

Detailed Minutes - Final

City Commission

Rex Hardin, Mayor

Alison Fournier, Vice Mayor

Audrey Fesik, Commissioner

Beverly Perkins, Commissioner

Rhonda Sigerson-Eaton, Commissioner

Darlene Smith, Commissioner

Gregory P. Harrison, City Manager

Mark Berman, City Attorney

Kervin Alfred, City Clerk

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

6:00 PM

Commission Chamber

Special Joint Meeting of City and CRA

CALL TO ORDER

The Honorable Rex Hardin, Mayor called the Joint Special Meeting of the City of Pompano Beach and the Pompano Beach Community Redevelopment Agency to order at 6:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Audrey Fesik
Commissioner Beverly Perkins
Commissioner Rhonda Sigerson-Eaton
Commissioner Darlene Smith
Vice Mayor Alison Fournier
Mayor Rex Hardin

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Kervin Alfred, City Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fournier, seconded by Commissioner Sigerson-Eaton, that the Agenda be APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Claudia McKenna, CRA Attorney, announced that Mark Berman, the city attorney for Pompano Beach, had been honored with the Paul S. Buckman Public Service Award from the Florida Bar for his contributions to local government law. She described Buckman's legacy and highlighted Berman's years of dedicated service, leadership, and willingness to support his colleagues and community.

Mayor Hardin congratulated Mark Berman and presented him with a token of appreciation. He praised Mr. Berman's long-standing service to the city and emphasized the significance of the award. He invited Mr. Berman to say a few words.

Mark Berman, City Attorney, expressed gratitude for the recognition and said it had been a joy to work with the city commission and predecessors. He acknowledged the challenges of the role but emphasized the fulfillment it brings and thanked the commission for the honor.

A. REGULAR AGENDA

1. [25-306](#) Downtown Development Project Update and Presentation - Update from the architect (HOK) on the City Hall and Parking Deck Design, Discussion of Proposed Additional Project Elements, Proposed Master Project Resolution, Proposed First Amendment to the Master Development Agreement and Discussion on the Financing of the City and CRA Obligations for the Downtown
(Fiscal Impact: N/A)

(Staff Contact: Suzette Sibble/Nguyen Tran)

Suzette Sibble, Assistant City Manager, provided a detailed overview of the downtown development efforts. She recapped previous joint meetings and clarified that no votes were required at the current meeting. She reviewed the history of the city's agreement with Roca Point Partners, which included mixed-use development plans, drainage infrastructure funding through a CRA bond, and financing mechanisms for a new city hall and parking garage. She explained that the city would now shift to public financing for those components and incorporate additional project elements. She also highlighted Roca Point's previous development projects in Georgia to illustrate their experience with mixed-use urban design and anchor facilities like county administrative buildings. She concluded by showing examples of restaurant and entertainment venues Roca Point successfully brought into other developments and expressed hopes to mirror those successes in Pompano Beach.

Patrick Leonard, Roca Point Partners, elaborated on the innovative technologies used in their past projects, including partnerships with Comcast and Duke to provide extensive fiber and power redundancy. He described infrastructure that could last decades and attract high-profile tenants due to its resilience.

Ms. Sibble added that the downtown area, previously named the Innovation District, includes designated opportunity zones established under Mayor Lamar Fisher in 2018. She emphasized how those zones create tax incentives for private investment and align with the city's vision for a technology-forward urban hub.

Mr. Leonard continued with context on the development site at the corner of Atlantic and Dixie. He described the challenges ahead, including zoning, environmental cleanup, and infrastructure work such as stormwater management and burying utilities. He emphasized that decisions on the City Hall and Pat Larkins Center would shape future planning and internal road layouts. He also detailed the design timeline and collaborative efforts with HOK Architects, aiming for a finalized concept in the next two weeks and a market-ready plan by year's end.

Vance Chatham, Senior Principal Designer at HOK Architects, described their architectural approach, beginning with interviews and programming to understand functional requirements and public accessibility. He outlined design principles focusing on integrating the building with its surroundings, using native landscaping, and welcoming features such as outdoor furniture and green spaces. He discussed early concepts for the building's facade, emphasizing transparency and openness, and described design ideas for the adjacent parking deck, which included colorful, sculptural elements and weather protection.

