



**Town of Surfside  
Town Commission Workshop  
MINUTES**

**November 17, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**

Town Hall

9293 Harding Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Surfside, FL 33154

**1. Opening**

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**B. Roll Call of Members**

Town Clerk McCready called the roll with the following members present:

Present: Mayor Charles Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, and  
Commissioner Nelly Velasquez.

Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer and Commissioner Charles Kesl were  
absent.

Also present were Town Manager Andrew Hyatt, Town Attorney Lillian Arango.

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Interim Chief Healy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**D. Mayor and Commission Remarks**

There were no remarks.

**2. Discussion on Items to be Placed on the March 15, 2022 ballot.**

**Hedges**

Commissioner Velasquez would like to add a ballot to the March election ballot related to the Hedges. She believes it should be up to each resident or 6 feet should be the highest. Mayor Burkett spoke about the proper language to be used in order not to put residents in a bad position.

Public speaker George Kousoulas stated that having such language on the charter may be overreached. He spoke about the possibility of focusing on the height of the homes.

Mayor Burkett further spoke of the possibility of some language stating it shall not be less than 6 feet tall.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that this topic gives many residents anxiety, especially for the corner lot residents.

Vice Mayor Paul agreed with Commissioner Velasquez and that's why she added it to the Zoning in Progress. She doesn't believe it has to go on the Charter, but agrees with letting voters decide.

Further discussion took place among the Commission and language. Consensus was reached for the language to be as follows: "The Town Commission shall never mandate that hedges be less than 6 feet in any areas in the residential district".

### **Town Commission Salaries and Benefits**

Commissioner Velasquez requested to also add Commission compensation on the March 15, 2022 ballot. She believes that it is a lot of work and they should be compensated.

Vice Mayor Paul agrees having the voters decide. She doesn't expect it but she is ok with putting it to the voters.

Randy Rose believe that North Miami and North Miami Beach are two municipalities that pay. He further stated that in some instances they received insurance and other benefits. He appreciated everyone's time and it doesn't hurt to ask and let the people speak.

Commissioner Salzhauer arrived at 5:48 p.m.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that she requested some information regarding Elected Official salaries.

Town Attorney Arango stated that she replied providing a report that is released by the Miami Dade Commission on Ethics. Town Attorney Arango provided Commissioner Salzhauer with a hard copy of the report.

Town Manager Hyatt stated that the Florida League of Cities usually puts out City stats that are available to the public.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that you get what you pay, and she believes this position is not worth a \$1 per year. She is not speaking about getting rich but being fairly compensated.

Some discussion took place relating to how Bal Harbor sets their elected officials' salaries.

Vice Mayor Paul read the Bal Harbor Charter section related to this matter into the record.

Commissioner Velasquez believes it should be a set amount but not with cost of living

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that if they are going to move forward, they should come up with a number.

Commissioner Velasquez stated the salaries of the City of Aventura elected officials.

Commissioner Salzhauer believes that \$25,000 could be a fair number.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that \$25,000 is too much money and that \$10,000 could be a better number.

Vice Mayor Paul gave her perspective. She doesn't think that money should motivate people to run. You should be motivated to serve your community, and she sees it more like a bonus for their services.

Further discussion took place regarding the issue.

Vice Mayor Paul suggested \$500 a month.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke about \$500 monthly.

Commissioner Salzhauer believes it is too little for the work it takes.

Consensus of majority was to put some language on the ballot for a \$1000 a month flat with no cost-of-living adjustment.

George Kousoulas spoke on the issue and he thinks that the rationale of the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Velasquez is the right one.

Further discussion took place and consensus was reached to put a ballot question on the March 15, 2022 to ask the residents if the Town Commission should get paid \$1,000 per month and receive individual health insurance. Mayor Burkett objected to this ballot question.

### **Undergrounding the Powerlines**

Assistant Town Manager Jason Greene requested not to exceed the amount that the Commission would like to place on the ballot.

There was some discussion with the "Pay as you go" concept and there was not consensus for this concept.

There was consensus to use "not to exceed \$40,000,000" language.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that \$3 million dollar could be a deal breaker.

Vice Mayor Paul believes that the Town should have a cushion and to have in mind that the alley is included.

