

## M E M O R A N D U M

**TO:** Howard Tipton, Town Manager

**FROM:** Allen Parsons, AICP  
Director, Planning, Zoning, and Building Department

**REPORT DATE:** August 13, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** September 8, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Temporary Waiver of Building Permit Fees Associated with Storm Damage from Hurricanes Helene and Milton Status Update

### **Background**

To assist in the post-storm recovery from Hurricanes Helene and Milton in September and October of 2024, the Town Commission passed a series of three resolutions<sup>1</sup>, which temporarily waived a number of building-permit related fees for permit applications submitted as a result of property damage caused by those hurricanes.

The Town Commission's continued extensions were in recognition that many properties damaged by Hurricanes Helene and Milton had not started with repairs or rebuilding. This was due to a range of factors, including delays in receiving insurance payments, grant funding sources, and contractor availability. At the expiration of the most recent Building Permit Related Fee Waiver, the extensions allowed affected property owners approximately one year to get started on putting structures back in order or redeveloping without the additional burden of paying permit fees.

Prior to the current Building Permit Related Fee Waiver expiration, on September 30, 2025, staff is providing the Town Commission with an update and the opportunity to consider further extension. Staff is recommending that the Building Permit Related Fee Waiver expire for the reasons outlined below.

Its duration is longer than other nearby communities that also provided certain permitting fee waivers, including:

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 2024-21, passed on October 7, 2024, waiving permit fees for storm damage related to Hurricane Helene through January 31, 2025; Resolution 2024-26, passed on November 4, 2024, waiving permit fees for storm damage related to Hurricanes Helene *and* Milton through April 30, 2025; and Resolution 2025-09, passed April 7, 2025, waiving permit fees for storm damage related to Hurricanes Helene and Milton through September 30, 2025.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Ending Date of Fee Waiver</b>
Anna Maria	January 31, 2025
Bradenton	January 15, 2025
Bradenton Beach	July 17, 2025
Pinellas County	June 1, 2025
Pasco County	July 31, 2025
St. Petersburg	July 31, 2025
St. Pete Beach	April 22, 2025
Sarasota County	May 22, 2025
City of Sarasota	April 1, 2025
Treasure Island	May 31, 2025
Venice	January 31, 2025

Storm damage-related permits have comprised approximately 40% of the total permits<sup>2</sup> issued since October 2024. Based on anticipated revenues for FY 2025, these waived fees account for approximately \$560,000 in waived revenue. The number of storm damage permits has also been decreasing over time. Over the past 4 months, 94% of the permits issued have been non-storm damage-related.

In addition, staff recommends maintaining sufficient reserves to potentially accommodate future fee waivers for other events should circumstances warrant, and to also be prepared for other aspects of economic uncertainty.

As a result of this recommendation, the Commission received a request from the Longboat Key (LBK) North group requesting consideration of allowing for the Building Permit Related Fee Waiver to be extended for a subset of property owners who are “diligently pursuing repairs and funding, yet unable to meet the September deadline through no fault of their own.” The LBK North group suggested allowing a continuation of the fee waiver for “properties that can demonstrate good-faith efforts to comply.” The group suggested that documentation be utilized and submitted by property owners, such as “attorney correspondence with insurance companies, documented FEMA-required assessments, or verification from Planning, Zoning, and Building staff regarding extraordinary review requirements” for consideration.”

Staff does not dispute that there are several property owners who have encountered a variety of issues that have held up their ability to proceed with repairs or reconstruction. Staff does, however, have significant concerns with creating the proposed exception and treating a subset of property owners differently with regard to applicable building permit fees.

The first challenge would be in crafting a clear exception with criteria that the Planning, Zoning, and Building staff could objectively measure. Such criteria would have to clearly distinguish between circumstances that are beyond a property owner’s control and time delays over the past year caused by the actions/inactions of private property owner(s). There are likely to be scenarios

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<sup>2</sup> As of August 22, 2025, a total of 5,617 permits have been issued since October 1, 2024. Storm damage permit totals are 2,171, and non-storm damage permit totals are 3,446.

that are not currently contemplated where a property owner could make a case that there were reasonable circumstances that prevented their repair/rebuilding actions within the current fee waiver timeframe. The second challenge would be having staff make decisions on the qualifying documentation provided by property owners and determining whether such evidence is sufficient to make approval (or denial) decisions.

If the Commission were to consider an extension of the current Building Permit Related Fee Waiver, staff recommends that such an extension be applied to all property owners who have had storm damage from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The “all or nothing” approach to the building fee waivers is based upon clearly measurable qualifying, objective criteria (demonstrating storm damage from last year’s hurricanes).

**Staff Recommendation**

Allow the current Building Permit Related Fee Waiver to expire on September 30, 2025.