

City of Port St. Lucie

121 SW Port St. Lucie Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, Florida 34984



Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

1:30 PM

Room 366, City Hall

Citizen's Advisory Committee

Lynette Lockwood, Chair

Michael Bernard, Vice Chair

Raymond Pezzi, Member

Christy Romano, Member

Melony Zaravelis, Member

Ingrid Sarmiento, Member

James Abbott, Member

Harry Williams, Alternate

1. Call to Order**2. Roll Call****3. Determination of Quorum****4. Approval of Minutes**

- 4.a** January 15, 2025 Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

[2025-253](#)

5. Public to be Heard**6. New Business**

- 6.a** Oath of Office for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

[2025-265](#)

- 6.b** Business Tax Update

[2025-255](#)

7. Unfinished Business**8. Adjourn**

Notice: No stenographic record by a certified court reporter will be made of the foregoing meeting. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal a decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at said meeting upon which any appeal is to be based.

Notice: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons needing special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's office at (772) 871-5157 for assistance.

As a courtesy to the people recording the meeting, please put your cell phone on silent.



Agenda Summary

2025-253

Agenda Date: 3/19/2025

Agenda Item No.: 4.a

Placement: Minutes

Action Requested: Motion / Vote

January 15, 2025 Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Submitted By: Jasmin Padova, Executive Assistant.

Executive Summary: January 15, 2025, meeting minutes.

Presentation Information: N/A.

Staff Recommendation: Move that the Committee review and approve the January 15, 2025, meeting minutes.

Alternate Recommendations:

1. Move that the Committee amend the recommendation and approve the meeting minutes.
2. Move that the Committee not approve the minutes and provide staff direction.

Attachments: January 15, 2024, minutes.

NOTE: All of the listed items in the "Attachment" section above are in the custody of the City Clerk. Any item(s) not provided in City Council packets are available upon request from the City Clerk.

City of Port St. Lucie
Citizen's Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes - Draft

121 SW Port St. Lucie
Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, Florida
34984

Lynette Lockwood, Vice Chair
Michael Bernard, Vice Chair
Raymond Pezzi, Member
Christy Romano, Member
Melony Zaravelis, Member
Ingrid Sarmiento, Member
James Abbott, Alternate Member

CAC

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

1:30 PM

Room 366, City Hall

Addition of Item 6C

1. Call to Order

A Regular Meeting of the CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Chair Bernard on January 15, 2025, at 1:30 p.m., at Port St. Lucie City Hall, Room 366, 121 Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

Michael Bernard, Chair

Lynette Lockwood, Vice Chair

Jack Jennings (left at 2:24 p.m.)

Raymond Pezzi

Ingrid Sarmiento

Melony Zaravelis

James Abbott, Alternate (left at 2:37 p.m.)

Members Not Present:

Christy Romano

3. Determination of Quorum

It was determined that there was a quorum.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.a November 20, 2024 Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes.

[2025-056](#)

There being no discussion, Ms. Sarmiento moved to approve the meeting

minutes. Vice Chair Lockwood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Public to be Heard

There was nothing heard under this item.

6. New Business

6.a Election of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair.

[2025-052](#)

Mr. Jennings moved to allow James Abbott to be a voting member for the meeting. Vice Chair Lockwood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Pezzi informed the Committee that he did not want to run for any position on the Committee.

Carly Fabien, Deputy City Attorney, explained the ballot process to the Committee.

Mr. Jennings inquired about members' unexcused absences, to which Deputy City Attorney Fabien quoted the governing Florida State Statute. Jasmin Padova, Executive Assistant, stated that she would reach out to Ms. Romano to inquire if she was still interested in serving on the board.

Lynette Lockwood was selected as the Chair; Micheal Bernard was selected as the Vice Chair and Jack Jennings was selected as Chair Pro Tem. Ms. Sarmiento moved to approve the ballot selections. Vice Chair Lockwood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

6.b Citizens Advisory Assignments

[2025-054](#)

(Clerk's Note: This Item was heard after 7a.)

