

**MINUTES REPORT
LEE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
ADMINISTRATION EAST BUILDING
2201 SECOND STREET, FORT MYERS, FL 33901
ROOM 118 (SECOND FLOOR)**

OCTOBER 30, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennie Carley
Tayelor Kakes

Kathleen Walsh
Annalisa Xioutas, Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Smith, Vice Chair

OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS/APPLICANTS

Kevin Ryan (Zentek Homes)
Carol Scott, President, Matlacha Civic Association

STAFF PRESENT

Peter Blackwell, Zoning
Brandon Dunn, Planning Manager
MarySue Groth, Zoning

Janet Miller, Recording Secretary
Amanda Swindle, Assistant County Attorney

Agenda Item 1 - Call to Order – 10:00 a.m./Review of Affidavit of Publication

Ms. Xioutas, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

A roll call was taken. Tayelor Kakes, Annalisa Xioutas, Jennie Carley, and Kathleen Walsh were present.

Ms. Swindle stated that the Attorney’s Office reviewed the ad and affidavit of publication for today’s meeting and determined it was legally sufficient.

NOTE: For the audio recordings for this meeting, go to:

<http://www.leegov.com/dcd/committees/committeesearch>. Once the page pulls up, click on the blue hyperlink that says “Lee County Historic Preservation Board (LCHPB).” There will be an audio recording for each item to help keep the recordings from being too large for the public to open. Contact Janet Miller at 239-533-8583 or jmiller@leegov.com if you need assistance.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of 7/17/2025 Minutes

Ms. Walsh made a motion to approve the 7/17/2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kakes. The Chair called the motion, and it passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 4 – Special Certificates of Appropriateness (SCA) Cases

A. SCA2025-00021, Cajuput House, 2616 Cajuput Street, Matlacha, FL 33993

Elevate the living space by constructing a new second floor and rendering the ground floor into storage space.

Mr. Blackwell reviewed the staff report and recommendations.

Ms. Xioutas opened this item to the applicant or their representative(s) and asked if they wanted to add any comments.

Mr. Kevin Ryan from Zentek Homes stated that Mr. Blackwell was thorough with his staff report, so he did not have anything further to add but was available for questions.

Ms. Walsh stated her only confusion pertained to the term “garages.” Being a resident of Matlacha, she is familiar with that street as well as that side of town and the road is very narrow/tight.

Mr. Ryan stated they will not be garages. They will be storage areas for a canoe or bicycles, etc. Regarding parking, there will be parallel parking in front of each unit.

The Board had no further questions, so Ms. Xioutas opened this item to public comment.

Ms. Sandy Reynolds, resident of Matlacha, stated that this proposed project is across the canal from her property. She noted the subject property is considered “commercial.” She asked if it was still going to be considered “Commercial Motel.”

Mr. Ryan stated it would be going back to “commercial/residential.”

Ms. Reynolds referred to the steps depicted in the application, yet they do not appear to be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Ryan stated the stairwell will be handicap compliant and will have railings.

Ms. Reynolds expressed concern that this property will be turned into a motel with 8 units instead of 4.

Ms. Swindle stated that the dialog between Ms. Reynolds and the applicant’s representative was not happening according to proper procedures. She explained that public comment is meant for a member of the public to provide their comments. If they have questions, they may pose them to the Board and the Board in turn may address those questions with the applicant.

Ms. Reynolds stated in her last comment that the underneath parking area is being used for storage instead of parking. She expressed concern that the road is so narrow as it is. Although she is not trying to stop this project, she felt it had many flaws according to the law. To her, there is not enough room for what the applicant wants to do unless they make the underneath area for parking.

Ms. Xioutas asked if there were any other members of the public that wished to comment. No other members of the public wished to comment, so the public comment segment was closed.

Ms. Swindle stated that if the applicant wanted to address the questions posed by Ms. Reynolds that would be appropriate at this time. If the Board has additional questions, they may pose them at this time as well.