### **Height and Density**

Mayor Burkett spoke about some ballot language that he had shared with the Town Attorney. He read the title into the record and it read as follows:

*"The density of development and structures within the Town of Surfside shall never exceed 70 units per acre, nor shall the height ever exceed ???? to the top of the building for properties on the ocean, and never exceed a height of 40 feet above the crown of the road to the top of the building on the blocks between Collins and Harding, nor ever exceed ????? above the crown of the road to the top of the building in the residential district. The erosion control line shall never be used to calculate density, only the bulkhead line shall be used. Lot size restrictions and requirements on the ocean shall be those which were in effect in the 2004 zoning code. This amendment to the Town of Surfside Charter shall not be repealed, revised, amended, or superseded, unless repeal, revision, amendment, or superseding provisions are placed on the ballot at a regularly scheduled election of the Town of Surfside and approved by a vote of more than 70% of the electors of the Town of Surfside."*

He believes that Surfside should remain the small town they all believe it is.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that this is already in the Charter and that the issue to her is the aggregation of the lots that's allowing the big buildings and parking garages.

Public speaker George Kousoulas spoke about the issue and provided some specific details related to the matter.

Commissioner Salzhauer stated that she is not interested in raising houses. She further stated that Lindsay Lecour's house was completed within the code. She believes that this is not a matter that should be added it to a ballot question.

Mayor Burkett stated that one of his main concerns has always been the density, intensity and height of properties.

Vice Mayor Paul reminded the Town Commission that some of these issues can be resolved during the upcoming Charter Review that takes place every 10 years.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that protection to the single-family district should be a priority and should be in the Charter. She believes that it is their duty to protect their Town.

Mayor Burkett believes that the 30 feet in the charter may be a little low.

Commissioner Salzhauer believes it is too high.

Public Speaker Jeff Rose stated that the Planning and Zoning Board had a workshop last night and requested some language regarding this matter to be considered by the Town Commission to be added to the ballot.

Vice Mayor Paul proposed that in case of a hurricane and devastation of a building occurs, that they can re-develop per the code that was in place when the building was built. She believes that if you go by another code, you are at risk of displacing some owners.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that this may become complicated to place it on as a ballot question.

Commissioner Salzhauer is not supportive of adding a question related to this matter on the ballot.

Further discussion took place about locking the height of the building in the ocean, the ones in the corridor and if anyone wanted to amend that, you will need 70 percent of the voters to vote.

Mayor Burkett also spoke about removing the language addressing the measurement from the erosion control line to use the bulkhead line instead.

Public speaker George Kousoulas provided an explanation on the matter.

Vice Mayor Paul believes that all these requirements are already in the Charter.

Discussion regarding what the current charter states that the higher measurement is 120 feet. However, it does not state where you measure from.

Mayor Burkett stated that he is trying to set the number where you measure from and setting a new height for buildings.

Recap – 120 feet above NGVD 18.25

The erosion control line shall never be used to calculate density, only the bulkhead line shall be used.

There shall not be more “magic” acre

60% of voters must vote in order to overturn any of these provisions.

Public speaker Randy Rose had a question regarding the number of voters that is required to approve a ballot question. He further spoke about parking garages being built underground and suggested that everyone should be more conscious about sea level rise.

Mr. Rose further requested consideration to allow to place on the Champlain Tower South property 18 floors instead of 12 floors so that it helps with the wrongful death cases.

Commissioner Velasquez objected to Mr. Rose’s suggestion.

Commissioner Salzhauer objected to Mr. Rose’s suggestion.

Public speaker Jeff Rose spoke and provided his opinion regarding some of the zoning matters previously discussed.

Vice Mayor Paul stated once again that all these requirements are already in the Charter.

Commissioner Salzhauer would like to add a question to the ballot for no overnight beach furniture storage on the beach. There was consensus to add this item to the ballot.

No other questions were asked by the Commission.

Public speaker Randy Rose commented on the decision of the Commission that it is more important to put a beach furniture storage and hedges height in the ballot instead of allowing the Champlain Tower South property height in order to assist with wrongful death cases.


**3. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Accepted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022.

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra N. McCready, MMC  
Town Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles W. Burkett, Mayor