Steven Burgos, Design Director for Interiors at HOK, shared the vision for the building's lobby. He emphasized openness, accessibility, and vibrancy through the use of natural light, greenery, digital art, and sculptural elements. He also noted plans for a welcoming one-stop check-in area and upcoming community feedback sessions, including a design check-in next week and a final design presentation on May 14.

Ms. Sibble explained the proposed changes to the master development agreement and project financing. She stated that the plan to construct a new E. Pat Larkins Center at an alternative location in the downtown had been removed based on feedback from Commissioner Perkins and community stakeholders. Instead, the city would renovate the existing facility without Roca Point Partners' involvement, which would result in a \$20 million loss in potential land sales and \$1.4 million annually in lost property tax revenue. She also introduced a new proposed standalone vocational tech and college resource center near Annie Adderley Gillis Park, which Roca Point would build. This would increase the civic facilities budget by \$6.4 million. She further outlined incentives for local business participation, capping them at \$2 million and structuring them as bonuses for developers. She emphasized commitments to cultural and heritage preservation, targeted workforce housing levels, and a \$500,000 community contribution from Roca Point Partners to local schools and nonprofits. She also introduced city-led plans for a job placement consultant and small business incubator, noting these were outside Roca Point's scope. She justified the need for a new city hall, citing increased population, outdated infrastructure, inefficient layouts, and high deferred maintenance costs. Constructing a new building would reduce operational expenses by about \$1 million annually. She defended building a physical civic structure despite digital advances, noting that many residents still prefer in-person services. She cited other Florida cities also building new city halls and emphasized the importance of anchoring the downtown redevelopment. She confirmed the plan retained flexibility for either renovation or new construction of the E. Pat Larkins Center and clarified that the total financing package would not exceed \$137 million.

Comr. Perkins objected to the claim that she supported placing a standalone building across the street from the project, clarifying that she never suggested any facilities be built on the north side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. She said the staff's statements wrongly attributed those ideas to her and accused them of creating a narrative to pressure her and incite community pushback.

Ms. Sibble responded that her recommendation was based on her understanding from earlier group discussions. She said the area north of MLK was still considered part of the downtown and thought the location would meet community feedback asking for a more central site. She agreed to revisit the decision if the commission wished to refocus the project footprint.

Comr. Fesik questioned the presentation's portrayal of City Hall's condition, pointing out that photos of deterioration might be misleading if maintenance had occurred. She asked when the roof had last been

replaced.

Tammy Good, CIP Manager, confirmed the roof had been replaced less than 10 years ago but explained that the rust visible was normal in a coastal environment. She asserted that the building had suffered from construction quality issues since its origin and that ongoing maintenance was insufficient due to foundational problems.

Comr. Fesik acknowledged Tammy Good's professionalism and said her concern was not with staff but with the way visuals were used in presentations to sway public perception. She asked why the City Hall project was prioritized before securing revenue from private development.

Ms. Sibble replied that City Hall was the planned anchor for the downtown and that its approval would trigger land sales. She noted that approval of financing items on May 14 would allow Roca Point to begin selling development pads immediately. She reminded the commission that all supporting documents had been delivered the previous Thursday and encouraged a review of the agenda memos and financing summaries.

Comr. Fesik expressed concern about the volume and complexity of documentation being provided on a tight timeline. She stressed the difficulty for the public-and even commissioners without legal training-to process such dense information. She requested more user-friendly presentations for the public to better understand the stakes and financial commitments involved.

Mr. Berman explained that this meeting was intended to present information, not to seek decisions, and assured the commission that his office and outside counsel would be available to provide explanations before any votes.

Ms. McKenna added that similar discussions had already occurred during the 2024 approval of the original documents and emphasized that while the current forms could be clarified, they would not be revised.

Comr. Fesik reiterated her request for future presentations to focus less on promotional imagery and more on plainly communicating legal and financial obligations to the public.

Ms. McKenna responded that the intention of the current PowerPoint was to fulfill that need.

Mayor Hardin asked attendees to refrain from applause so the meeting could proceed in an orderly fashion.

Ms. Sibble concluded by reiterating that detailed legal and financial documentation had been made available three weeks in advance. She affirmed that the city's financing plan was conservative and self-sustaining, supported by land sale projections. She emphasized the city's duty to meet its obligations under the agreement and said that Roca Point Partners had already begun executing their commitments.