Mr. Ryan stated that everything he submitted and that was presented today shows parallel parking versus perpendicular, so it does not encroach any further than the street. It is on the property itself so the parking will not be in the street.

Ms. Reynolds wanted it noted in the minutes that at the next Lee County Historic Preservation Board meeting she will have several other members of the public in attendance that were absent today. Ms. Reynolds stated that she had three years' experience with this Board and although Mr. Blackwell was eloquent in his review of the staff report, she disputes the findings. She also stated that she wanted to make sure this item does not get passed today.

Ms. Swindle stated it would potentially get approved today because today's hearing is to approve a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for this property and she reminded Ms. Reynolds that public comment was closed.

Ms. Walsh made a motion to make a finding that the proposed elevated residence is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Lee County LDC Chapter 22; and approve the Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the subject property pursuant to LDC Chapter 22 to permit the new elevated structure as depicted in the site plan, floor plans, and elevations stamped "received" September 15, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kakes. The Chair called the motion, and it passed 4-0.

B. SCA2025-00025, Crabshack 2.0, 2653 Cajuput Street, Matlacha, FL 33993
Construction of a new elevated single-family residence.

Mr. Blackwell reviewed the staff report and recommendations.

Ms. Xioutas opened this item to the applicant or their representative; however, they were not in attendance.

The Board had no questions, so Ms. Xioutas opened this item to public comment. No members of the public wished to comment, so the public comment segment was closed.

Ms. Walsh made a motion to make a finding that the proposed elevated residence is in compliance with the Design Guidelines for the Matlacha Historic District and Lee County LDC Chapter 22; and approve the Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the subject property pursuant to LDC Chapter 22 to permit the new elevated residence as depicted in the floor plans and elevations stamped "received" August 26, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kakes. The Chair called the motion, and it passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 5 – Items by the Public; Committee Members; Staff

Public

Request to Present the Florida Institute Report at a Future LCHPB Meeting

Ms. Carol Scott, resident of Matlacha, and the President of the Matlacha Civic Association, stated she was aware that some of the DCD staff and LCHPB members received the study from the FIBER Team (Florida Institute Building Environment for Resiliency). She provided the background behind this study. She noted they work on challenges that are faced by both social and ecological systems by building partnerships across the state with municipalities and communities to build a more resilient community, for which she felt Matlacha was qualified. She noted that the FIBER Team has partnered with the non-profit Collaboratory and has already been approved on some projects in Lee County such as Pine Manor and Franklin Park. Ms. Scott stated that after 1½ years, they now have the "*Matlacha,*

Pine Island Road/Public Space/Parking Urban Strategy Presentation.” She reviewed what the report included. During her presentation she stated the following:

