

**Local Planning Agency
Pinellas County
October 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The Pinellas County Local Planning Agency (LPA) met in regular session (pursuant to Section 134-12 of the Pinellas County Land Development Code, as amended) at 9:01 AM on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Rodney Collman, Vice-Chairman
Carlos Brito
Stanley Cataldo
Hoyt Hamilton
John Hendricks
Lari Johnson
Trish Johnson (non-voting School Board Representative)

Not Present

Mattaniah Jahn, Chairman

Others Present

Michael Schoderbock, Division Manager, Zoning and Project Management
Scott Swearengen, Planning Section Manager
Derrill McAteer, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Jessica Oakes, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Collman called the meeting to order and reviewed the procedure for public hearings, indicating that today's cases will be heard by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on November 18, 2025; and that any documents needing to be reviewed by the BCC should be submitted to the Zoning Section 15 days prior to the BCC meeting.

QUASI-JUDICIAL STATEMENT

Attorney McAteer noted that the following hearings are quasi-judicial; and that only competent, substantial, fact-based testimony or evidence may be considered in the

decisions made by the Board; whereupon, he provided information regarding the types of evidence that are considered as such.

MINUTES FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 MEETING

Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes, as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Legal notice having been published for the items on the agenda, as evidenced by affidavit of publication filed with the Clerk, public hearings were held for the following items. All correspondence provided to the Clerk's Office has been filed and made a part of the record. All persons planning to give testimony were duly sworn by a Deputy Clerk.

PROPOSED ORDINANCES AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND PROPOSED RESOLUTION AMENDING THE ZONING ATLAS

Case Nos. FLU-25-08 and ZON-25-07

APPLICATIONS OF JUSTIN GINGERICH, IGNITE ACADEMY, INC., THROUGH BRIAN J. AUNGST, JR., REPRESENTATIVE, FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- (FLU-25-08) FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) AMENDMENT FROM RESIDENTIAL RURAL (RR) TO INSTITUTIONAL (I)

and

- (ZON-25-07) ZONING ATLAS AMENDMENT FROM RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURE (R-A) TO LIMITED INSTITUTIONAL (LI)

A public hearing was held for the above applications regarding approximately 5.23 acres located at 2271 Keystone Road in East Lake Tarpon.

Mr. Schoderbock indicated that Case Nos. FLU-25-08 and ZON-25-07 will be presented together; whereupon, acting Chairman Collman and Mr. Hamilton noted that they have visited the site.

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation containing photographs and maps, Mr. Swaengen pointed out the location of the subject property and described the surrounding land use categories and zoning classifications; whereupon, he indicated that

the applicant has expressed the desire to build a private school for students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Mr. Swearengen also provided details regarding the current and proposed FLUM and zoning categories and briefly discussed the subject property's inclusion in the East Lake Tarpon Community Overlay and the Rural Open Space category of a Scenic Non-Commercial Corridor. He noted that while the request could generate up to an additional 570 vehicular trips per day, Keystone Road currently operates with a 54% vehicle to capacity ratio; whereupon, Mr. Swearengen also related that flood risk on the subject property is low; and that staff recommends approval.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Swearengen provided additional information regarding flood risk, allowable uses in the current land use and zoning categories, and traffic impacts.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for the applicant, Brian Aungst, Jr., Clearwater, appeared and indicated that Ignite Academy is a private school that is based at Radiant Church on East Lake Road, which is located approximately two miles from the subject property; that the Academy's current lease with Radiant Church has not been renewed and will expire in July of 2026; and that the subject property is now under contract to be purchased by Ignite Academy for the continued operation of the private school.

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Aungst provided background information regarding the rationale for today's requests, relating that staff advised the applicant to pursue a land use amendment rather than a Type 2 Use due to the size of the subject property. He also presented a conceptual site plan and provided details related to drainage, buffering, and current enrollment at the school.

Following introduction by Mr. Aungst, Kurt Hinrichs, Clearwater, appeared and indicated that he is a civil engineer; whereupon, Mr. Hinrichs referred to the conceptual site plan and provided information regarding the proposed structure, on-site parking, buffering, and potential traffic impacts.

Thereupon, Mr. Aungst, with input from Justin Gingerich, Tarpon Springs, briefly discussed various aspects of the school's operations. Mr. Aungst also referred to a map of the area surrounding the subject property and provided details regarding nearby retail/office, agricultural, institutional, academic, and religious uses.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for proponents, the following individuals appeared and expressed their support for both applications:

Nancy McAmis, Tarpon Springs

Rick Kalil, Clearwater
John Varvaresos, Tarpon Springs
Cherise Katsaros, Palm Harbor

Upon the acting Chairman's call for opponents, the following individuals appeared and expressed their concerns related to both applications:

Linda Van Dam, Tarpon Springs (submitted documents)
Mark Washburn, Tarpon Springs
Ed Hoffman, Tarpon Springs
Chris Hrabovsky, Tarpon Springs
Charlie Smith, Tarpon Springs

In rebuttal, Mr. Aungst addressed concerns expressed by the opponents and indicated that usage of the subject property for a school is already permitted under the current land use and zoning categories; whereupon, he provided brief comments related to staff's recommendation for approval and the role of competent, substantial evidence in the decisions made by the Board.