Comr. Fesik clarified that her concern was not with the development team or legal counsel but with how the material was presented to the public. She advocated for transparency and comprehension to ensure residents and commissioners could make informed decisions about the project.

Vice Mayor Fournier expressed strong concerns about using a new City Hall as the anchor for the downtown

redevelopment project. She noted that City Hall is closed several days a week and appears empty, which undermines its value as a bustling civic hub. She emphasized that taxpayers are ultimately responsible for the financial obligations tied to this project and highlighted the risk that land sales may not materialize as expected. She questioned the continued use of outdated planning concepts that may no longer align with the city's current needs and demographics.

Nguyen Tran, CRA Director, confirmed that the drainage and City Hall concepts originated around 2016 when the area was rebranded as the Innovation District.

Vice Mayor Fournier criticized the plan's rigidity, comparing it to the Atlantic and Dixie development, which she said was imposed on the community. She questioned the true investment role of Roca Point Partners, pointing out that they were not contributing funds to the early-stage, high-risk components of the project.

Ms. Sibble clarified that the city owns the land and is financially responsible for development-related obligations.

Vice Mayor Fournier stated that while Roca Point is referred to as a "master developer," their function appears more like a consultant or manager, with little financial risk. She questioned if the city's agreements had inadvertently compromised its autonomy by locking in obligations with insufficient public benefit.

Ms. McKenna explained that a deadlock under the master development agreement refers to disagreements on project terms, not necessarily a 3-3 commission vote. She emphasized the flexibility built into the agreement, allowing the city to pursue either public or private financing. She noted that the agreement does not supersede the city's charter but allows fallback options in case of disagreement.

Vice Mayor Fournier raised the concern that Roca Point was being described as an "owner's representative," which she found inappropriate given the inherent conflict of interest. She also criticized the way affordable housing was presented in the agreement, pointing out that 15% of workforce housing is already legally required and not a concession.

Mr. Tran responded that while 15% is the minimum, the developer committed to building-not buying out-those units and is targeting 25%.

Comr. Perkins expressed deep dissatisfaction with the contract approved in 2024. She felt that community requests were ignored, and the agreement strongly favored the developer. She criticized the \$2 million annual payment to the developer and argued that the project would continue to financially burden the city even if it failed.

Ms. Sibble clarified that the \$22 million is to be paid over 36 months for design and construction services and not over 10 years.

Ms. McKenna added that in the event of non-performance, the agreement allows for a tolling period of up to 10 years, during which the city would be restricted from developing the land elsewhere. She stated that if the city chose not to fund the project, it could revert to private financing, but the project would still proceed unless

explicitly terminated under the agreement.

Comr. Perkins maintained that the agreement unfairly binds the city and allows the developer to claim damages if the city backs out. She criticized the city attorney's office for producing a contract that, in her view, failed to protect the public interest and prioritized developer profits. She cited historic injustices regarding land seizure in the Northwest community and warned that the current redevelopment effort risked repeating those patterns.

Mr. Tran confirmed that RMA is responsible for real estate advisory work while the master developer is tasked with actual construction. Commissioner Perkins contended that the two roles were overlapping and unclear.

Mr. Berman defended the contract, stating it was drafted with expert outside legal counsel experienced in public-private partnerships (P3s). He asserted that the process followed best practices for complex development deals and was carefully negotiated.

Comr. Perkins questioned Mr. Berman's loyalty to the commission and said the contract reflected a profit-driven mindset rather than community benefit. She reflected on the historic and emotional significance of the land to the Northwest community. She voiced concern that the redevelopment project isolates itself as a self-sustaining enclave while failing to improve surrounding neighborhoods. She noted the lack of meaningful inclusion of Black developers and minority-owned businesses and expressed disappointment with staff she felt had not advocated for equitable outcomes. Despite the controversy around preserving the E. Pat Larkins Center, she stated she would support the will of her constituents who want it to remain.

Comr. Fesik questioned why a referee was chosen for conflict resolution over a mediator or arbitrator and how that individual was selected. She noted that the referee's decisions would be binding and final, expressing concern over the lack of commission input on the appointment. After hearing that the city contract administrator and the developer mutually selected the referee, she questioned why the commission was not informed by the stated January 31 deadline. She further criticized the intense time demands of the project and the amount of money spent on marketing and consultants, questioning the point of the commission's involvement if decisions were already effectively made. She raised skepticism over the impartiality of the referee, suggesting the process felt predetermined and lacking transparency.