- The UF FIBER Team is the Florida Institute for Building Environment Resilience. It is an institute at the University of Florida that focusses on creating a more resilient community within Matlacha. After a two-year study with cooperation from the community, a final presentation of Phase 1 was given to Matlacha for the Pine Island Road public space parking strategy on October 21, 2025. She noted that, so far, it has been well received from the Matlacha community.
- She stated that the Public Space and Parking Strategy notes four points to identify specific community needs for public spaces whether it be for retail, restaurants, or other services to develop a special strategy that combines traffic infrastructure and special planning considerations from our Lee County leaders who they are partnering with. It also includes a flood adaptation strategy for the surrounding areas on Pine Island Road while still focusing on public spaces, parking, and landscaping. The final point is that the FIBER strategy assesses Tidal flooding vulnerability in the diverse residential areas. She reviewed the slides.
- In Scenario #1 (Functional Improvements), the buildings remain as they are but there would be temporary pavement barriers that are placed between traffic lanes and the existing concrete shoulders. These temporary barriers would help slow down mobility, space, and improve safety. The scope would be to use bollards and big planters to give pedestrians safety. Both sides of the road need sidewalks, which also create safety and parking areas.
- In Scenario #2 (Big Deck Tidal Flooding Resilience), the big deck would be able to withstand frequent tidal flooding while supporting flexible public and commercial use through a shared elevated platform. Some shops can be mobile or perhaps permanent. There will be cement sidewalks for pedestrians creating safety on both sides north and south. She reviewed the slide with the Board to show what it would look like. The buildings will be on a platform that is lifted. There will be ramps for those who need assistance. It will also have stairs that will be elevated. This helps so that water will flow underneath. The shops would be in the front and parking in the back. There is a canal with some vegetation. They would like to bring some of their vegetation back. The south side will be the same as depicted with the north side of the road (i.e. sidewalks, shops, parking, and vegetation).
- In Scenario #3 (The Arcade Storm Surge Resilience), there will be two levels of public arcade style with the shops lifted. While it will be walkable at the ground level, it also provides shaded areas. Since the shops will be lifted, there is property underneath that could be used for pop-up retail stores, art, live music, and additional parking. There will be a shared elevator in the middle for the shops as well as along the lifted walkway. It is on the idea of a lifted boardwalk where everyone can appreciate and enjoy the view, sit outside with some tables (if there are restaurants there) and it creates safety because the traffic is down below.
- In Scenario #4 (Facing Nature Storm Surge Resilience), it was adapted for a severe storm surge. It creates an environment for landscaping enhancement that is integrated into public life. The arcade style is very similar to Scenario #3 where the shops are lifted and you have property underneath, walkability, shaded spaces, and additional parking. However, in Scenario #4, the buildings are moved to the back. There will be more of a walking area or parking as well as landscaping. The canal is in the back. As the landscaping matures, it will be a beautiful visual

of tropical Florida plants as people are sitting at a restaurant overlooking the view. It is off the road, so it will be a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- This presentation has been shared with the Matlacha community several times and they have been collecting comments both good and negative. Ms. Scott stated she would share those comments with the county as they get ready to proceed.
- She gave an example of how Punta Gorda was revitalized after the storms. Ms. Scott stated that small towns across Florida are supported through government, historic preservation boards, and community redevelopment agencies for these restorations. She reminded everyone that Matlacha is the gateway to Pine Island.

Ms. Walsh stated that in addition to being a board member of the Lee County Historic Preservation Board, she is also the Treasurer for the Matlacha Civic Association. She noted that at previous Lee County Historic Preservation Board meetings, some members have wondered why this item was being brought before this Board. She noted that according to Chapter 22, Article 1 of the Land Development Code, one of the items that this Board is tasked with involves encouraging historic preservation by creating programs, and technical assistance and financial incentives for preservation practices. The Matlacha Civic Association meets on November 3, 2025 where they will most likely narrow the scope of what they are likely to request and will bring it back to this Board because the end goal is to ask this Board to be part of the process to move this project forward.

Ms. Xioutas stated that she could understand wanting this Board's support. Whatever this Board can do to help a community, they would be open to doing, but regarding funding, she asked for further clarification from staff. Ms. Xioutas stated that since she has been on the Board there have been no funds for this Board to distribute.

Ms. Swindle stated that is accurate. Her understanding is that although there was funding available for historic preservation projects in the past when this Board was established, it ended. She was not sure exactly when the funding ceased, but it has been cancelled for several years.

Mr. Blackwell stated that the program was ended by the Board of County Commissioners around 2017 or 2018. He noted that even when the program existed, it never involved a large sum of money. There was only \$50,000 total to be spread out over all projects that requested funding. It was on a case-by-case basis. It normally went to homeowners who had homes that were in bad shape, and they did not have the funds for repairs.

Ms. Xioutas asked if we had outdated language.

Ms. Swindle believed that could be the case because the ordinance was drafted in 1988 and was codified into the Land Development Code in 1994, so it will need some updating.

Ms. Xioutas asked if this was something staff could do.