Ms. Padova informed the Committee that the Business Tax Department would be attending the Committee's March meeting; streetlights would be discussed at the April meeting and the Solid Waste Department would be attending the Committee's May meeting. Mr. Graham reminded the Committee that they may receive more assignments from the February City Council Workshop.

Ms. Padova invited the Committee to the Citizen's Summit at the Community Center on February 1, 2025.

6.c Oath of Office for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

[2025-084](#)

(Clerk's Note: This item was heard after Item 6a.)

The Deputy City Clerk administered the Oath of Office to James Abbott.

7. Unfinished Business

- 7.a** Special Transmittal of Documents regarding the St. Lucie River from Committee Member Jennings.

[2025-053](#)

Mr. Jennings moved to recommend that the City Council establish a task force made up of local jurisdictions to resolve water quality issues in the St. Lucie River. Deputy City Attorney explained the Committee's role and responsibility. Therefore, Mr. Jennings amended his motion to move to recommend, to the City Manager's Office, that the City Council establish a task force made up of local jurisdictions to resolve water quality issues in the St. Lucie River. Mr. Abbott seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. Abbott stated that his sailing club discussed the water problems. Vice Chair Lockwood added that the estuary had been an issue for 20+ years. She stated that other entities/jurisdictions, on multiple levels, had been working on this topic and questioned the City's ability to lead a task force. Mr. Jennings stated that the City could bring together multiple jurisdictions to tackle the issues. He added that Ballantrae residents donated funds. Mr. Abbott suggested that agencies who were currently working on water issues come and speak to the Committee or task force to sort out responsibilities. Chair Bernard stated that the details needed to be worked out, the who, what and why.

Bret Kaiser, NPDES, informed the Committee that the St. Lucie River & Estuary Basin Management Action Plan was drafted in 2002 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. They held a roundtable with multiple agencies to set the guidelines needed to address the water quality. He added that multiple cities, counties as well as individual CDD's produced yearly reports aka Statewide Annual Report to show the progress and they provide the water quality results. Vice Chair Lockwood suggested that Mr. Kaiser supply the Committee with the link for the reports and suggested that the City's Communication Department release a "Did You Know?" newsletter to advise residents of updates and steps to take regarding water quality. Chair Bernard restated that the Committee needed to understand all the details (what is being done) before making a recommendation to the City Manager.

David Graham, Special Assistant to the City Manager, advised that the Committee was not empowered to create their own assignments. He added that this topic could dominate the Committee as it contained multiple agencies, at different levels, and he was unsure if the Council had the desire to conduct such meetings. He stated that the Committee would need to provide a plan of action to the City Manager to receive City Council approval. Mr. Jennings stated that the Committee worked on water quality issues in the past (septic to sewer) with no resolve, therefore he wanted to bring the assignment back up. Deputy City Attorney stated that if this item

became its own assignment, another directed assignment may need to be removed since the Bylaws indicated that the Committee was only responsible for up to three assignments.

Mr. Pezzi stated that the Committee needed to know who was doing what for the water quality and after knowing the details they may not want to get involved in the project. Vice Chair Lockwood stated that the Committee had assignments from the past that they needed to focus on. She added that the Committee can review the DEP reports and maybe readdress the issue in the future. Mr. Kaiser stated that the coordinator could present and explain the DEP report to the Committee. Vice Chair Lockwood reiterated that the report/information should be presented to the community to create awareness.

Chair Bernard suggested that the Committee receive a water quality presentation at a later date. Ms. Sarmiento moved to recommend to the City Manager that the Committee start preliminary presentations on water quality. Mr. Abbott seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Michael Bernard, Chair

Shanna Donleavy, Deputy City Clerk



Agenda Summary

2025-265

Agenda Date: 3/19/2025

Agenda Item No.: 6.a

Placement: New Business

Action Requested: Discussion

Oath of Office for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Submitted By: Jasmin Padova, Committee Liaison.

Executive Summary: In order to conduct business on behalf of the Port St. Lucie City Council, new members being appointed shall be required to take the Oath of Office prior to conducting formal business.

