

City of Melbourne, Florida
Agenda
Melbourne Downtown Redevelopment Advisory Committee

City Hall Council Chamber
900 E. Strawbridge Avenue
Melbourne, FL 32901

July 1, 2026 • 8:00 AM

1. A meeting of the Melbourne Downtown Redevelopment Committee was held in the Council Chamber at 900 East Strawbridge Avenue and was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Lisa Herendeen.
2. All present said the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. The following members were:
 - Present: Lisa Herendeen, Chair
JoAnn Davis, Member
Gerry Smith, Member
John Lucas, Member
Marva Murray, Member
Chris Adams, Member
Stefan Hartmann, Alternate Member
 - Absent: Bert Luer, Vice Chair (excused)
Brett Miller, Alternate Member (excused)
 - Also Present: Cindy Dittmer, Community Development Director
Robert McKinzie, Economic Development Manager
Carmin Velasquez, Redevelopment Planner
Mary Wolak, Recording Secretary
4. **Approval of Minutes – May 1, 2026**
Moved by Davis/Adams to approve the May 1, 2026 meeting minutes, as presented.
Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Melbourne Main Street Update**
Amil Cordova, Executive Director, Melbourne Main Street

Mr. Cordova reported that Melbourne Main Street (MMS) has once again achieved accreditation through Florida Main Street. He noted that MMS continues to meet monthly with City staff, participated in the April 23 Stakeholders Meeting and the June 23 Property Owners Meeting, and recently presented its 2026–2030 Strategic Plan to the MMS Board for review. He also shared updates on the upcoming budget and work plan, the Florida Main Street POMS Conference, the Summer/Fall Visitor's Guide, ongoing marketing efforts, recent BOOMS Tracker and wayfinding sign updates, and upcoming downtown events, including Putta Palooza, Sip & Shop, the Sidewalk Sale, and Small Town Fridays.

Board members discussed the downtown vacancy rate and the new Small Town Fridays initiative. Mr. Cordova reported that MMS has identified 14 vacant storefronts and nine additional overflow vacancies within the Main Street district, noting that vacancy numbers have remained relatively stable. Ms. Davis requested quarterly vacancy updates to the CRA Board and received additional information on Small Town Fridays, which are intended to create a more family-friendly downtown atmosphere. Mr. Hartmann also inquired about outreach to property owners, and Mr. Cordova stated that MMS continues to engage with property owners regarding vacant properties.

6. Board Members' Term Lengths (Requested by City Council)

Mr. McKinzie explained that City Council is seeking feedback on a proposal to standardize volunteer board member terms to three years in an effort to improve attendance reviews and streamline the reappointment process. The Board discussed the proposal, confirmed there are no term limits provided members apply for reappointment through the City Clerk's Office, and reached a consensus in support of the proposed three-year term.

7. Community Policing Report

Officer Ryan Allen

Officer Allen reported that calls for service within the CRA have decreased by approximately 50%, which he attributed to the City's efforts to address homelessness. He noted a significant reduction in trespass orders, stated there are currently no known homeless camps within the CRA, and reported that the newly installed security cameras have been highly effective.

The Board discussed the potential for expanding the camera system, with Ms. Dittmer noting that any additional cameras would require budget consideration and supporting infrastructure. Officer Allen also explained that trespass orders are issued for one year for a first offense and two years for a second offense, with repeat offenders being referred to Providence Place for services. He added that the homeless population appears to have dispersed outside the downtown area, although current numbers are unknown.

8. Small Business Incentive Program

Mr. McKinzie presented the draft guidelines for the proposed Interior Building Improvement Program, which City Council directed staff to develop. The program would provide reimbursement grants of up to \$30,000 for eligible code-related interior improvements to commercial properties within the CRA. Staff reviewed the program's eligibility requirements, eligible and ineligible improvements, application process, reimbursement structure, and funding restrictions.