Ms. Swindle stated staff is always ready to take direction from this Board on what they would like staff to do such as reviewing the existing ordinance for potential updates.

Ms. Xioutas stated that she was in favor of having staff work on this and bring their recommended revisions back to this Board. She expressed her concern over the current language because it can give people an impression that this Board does not care. In addition, it gives the public an impression that this Board has control over something when in actuality, it does not, which creates a conflict.

Ms. Swindle recommended that this Board direct staff to do a general overview of the ordinance and the administrative code associated with historic preservation boards and make a recommendation that will first be reviewed by the County Attorney's Office and then back before this Board for discussion. If it turns out to be something this Board wants to pursue, then at some point, staff will need to get direction from the Board of County Commissioners to bring the item through the formal adoption process.

Ms. Walsh asked if it would have to be approved on a state level as well.

Ms. Swindle explained the process. Because it is a land development code amendment, it has to go before the Executive Regulatory Oversight Committee (EROOC), the Land Development Code Advisory Committee (LDCAC), and the Local Planning Agency (LPA) before it is brought back to the Board of County Commissioners for a formal adoption. At that point, they would send the ordinance to the State. The State does a precursory review that normally takes approximately two days, and they send a letter back saying they have no objections.

Ms. Xioutas asked Ms. Scott how long of a stretch this proposal encompassed.

Ms. Scott stated it was less than a ½ mile. She stated there is the big bridge and then a small flat bridge at the chocolate store and the Post Office. It is less than a ½ mile to Matlacha Avenue, which is what the Matlacha residents consider to be their downtown commercial area. She noted the other side that faces Area 1 or A has nothing there because it was all lost during the storms, so they are focusing their efforts on Phase 1 for the ½ mile stretch being discussed today.

Ms. Xioutas asked how high the deck would be.

Ms. Scott stated that in the report e-mailed out today, the first lift is anywhere between 9 to 12 feet, which will be large enough for vehicle or truck parking.

Ms. Walsh stated that FEMA will determine the height of the deck.

Mr. Blackwell confirmed that FEMA will determine the appropriate elevation for the storm surge height, and the Land Development Code will detail how it needs to be addressed. He noted that normally the finished floor has to be FEMA plus 1 foot.

Ms. Xioutas asked if the contractor took that into account.

Ms. Scott stated they had taken that into account and noted that the FIBER Team has a team of certified engineers, professors that are licensed and engineered, and architects. She also noted that the report was not only put together by students, but by professors and civil engineers.

Ms. Xioutas asked how long it took to finalize this report.

Ms. Scott stated it has taken two years to finalize the report. Members of the FIBER Team came to the Matlacha area once every three months.

Mx. Xioutas asked if this was originally someone's thesis or project.

Ms. Scott stated it was not. This is done by the FIBER Team, which is an actual organization from the University of Florida. She noted that Matlacha and Pine Island were not their only projects. Ms. Scott stated she was very appreciative of the Collaboratory for sponsoring them and obtaining their services for the Matlacha and Pine Island area. It is an enormous undertaking, and she was appreciative of their efforts.

Ms. Walsh noted that this work has been provided to them at no cost. If the Matlacha Civic Association had to pay for this service, it would have cost a fortune that they would be unable to afford.

The Board had no further discussion, so the Chair asked for a motion.

Ms. Kakes made a motion to direct staff to review the Land Development Code for the Historic Preservation Board including the Administrative Code for potential updates and bring it back to this Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Carley.

Before finishing the motion, Mr. Hannon asked to speak because he wanted to ask for a modification to the motion.

