



DeSoto County

Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

3:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner JC Deriso
Commissioner Judy Schaefer
Commissioner Steven Hickox
Commissioner Elton Langford
Commissioner Jerod Gross

TURN OFF OR SILENCE ALL CELL PHONES

PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Allen Ressor of Trinity Methodist gave the invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

SET/AMEND

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to amend the agenda, adding emergency item 7a. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

PUBLIC FORUM FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Ashley Brown, the district's Community Outreach Coordinator, shared several important announcements regarding the final week of the school year. Mr. Ed Johnson spoke in opposition to the proposed data center and urged the Board of Commissioners to consider implementing a one-year moratorium on data centers in DeSoto County to allow additional time for research and review. Dr. Jake Reynolds, Deputy Superintendent of DeSoto County Schools, and Benjamin Benitez of One Stop Housing spoke in support of the proposed comprehensive plan amendment to increase density for workforce housing.

CONSENT AGENDA-MOTION TO APPROVE

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Deriso, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

1. Declaration of Surplus Property

Attachments: [Surplus Declared List 5-26-26](#)

2. Resolution/Affordable Housing Advisory Committee member appointment

Attachments: [RESOLUTION 2026 AHAC members JUNE 2026 \(tc\).pdf](#)

Enactment No: 2026-044

3. Consent to Assignment - 2nd Amendment- Sanders - Eurofin

Attachments: [AMENDMENT-ASSIGNMENT -Sanders-Eurofin
Eurofins-SandersAssumptionSignedLetter](#)

4. Amendment No. 1 to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Use of Starlink Satellite Kits between the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and DeSoto County Emergency Management

Attachments: [Desoto County MOA Starlink Amended \(4-27-26\)](#)

5. Agreement/ DeSoto County Medical Director

Attachments: [Medical Director 2025-2027](#)

REGULAR BUSINESS

6. Resolution/Budget Amendment Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Attachments: [Resolution
2026-100 Library
2026-101 Road and Bridge
2026-102 Article V Courts Innovations](#)

Brian Wagner presented a request to adopt a Resolution relating to the attached budget amendments affecting the 2025/2026 adopted budget, as provided in Budget Amendment 2026-100, 2026-101 and 2026-102.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schaefer, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-045

7. Authority to Negotiate / DeSoto County Fair Association

Mandy Hines made a request to authorize discussion and negotiation with the Fair Association to host the County Fair at the Turner Center property.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approve discussion and negotiation with the Fair Association. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

8. Emergency Purchase of fire alarm system for the Turner Center

Attachments: [QUOTE_193442 rev2 5.15.26 \(003\)
Emergency PO Fire Panel \(002\)](#)

Sondra Guffey made a request to approve an emergency purchase with Piper Fire Protection for the replacement of the fire alarm system at the Turner Center.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the Purchase of a fire alarm system for the Turner Center. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mandy Hines provided a brief update regarding the public sale of the property on Cedar Avenue. She also shared that she received a call from Senator Albritton's office stating that, following the conclusion of the budget conference, all DeSoto County projects have been approved and are now awaiting a final vote and the Governor's signature.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Valerie Vicente, County Attorney gave a brief update on Reardon litigation.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

The Board expressed its appreciation to staff for their continued dedication and hard work. Commissioner Schaefer honored Military Appreciation Month by sharing a piece of Presidential history, highlighting several former Presidents who honorably served our country in the Armed Forces. Commissioners also commented on the wonderful Memorial Day celebrations held throughout DeSoto County.

RECESS UNTIL 6:30 PM PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING

9. Ordinance / Comprehensive Plan Amendment Adoption / Affordable Housing-Density (COMP-0015-2025)

Attachments: [2026-05-13 COMP-0015-2025 Affordable Housing Density SR for BOCC Adoption](#)
[Exhibit D Supportive Data and Analysis Report](#)
[DC Comment Letter 4-13-26](#)
[2026-05-13 COMP-0015-2025 Affordable Housing Density Ord for BOCC](#)

