



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT
New Smyrna Beach City Commission
Reported by Rice S. Wagner

07/14/26

After a month's break the commissioners returned with a plate full of city business. A proclamation was presented to Rob Salazar and the Leisure Services Department for an excellent job in promoting the many assets of New Smyrna Beach. Among accomplishments were included a new video of NSB, the Sports Complex, the city golf course and dog parks.

Chad Truxall, Executive Director of the Marine Discovery Center, gave a thorough and interesting overview of activities for 2025. The talk, which included credit to former Mayor Jim Vandergriff, emphasized the now four pillars of importance—education, conservation, exploration and connection. Over 18,000 people visited the center and 986 campers participated in eco-friendly camps. People contributed over 11,900 volunteer hours which included the recycling of 1.3 million oyster shells. The center plans on adding a building for educational purposes and another boat due to the high demand of water exploration.

Town Manager Kevin Cowper reminded the audience that there is a budget meeting on July 16th and on July 28th the proposed millage will be set. Babe James is receiving a block grant to help with needed upgrades in areas such as the garden.

A workshop was held to discuss the possibility of a roundabout at or near the entrance to the NSB airport off of US1. A report is to follow with the findings, both pro and con.

Department heads met to go over preparedness for hurricanes. Mr. Cowper feels we are ready if disaster hits.

Of special interest is the instillation of an electric sign on 44...indicating that construction will begin on July 20th. It is long overdo and work will be disruptive but necessary. You can check www.cityofnsb.com for up to date information.

The contract with FCC for waste management has been signed and will take effect on October 1st. The public will be advised what to expect as the start date grows closer.

Mr. Cowper addressed the concern about data centers and says the town is waiting to see what laws out of Tallahassee are passed and signed. The Development Services Department, headed by Director Shane Corbin, will be in charge of gathering information on the possible implications of such centers in our town. Citizens await a response, including Commissioner Lisa Martin who for the third time asked the commissioners to consider crafting legislation to control data center development in our town. No one on the commission came forward to support action.



A member of the public raised concerns about the noise generated by the local airport and the constant training flights. The FAA recommended a Calm Wind Designation and it is not used. A request was put forward which would have the city form a Noise Abatement Commission and act as a go-between with the public and the airport officials.

Brian Floria is working on a youth sailing program which would start next year. There is currently 100% funding for boats and gear. He is looking for a grant that would help with expenses such as scholarships for sailing campers (\$400 fee). The program is also looking for a location to provide instruction.

A discussion was held regarding the funds for demolition-acquisition vs. elevation of homes that were damaged during hurricanes. The program is winding down but some homes are still slated for completion in a year.

There is work being done to eliminate confusion over which parking passes are needed and in what locations. The Interlocal Agreement for Reciprocal Parking combines city and county permits and is proposed to begin January 1, 2027. Note that the NSB Dunes Park and the Lighthouse are outside this agreement. Regarding the beach, FDOT has provided at least one electric sign for beach parking closures due to the extremely high volume of visitors. The goal is to advise people on what is closed and where alternate approaches can be found.

Tony Miller, NSB's Natural Resources Manager, continues to acquire land for the city. One purchase of interest is on Turnbull Creek with the possibility of adding an ADA ramp which would provide access for the city.

The assistant NSB attorney supported adding parking lots as permitted use property. The commissioners approved the move 3-1 (Martin voting no).

NSB is considered a 'tree city' and as such the board reviewed laws which require a permit to remove even dead trees. A consulting firm made recommendations regarding our fee structure. Commissioner Martin expressed concerns about the wording of the suggested changes and would like to see a biannual review of the city's guidelines. Mayor Cleveland indicated his strong concern about the risk of using language that is not specific enough to protect our trees. The issue was tabled for a future commission meeting.

Parking along Sapphire has been redesigned (including mobile payment) and paid parking areas have been increased to 20. Any phone can be used and the receipt does not have to be returned to the car for display. The new mobile payment kiosks will be activated on August 30th.

A first reading of Ordinance No.34-26 would assign a Local Landmark designation to the Clinch Street Railroad Spur section which is east of South Riverside Drive.