Mr. Hannon stated the following:

- The FIBER Team also had a botanist or environmental people involved in this effort who gave a presentation on seeding seawalls and creating "*bioswales*."
- He noted that the private property owners in Block 1, where Berts Bar used to be, intend to submit plans for permits to build out that block to their property lines. Their property lines in many instances are 90 feet out on the water.
- He asked for a modification in the motion that staff schedule a workshop where people in Matlacha can attend and provide their views on what they feel the mission of the Historic Preservation Board should be going forward.
- Even though the grant fund program is no longer in operation, there is a program set up under federal law for historic preservation. There is a Division of Historic Preservation under the State of Florida. This Lee County Historic Preservation Board has been authorized as a certified local government since May 9, 1990.
- He asked for the motion to be modified that when Lee County begins these conversations with staff, that the Matlacha residents be invited to participate.

Ms. Xioutas asked if there was any other public comments. No other members of the public wished to comment, so the public comment portion was closed.

After further discussion, the motioner and seconder did not opt to alter the motion. The motion stands as is, which is to **direct staff to review the Land Development Code for the Historic Preservation Board including the Administrative Code for potential updates and bring it back to this Board. The motion was made by Ms. Kakes and seconded by Ms. Carley. The Chair called the motion, and it passed 4-0.**

Ms. Swindle stated that since this item will be brought back before the Lee County Historic Preservation Board at a future meeting, there will be another opportunity for the public to share their views. In addition, these changes will be required to go through other advisory boards providing additional opportunities for public comment. The second issue raised by Mr. Hannon deals with funding. The County would not be opposed to receiving funds from the state or federal government for historic preservation projects such as the one proposed today. If there are specific programs that the public would like to bring to staff's attention, they are welcome to do so, and staff will explore those programs to see if our area would be eligible to receive those funds. However, once that decision and analysis is made, staff would need to get direction from the Board of County Commissioners. The Lee County Historic Preservation Board could make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners, but ultimately whether to apply for funds for a specific project, especially one as comprehensive as the one presented today, would require more than just this historic board to accomplish it. It would involve the Board of County Commissioners.

Items by Board Members

Demolition by Neglect

Ms. Walsh gave an overview of the Old Fish House property that was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ian. She read into the record Section 22-245 dealing with Demolition by Neglect. Ms. Walsh stated her concern has always been that Code Enforcement did not notify this Board as it was supposed to do. It has since been remedied. Since the property owner has been non-responsive and this has been on-going for three years, she did not understand why the county was not undertaking the 35-day notice to the property owners. On a separate note, she wanted to thank the county for funding three derelict buildings. One has been demolished. A second one is soon to be demolished. A third one, purchased by Honc, is being demolished by them on their own, so progress is being made.

Ms. Swindle stated that the 35-day notice is an avenue available to this Board. However, since the property owner has not been responding to Code Enforcement, it is likely they will be unresponsive to this Board as well. Even if the hearing is held in 35 days, ultimately, it provides a recommendation that goes to the same Building Official, and they are already pursuing the property owner to get this situation alleviated and ultimately go to the Hearing Examiner for a Code hearing. She also clarified that it was a 35-day clock to have the hearing. Once the hearing is over, it goes back to the Building Official and that process takes as long as it takes. She explained there are very important considerations regarding private property rights when Lee County starts taking these actions, so staff must be extremely careful to follow the statutory and local requirements.

Ms. Groth noted there is already a code violation on this property that was issued in 2024.

Ms. Swindle stated she does not handle code enforcement items, but ultimately the county is not interested in issuing violations and collecting fines from property owners. Instead, they seek remediation of the issue. Ms. Swindle stated another issue that arises is that often times homeowners make promises to the Hearing Examiner that do not get fulfilled as quickly as promised causing them to have another hearing. Ms. Swindle stated that although Section 22-245 is available to this Board,

she did not personally believe it should be pursued for properties that already have a violation on them. However, it could be utilized in instances where the Matlacha Civic Association or Matlacha residents find other properties that fit this description and Code Enforcement has not yet responded or initiated their process.

Items by Staff - None

Agenda Item 6 – Next Meeting Date

The next Lee County Historic Preservation Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2025 (if there are cases to discuss) in the Old Lee County Courthouse, 2120 Main Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901, Second Floor, East Room. The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.