Presentation Information: The City Clerk shall issue the Oath of Office for Harry Williams.

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Attachments: N/A



Agenda Summary

2025-255

Agenda Date: 3/19/2025

Agenda Item No.: 6.b

Placement: New Business

Action Requested: Motion / Vote

Business Tax Update

Submitted By: Summary by Jasmin Padova, Executive Assistant. Discussion to be led by Yvonne White Grayson, Business Tax Manager.

Executive Summary: Business Tax Collection Initiatives Enhancing Compliance and Efficiency for Port St. Lucie.

Presentation Information: Yvonne White Grayson will provide a presentation to the committee.

Staff Recommendation: Move that the Committee hear the update.

Alternate Recommendations:

1. Move that the Committee amend the recommendation and hear the update.
2. Move that the Committee hear the update and provide staff direction.

Attachments: Presentation.

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Business Tax

March 12, 2025



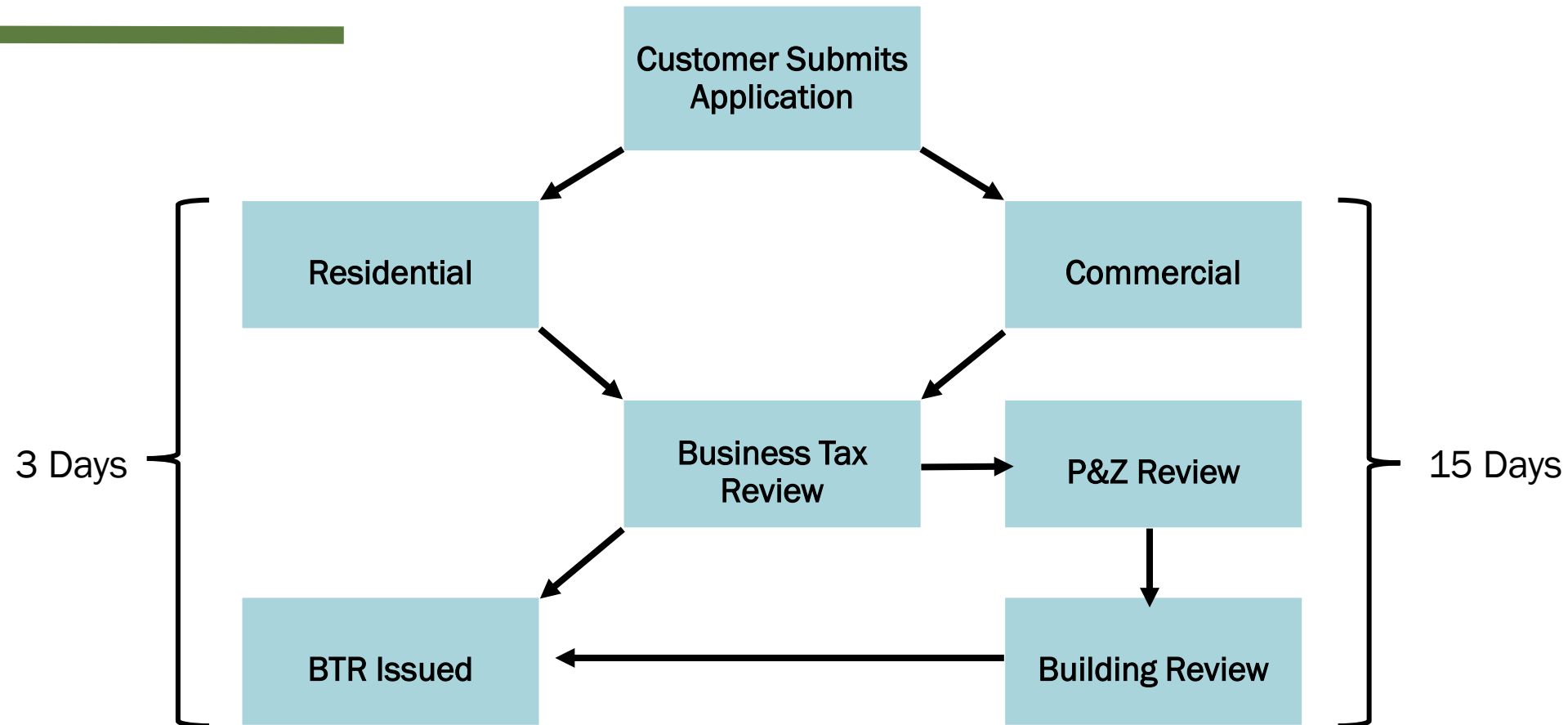
CITY OF PORT ST LUCIE

Business Tax Collection Initiatives
Enhancing Compliance and Efficiency for Port St. Lucie

Agenda

1. Overview of Business Tax Department
2. Business Tax Application Process
3. Challenges in Coverage and Compliance
4. Proposed Interlocal Agreement with St. Lucie County
5. Benefits of Collaboration
5. Advisory Board Input

Business Tax Application Process



Business Tax Renewal Process



- Business taxes must be paid annually
- Annual renewals sent out via email and mail in July
- Easy online process to renew
- Generates over \$2 million annually to the General Fund
- Approximately 1265 new BTRs issued in FY24
- YTD 442

Business Tax Compliance


Two main ways to be non-compliant with Business Tax:

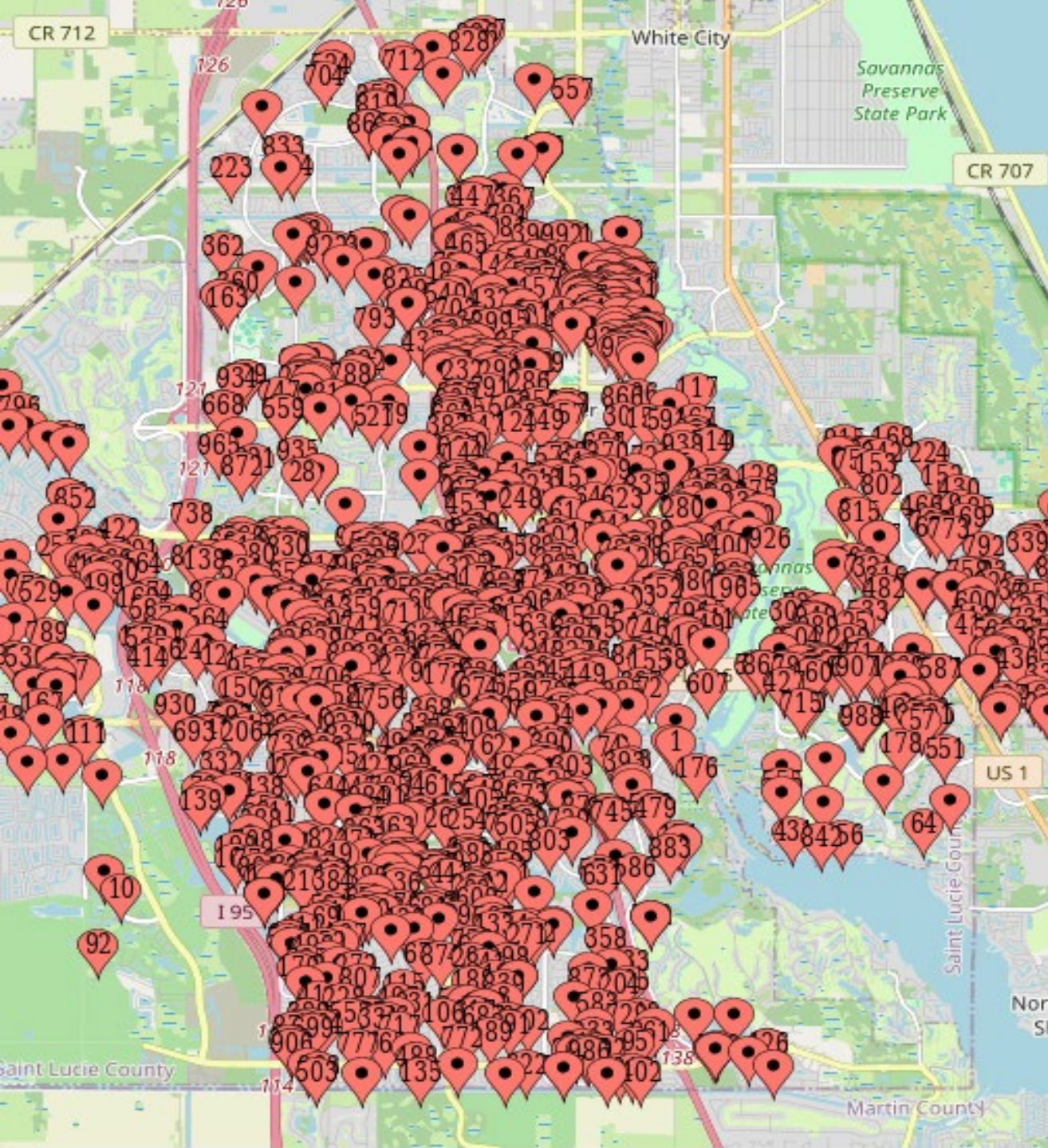
- Operating a business without a valid City of Port St Lucie BTR
- Renting or providing space to a business that does not have a valid City of Port St Lucie BTR

