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

Nay: 0

Hassell invited the Commission to deliberate.

There was brief discussion regarding adding the word “sink” to the definition of dwelling unit, and comments that “sink” was considered to be included in “sanitation”.

Hess made a **motion**, seconded by Lanyon, that based on the facts and evaluations presented in the City Staff Report, and evidence presented, the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval and adoption of the amendments to the City of Rockaway Beach Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Comprehensive Plan, with the following changes: wherever the word “family” appears, change it to “unit”.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

Nay: 0

## **8. CITIZEN INPUT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Hassell invited public comment. No audience members wished to comment.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Review of Draft Code Amendments Providing Exception to STR Cap for Accessible Short-Term Rentals**

Start time: 5:45 p.m.

Hassell invited public comment. No audience members wished to comment.

Mertz explained that the proposed license cap exception for accessible short-term rentals would not count towards the license total, and thus would not affect those on the license waiting list.

Discussion ensued regarding specific physical and cognitive accessibility requirements, cap recommendations, usage and availability requirements, and concern regarding the application process once the exception is in place.

Johnson made a **motion**, seconded by Hess, that the Planning Commission approve the short-term rental minimum accessibility standards, adding in an accessible microwave, and adding in the cognitive accessibility requirements that are set forth, with the bathtub being optional and all other requirements being mandatory instead of a certain number out of each. Johnson further moved that on the short-term rental minimum accessibility standards sink requirement, that the sink lip must be no higher than 34 inches. Johnson further moved to recommend that a total of one license availability exception may be issued to accessible dwelling units.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

Nay: 0

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Review of Large Community Grant Applications

Start time: 6:29 p.m.

Mertz shared slides summarizing Commissioner's scoring of the Large Community Grant applications showing three funding options for each grant based on the rankings.

Discussion ensued and Mertz answered clarifying questions. Concerns were expressed about the lack of detail or estimates in the Lions Club application.

Johnson stated that she is on the Board of Meals for Seniors, has volunteered with the Business Association and Neah-Kah-Nie Coast Art, Music and Cultural Foundation (NCAM), and participates in the Lions Club cleanups. Johnson stated that since they are non-profits, she is not required to declare a potential conflict of interest.

There was further discussion and consensus to approve option 1, whereby funds are disbursed by ranking, until funds run out.

Maxfield made a **motion**, seconded by Johnson, that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council award Large Community Grants in the dollar amounts indicated:

Fulcrum Community Resources and Rockaway Beach Business Association: \$19,000

Meals for Seniors: \$20,000

Neah-Kah-Nie Coast Art, Music and Cultural Foundation: \$18,206.42

Rockaway Beach Lion's Club: no award

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

Nay: 0

## 11. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Start time: 6:50 p.m.

Johnson shared a reminder about the Easter Egg Hunt at Phyllis Baker Park.

Lanyon commented on a news report about 3D printing houses as a means to create affordable housing.

Maxfield acknowledged Easter weekend and the beginning of summer events, and thanked all involved for organizing them. Maxfield suggested the City consider a commercial vacancy tax.

McGinnis praised Mertz and thanked the Planning Commissioners for their work. McGinnis thanked City staff for their gift bag presentation of grant awards. McGinnis shared information about NCAM.

Hassell expressed desire to revisit getting benches on the boardwalk.

McNeilly commended the Commission for their work that night. McNeilly shared information about weekend events. McNeilly stated that the proposed budget included funds to do an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Hess made a **motion**, seconded by Maxfield, to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Hess, Maxfield, Hassell)

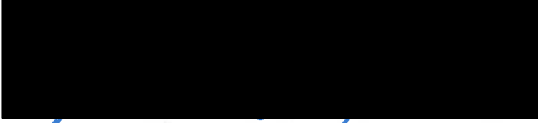
Nay: 0

MINUTES APPROVED THE  
15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MAY 2025



William Hassell, President

ATTEST



Melissa Thompson, City Recorder