Mr. Berman clarified that the meeting's purpose was simply to inform the commission and public of project progress, not to make final decisions.

Comr. Fesik countered that the reality felt different, describing a scenario where the commission had no real options-either approve the project or fall into a deadlock, where the referee would decide in favor of the developer. She expressed frustration at the lack of genuine choice and transparency in the process.

Vice Mayor Fournier criticized the original approval of the contract, emphasizing that she voted against it due to its lopsided nature and the heavy burden it placed on taxpayers. She pointed out the financial gains by consultants like CBRE, who had received significant compensation and stood to make even more. She raised concerns about Ms. Sibble's heavy involvement and questioned whether the CRA should be covering part of her salary, given her time commitment to the project. She concluded that the project felt imposed from the top down, not driven by community input.

Ms. Sibble responded that CBRE had played a long-standing role in bringing the master developer to the city and offering real estate expertise. She emphasized the developer's role in overseeing and coordinating the entire project, including infrastructure and resale of improved land parcels. She explained that the developer helps accelerate progress by streamlining negotiations and managing multiple development components.

Vice Mayor Fournier acknowledged the developer's potential to earn significantly from land sales, describing the arrangement as lucrative. She reiterated her concern about shared personnel between the city and CRA, suggesting the lines of responsibility and funding were blurred. She pointed out that many consultants were involved and questioned whether the project truly reflected community needs.

Comr. Smith voiced support for the project, viewing it as a promising opportunity for District 4 and the city. She believed that revitalization would attract further investment, including in affordable housing, and encouraged openness to potential benefits for surrounding neighborhoods.

Comr. Perkins disagreed with comparing the beach and Northwest communities, arguing that the differences were too vast. She expressed frustration at not being included in the project from the beginning, feeling it was handed to her after key decisions were already made. She emphasized that affordable housing was the biggest concern in her district and said current development plans did not truly address it. She pointed to a lack of control over CRA funds and called for a dedicated pot of funding for the Northwest, expressing disappointment in the failure to prioritize community needs.

Mayor Hardin briefly interjected to maintain order during applause and allowed Commissioner Perkins to conclude her remarks.

Comr. Fesik clarified that despite her concerns with the agreement, she recognized Roca Point as a highly respected developer and supported revitalization in principle. She stressed the need to invest in aging parts of the city while ensuring the community's character is preserved. She warned that developers could buy out affordable housing obligations, leaving only market-rate units. She then asked Mayor Hardin about a long-standing plan to connect Tri-Rail and Brightline through the area, expressing concern over how much of the Northwest CRA would be consumed by the downtown project. She recounted noticing the sheer volume of approved developments while reviewing city records and questioned what would remain of the Northwest community. She asked Ms. McKenna about any relationship with RMA.

Ms. McKenna firmly denied ever providing services to RMA or being paid by them, stating her work was solely for local governments.

Comr. Fesik presented a blog post from RMA that implied Ms. McKenna was part of their compliance team. She expressed frustration over having been dismissed previously and accused the process of creating a hostile environment for her from the beginning of her term.

Ms. McKenna responded by explaining her role as a compliance expert for local governments, occasionally working with RMA on panels or training. She clarified that RMA had never been her client and that her services were always rendered through public agencies. She expressed regret that Commissioner Fesik had not

approached her directly before making public accusations.

Comr. Fesik maintained that even if not technically a conflict of interest, the relationship appeared ethically questionable.

Mayor Hardin opened the floor to public input, clarifying that staff would document any questions for later responses.

Gigi Doubek, a resident of District 1, voiced opposition to relocating City Hall. She argued that while the building requires renovations like a new roof and interior updates, it remains a manageable and affordable asset. Drawing comparisons to Chicago's historic City Hall, she emphasized pride in maintaining public facilities rather than replacing them. She questioned the notion of City Hall serving as a redevelopment anchor, noting that true anchors create jobs and economic activity. She criticized the plan to give up city-owned land and lease it back, warning it would lead to lost control and future financial burdens. She cited local examples, like the Parliament House, to illustrate the risks of land lease agreements. She also questioned the justification for the project based on city employee residency, noting that only a minority of workers live in the city.