Business Tax Compliance



How the Business Tax Division Identifies Non-Compliance:

- In-Person site visits
 - SunBiz Registrations
 - Social Media and other Advertising
 - Call in Complaints
- 



Challenges in Current Compliance

Plot of approximately 1800 known business violations

How Business Tax Enforces Compliance

- In-Person site visits
- Letters
- Personal Phone Calls
- Robo Calls
- Emails
- Text Messages
- Special Magistrate Hearings

Impact of Non-Compliance on Revenue and Community Standards

- Non-compliant businesses result in uncollected taxes.
- Approximately \$350,000 annual revenue loss.
- Health and safety concern for citizens. Unsafe buildings, unpermitted locations, invalid licensing.
- Unchecked violations affect the City's reputation and attractiveness to new businesses.
- Businesses that comply feel unfairly burdened

Strategies for Increased Compliance

- Requesting 1 additional compliance officer for FY26.
- Hired 3rd party vendor to identify non-compliant businesses and send letters.
- Creating an outreach program through Communications increasing awareness of BTRs, how to apply, and repercussions of non-compliance
- Adoption of the Special Magistrate process and Business Tax liens.
- Further simplifying the application process
- Exploring interlocal agreement with the County to take over collections

Exploring an Interlocal Agreement for Business Tax Processing

Current Process: Business Tax Applications and renewals are currently handled independently by the City and St Lucie County Tax Collectors Office.

Challenges: Business owners must redundantly provide the same information to both entities.

Proposed Process: City of Port St Lucie collects County BTR taxes for business located within City limits.

Benefit: Business owners can make a single application or renewal that pays for both the City and County Business Taxes.

Opportunities Through an Interlocal Agreement

Advantages of Assuming Responsibility for County BTR Collections:

- Share resources for processing and enforcing business tax compliance.
- Leverage City expertise and systems to improve efficiency.
- Streamline the issuance and renewal of BTRs through the City system.
- Simplified processes for both the City and local businesses.
- Higher compliance rates leading to improved tax collection.
- Improved reputation for the City as a business-friendly environment.

In Summary



- The Business Tax Office continues to discuss the challenges of current compliance, highlighting resource limitations, community impacts and revenue implications while connecting it to the potential benefits of a new approach.
- Enhanced compliance efforts will reduce violations and improve revenue collection.
- The interlocal agreement with St. Lucie County creates a **one-stop shop** for small business owners, simplifying their experience while promoting compliance.

Recommended Action

Staff is seeking support from the Citizens Advisory committee to:

1. Request an additional compliance officer in FY26
2. Continue working with the County on an interlocal agreement

Questions?



With your guidance and support, we can create a seamless and effective process that supports our local businesses and secures the City's economic future.