Mr. McKinzie explained that eligible improvements must address requirements of the Florida Building Code and/or the Florida Fire Prevention Code related to new business, business expansion, or business retention. Eligible improvements include electrical, plumbing, HVAC, fire suppression and fire Separation, and ADA accessibility improvements and code-required interior modifications such as life safety egress improvements, grease traps and related plumbing, commercial kitchen exhaust hoods, ventilation systems and interior systems required for code compliance.

Mr. Adams asked what would happen if a business were sold or closed after receiving grant funding. Mr. McKinzie explained that the improvements would remain with the property. Ms. Dittmer stated the goal of the program is to provide businesses with an opportunity to help fill vacant commercial spaces.

Mr. Hartmann commented that waiving building permit fees and reducing building code requirements for property owners would better encourage businesses to occupy vacant storefronts. Staff explained that building permit fees are not allowed to be waived and Florida Building Code and Florida Fire Prevention Code requirements are not regulated by the city. Mr. Hartmann later questioned whether the city could waive the building permit fees since it collects them, and staff responded that the city is not able to waive them.

The Committee discussed the proposed program, including eligibility requirements, the restrictions on applying for both the Façade Improvement Program and the Interior Building Improvement Program simultaneously, the financial burden of code-required improvements on new businesses, and the potential impact on filling vacant commercial spaces. Several members expressed support for allowing qualified applicants to participate in both grant programs at the same time, while others emphasized the importance of ensuring the program benefits businesses facing financial hardship.

Ms. Davis left the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Mr. Lucas commented that replacing the HVAC system can cost approximately \$20,000 and that many new business owners may not realize such improvements are required. He added that landlords are often unwilling to cover these costs. Ms. Dittmer responded that these are the challenges staff has consistently heard from prospective business owners over the years.

During public comment, Mr. Mark Herendeen asked whether the city could reduce or reimburse building permit fees. Staff explained that building permit fees cannot currently be waived and that reimbursement of the fees could be included in the program.

Mr. Adams left the chamber at 9:06 a.m.

Moved by Hartmann/Herendeen to waive all building permit fees within the Downtown Melbourne Community Redevelopment Area.

Aye: Hartmann, Herendeen, Smith

Nay: Murray, Lucas

Mr. Adams returned to the chamber at 9:09 a.m.

Due to Mr. Adams leaving the chamber the committee reconsidered the motion.

Moved by Hartmann/Herendeen to waive all building permit fees within the Downtown Melbourne Community Redevelopment Area.

Aye: Hartmann, Herendeen, Adams, Smith

Nay: Murray, Lucas

During public comment, a letter was read on behalf of downtown business owner Staci Sullivan regarding a pedestrian accident at the Strawbridge Avenue crosswalk. The letter requested upgraded cameras, improved crosswalk visibility, and additional traffic safety measures. Staff agreed to forward the letter to the Police Chief and City Engineer for review and noted that FDOT has jurisdiction over traffic calming improvements on the roadway.

Moved by Herendeen/Hartmann to recommend that Staff explore the possibility of expanding the camera program in Downtown Melbourne.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Herendeen asked the Committee for its consensus on the proposed Building Improvement Program before it is presented to City Council. Approximately half of the Committee supported the program as presented, while the other half expressed support for the program if applicants were permitted to apply for both the Façade Improvement Program and the Interior Building Improvement Program simultaneously.

9. CRA Capital Projects & Programs

Mr. McKinzie provided an update on the Downtown Core Streetscape Project. He reported that the Holmes Park Project is progressing through the design phase, with 30% design plans expected within the next few months, followed by a public workshop. He also noted that the South Expansion Streetscape roadway Project is anticipated to be completed by mid-July, after which FDOT will install the landscaping and irrigation systems. Mr. McKinzie added that the Riverview Park entryway design plans are approximately 90% complete.

10. Additional Business

Mr. McKinzie announced that the City Council Budget Workshop is scheduled for July 29. Ms. Herendeen requested that the CRA Committee be notified of future property owners' meetings. Staff explained that the recent meeting was hosted by Council Member Neuman, with City staff assisting in mailing approximately 80 invitations to property owners. Approximately 20 property owners attended the meeting.

11. General Public Comment

There was no public comment.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Herendeen at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wolak
Mary Wolak, Recording Secretary