Responding to a query by Ms. Johnson, Mr. Aungst confirmed that the proposed two-story structure would total 40,000 square feet, with each story comprising 20,000 square feet.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Swearngen, with input from Mr. Schoderbock, provided information regarding various topics, including the site plan review process, Type 2 Uses, and the need for a land use amendment due to the subject property's size.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for a motion, Mr. Schoderbock indicated that separate motions are required for both the future land use amendment and the zoning amendment; whereupon, Mr. Hendricks made a motion to approve Case No. FLU-25-08, as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamilton and carried by a vote of 5 to 1, with Mr. Cataldo dissenting.

Thereupon, following the acting Chairman's call for a motion, Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve Case No. ZON-25-07. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hendricks and carried by a vote of 5 to 1, with Mr. Cataldo dissenting.

Case No. FLU-25-09

APPLICATION OF GREEN ENERGY FOR NORTH AMERICA, LLC, THROUGH KATIE COLE, REPRESENTATIVE, FOR A FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) AMENDMENT FROM RESIDENTIAL URBAN (RU) TO RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM (RM)

A public hearing was held for the above application regarding approximately 18.43 acres located at 13400 Pine Street in unincorporated Largo.

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation containing photographs and maps, Mr. Swearengen pointed out the location of the subject property and indicated that it is currently vacant; and that the applicant has expressed the desire to build multi-family housing on the subject property. He also provided information regarding the surrounding land use and zoning classifications, the subject property's current zoning category, and the current and proposed land use categories.

Thereupon, Mr. Swearengen provided historical information regarding the subject property, indicating that a FLUM amendment changed the land use from Residential Low to Residential Urban in 2004; that the FLUM amendment included a development agreement, which allowed 207 multi-family dwelling units due to an affordable housing density bonus; and that since the units were never built, the development agreement expired. He also related that a Type 2 Use for the subject property was approved by the Board of Adjustment and Appeals in 2015; that the intention for the Type 2 Use, and an associated concept plan, was to construct a 207-unit affordable housing development; and that since the units were never built, the Type 2 Use expired.

Mr. Swearengen indicated that the applicant has expressed the desire to build affordable housing on the subject property; and that, under the proposed Residential Medium land use category, the applicant could acquire a density bonus to construct up to 414 dwelling units if an affordable housing development plan is submitted and approved by the BCC; whereupon, he briefly discussed potential traffic impacts and flood risk.

Mr. Swearengen related that staff has compatibility concerns with much of the surrounding community; that past approvals for multi-family housing on the subject property included additional assurances, such as binding concept plans and affordability parameters; and that this request would allow up to 69 more units than what has been approved in previous requests, but without accompanying assurances; whereupon, he noted that staff finds the application inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommends denial.

Responding to queries by Ms. Johnson, Mr. Swearengen clarified that the applicant could construct up to 414 dwelling units under the proposed land use category of Residential

Medium if the County granted the full density bonus of 50% for an affordable housing development project; and that, without an affordable housing density bonus, the applicant could construct up to 276 dwelling units under the Residential Medium land use category.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for the applicant, Katie Cole, Clearwater, appeared and indicated that she represents the applicant, Belleair Development Group, who is the contract purchaser of the subject property. Referring to a PowerPoint presentation containing photographs and maps, Ms. Cole provided information regarding the request, including details related to the subject property's low flood risk and requirements associated with the property's zoning category of Residential Planned Development (RPD).

Ms. Cole pointed out the location of the subject property and provided information related to the subject property, including its previous use as a disposal facility and joint efforts by the applicant and the County Attorney's Office to pursue a Brownfield designation. She also provided details regarding new development surrounding the subject property and indicated that the County recently confirmed that the subject property would be eligible for development under a Live Local Act designation.

Ms. Cole indicated that this application would go through the Type 2 Use process due to the RPD zoning category's master development plan requirements; and that the process will include considerations for utilities, traffic, buffering, and building height; whereupon, she briefly discussed potential traffic impacts, the proposed affordable housing project's alignment with Comprehensive Plan goals, and reasoning for the proposed change to the Residential Medium land use category.

Responding to queries by Ms. Johnson, Ms. Cole, with input from Mr. Schoderbock, briefly discussed the expiration of the previously approved master development plan, traffic considerations, time and research needed to secure a Brownfield designation, and the rationale that led the applicant to exclude a formal affordable housing request as part of this application.

No one appeared following the acting Chairman's call for proponents. Upon his call for opponents, Marva Perry (submitted documents) and Gloria Blain, Largo, appeared and expressed their concerns related to the application.

In rebuttal, Ms. Cole addressed concerns expressed by Mses. Perry and Blain and indicated that requirements associated with the RPD zoning category ensure that buffering, compatibility, and traffic would be addressed through a master development plan.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for discussion, Mr. Hamilton expressed his support for the application.

Responding to queries by Ms. Johnson, Mr. Schoderbock provided clarifying information regarding the application's current land use and zoning classifications and confirmed that the subject property could currently be developed at a lower density than that which is being requested.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for a motion, Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve the request associated with Case No. FLU-25-09. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brito and failed by a vote of 2 to 4, with Messrs. Hendricks and Cataldo, acting Chairman Collman, and Ms. Johnson dissenting.

Responding to comments and queries by Ms. Johnson, Attorney McAteer, with input from Mr. Schoderbock, indicated that since the motion failed, another motion is needed in order to provide a recommendation to the BCC.

Thereupon, Ms. Johnson made a motion to deny Case No. FLU-25-09 based on staff's recommendation and to recommend denial to the BCC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cataldo and carried by a vote of 4 to 2, with Messrs. Brito and Hamilton dissenting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schoderbock indicated that there will be an LPA meeting next month.

Upon the acting Chairman's call for a motion to adjourn, Ms. Johnson made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cataldo; whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.