Ed Phillips, 384 Northwest 19th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, initially did not plan to speak but felt compelled to address the meeting's implications. He acknowledged that development can bring financial gain but emphasized that the Northwest community deserves to share in those opportunities. He advocated for including qualified African Americans in the project and supported Commissioner Perkins' stance on preserving the E. Pat Larkins Center. He criticized early renderings and noted that while relocation may displace some residents, they must be supported in finding new homes. He concluded by urging the commission to understand what opportunity truly means for the neighborhood, reminding them that such chances may not return.

Morgan Cooper, 1031 Northeast 28th Avenue, Pompano Beach, FL, expressed concern over the plan to demolish City Hall and the Pat Larkins Community Center. She opposed selling city-owned land to private developers and leasing it back, calling it fiscally irresponsible. She criticized the framing of the project as "smart growth" and questioned its economic timing given the current downturns. She emphasized the community's desire to preserve public assets, retain control, and avoid being left out of the planning process, arguing that the current plan benefits private interests over public good.

Jackie Moreland, 1526 Northwest 7th Lane, Pompano Beach, FL, quoted a reflection on legacy and credited E. Pat Larkins with leaving a lasting impact on the community. She expressed her wish to keep the community center in its current location while calling for a new center named for the Northwest community. She criticized the exclusion of residents from decision-making and noted that the project appears imposed rather than inclusive. She likened replacing the City Hall to discarding a home due to aging rather than maintaining it. She urged mutual respect and recognition of the Northwest's right to be heard and included in city plans.

Carlene Duncan, 1851 Northwest 15th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, questioned the legitimacy of involving a referee in city decisions, expressing confusion and frustration. She stated that if a decision cannot pass a vote, it should not be overridden by an outside party, advocating for local control over city matters.

Mary Phillips, 384 Northwest 19th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, asked what plans exist for the City Hall

property if it is demolished, highlighting a lack of transparency. She suggested that current trends pushing remote workers back into offices might justify the need for more space but expressed dissatisfaction with the design. She supported building a new community center to address population growth and called for an investment that benefits the entire city. She believed that placing City Hall in the area would enhance perceptions of safety and attract businesses, sharing a past conversation with E. Pat Larkins about revitalization.

Wayne Vereen, 2420 Northwest 7th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, emphasized his support for change in Pompano but insisted that elected officials listen to the people who voted for them. He noted disparities between how the east side and beach areas receive resources compared to the Northwest. He advocated for basics like affordable housing, grocery stores, and restaurants and warned against secretive contracts and last-minute decisions. He called for transparency and inclusion in development decisions that directly affect the community.

Terry Williams, 757 Northwest 15th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, reflected on historical efforts by E. Pat Larkins and affirmed that Mr. Larkins supported redevelopment. She defended the developer's inclusivity and emphasized personal responsibility in reviewing agreements before voting. She also raised concerns about the historic seizure of her family's property for public development, drawing parallels to broader patterns of gentrification. She urged commissioners to negotiate beneficial outcomes for their constituents with professionalism and transparency.

Tundra King, 124 Northwest 15th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, criticized the city for mishandling early community engagement. She recounted a meeting where residents were not allowed to ask questions about a project that would significantly impact their neighborhood. She expressed frustration at being excluded from visuals and decisions and pointed out the imbalance in how the Northwest is treated compared to other parts of the city. She raised issues such as poor schools, lack of police presence, and safety concerns, concluding that trust in the process is difficult when the community consistently feels ignored.

Carla Coleman, 2631 Northeast 23rd Street, Pompano Beach, FL, reflected on her lifelong connection to Pompano Beach and emphasized the ongoing need for a functioning City Hall. She doubted that remote work would ever fully replace in-person operations and urged the city to move forward with the long-term redevelopment plan. She encouraged the commission to continue engaging the public, listen to community needs, and build a modern, efficient workspace while honoring the legacy of the neighborhood.

There being no further speakers, Mayor Hardin concluded public input and moved on to Commission discussion; however, no one commented further on the matter.

No official action was taken at this meeting.

B. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Rex Hardin, Mayor

Kervin Alfred, City Clerk