John Osborne presented a request to adopt the proposed amendments to DeSoto County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations, outlining the county's efforts to expand workforce and affordable housing opportunities in targeted areas near existing infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and major employers. During his presentation, Osborne explained that the amendments are intended to support higher-density housing in designated Neighborhood Mixed Use and Urban Center land use categories, particularly for projects meeting workforce and affordable housing criteria tied to area median income levels. County officials cited rising land and infrastructure costs, increasing transportation expenses, and the large number of households living paycheck to paycheck as key factors driving the proposed changes. The proposal emphasized directing growth toward existing urbanized areas to reduce sprawl, improve service efficiency, encourage infill and redevelopment, and preserve the county's rural character and environmentally sensitive lands. Planning staff stated the amendments are consistent with long-term population projections, concurrency

requirements, and existing comprehensive plan goals related to sustainable growth and infrastructure capacity. The amendments also update policies and definitions related to workforce and affordable housing, clarify density bonus standards, and maintain environmental protections for wetlands, floodplains, and conservation areas. Officials noted that all future development proposals would still be required to comply with the county's Land Development Regulations, design standards, compatibility requirements, and public hearing processes. Representatives from DeSoto County School District, DeSoto Memorial Hospital, and One Stop Housing spoke in support of the amendments, stressing the growing need for attainable housing for teachers, healthcare workers, first responders, and other essential employees who currently struggle to afford housing within the county. Supporters noted that many workers commute from surrounding counties, creating recruitment and retention challenges, and encouraged the board to focus development near schools and the hospital to maximize access to services and reduce transportation costs. Several residents also voiced concerns regarding infrastructure capacity, neighborhood impacts, transparency, tax incentives, and the long-term effects of increased density on the county's rural character. County staff clarified that the amendments themselves do not automatically approve future developments and that all proposed projects would still require review and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Following discussion, the board unanimously approved both the Comprehensive Plan amendment and the related Land Development Regulation changes, limiting workforce and affordable housing density bonuses to qualifying areas located within 1,000 feet of public schools and hospitals classified as major employers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to adopt this Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-008

10. Ordinance / Land Development Regulation Amendment / Affordable Housing-Density (LDR-0013-2026)

Attachments: [2026-04-16 LDR Affordable Housing SR for BOCC](#)
[2026-05-13 Ord Affordable Housing Ord for BOCC](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to adopt this Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-009

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

Valerie Vicente, County Attorney reviewed Quasi-Judicial procedures and Ex Parte communication rules, followed by Commissioners disclosing any constituent contact or site visits. The Clerk administered the Oath to all speakers.

11. Ordinance / Maria's Rentals / Rezone (RZNE-0046-2023)

Attachments: [2026-04-20 2026-04-17 RZNE 0046-2023 Maria's Rentals SR Fin for PC](#)
[Location Map](#)
[FLUM](#)
[ZONING MAP](#)
[Comp Plan Policies exhibit](#)
[Ordinance RZNE-0046-2023 Maria's Rentals Final for BOCC 6-23 -tc](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Schaefer, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, that this Ordinance be tabled due back on 6/23/2026. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross
Enactment No: 2026-013

12. Ordinance / Debra Brantley / Rezone (RZNE-0082-2026)

Attachments: [2026-04-20 Staff Report Brantley final for PC](#)
[Location Map](#)
[FLUM](#)
[Zoning Map](#)
[2026-04-20 Brantley Rezone Ordinance Final for PC](#)

Misty Servia presented a request to rezone a 1.13 acre property at 2038 SE Hillsborough Avenue from A5 to Residential Single Family. The owners, Ronald and Debra Brantley, are seeking the change to bring the parcel into conformity with current zoning standards and to allow the rebuilding of a hurricane damaged home through a HUD funded repair program. Although the parcel has existed since 2003, it is non conforming under the A5 district because it does not meet the five acre minimum lot size. The proposed RSF 1 zoning aligns with the property's Low Density Residential future land use designation and is compatible with surrounding residential development. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, noting no adverse impacts to public services, infrastructure, or the environment, and determined that the rezoning would correct illogical zoning boundaries and eliminate non conformity. Sara Myer, representative with Rebuild Florida was present for questioning on behalf of the applicant. Commissioner Gross made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Langford, the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, to adopt this Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross
Enactment No: 2026-010

13. Resolution / Kings Crossing / Development Plan (SITE-0128-2023)

Attachments: [2026-04-16 Staff Report SITE-0128-2023 Kings Crossing for BOCC Final](#)
[Location Map](#)
[FLUM](#)
[Zoning Map](#)
[Kings Crossing Dev Site Plan For BOCC 5.26.26](#)
[2026-04-16 Resolution SITE-0128-2023 Kings Crossing for BOCC Final](#)

Misty Servia presented a request for approval of the “King’s Crossing” development plan, an existing wedding venue and banquet hall barndominium on approximately 18 acres at 6420 Southwest County Road 769 in Arcadia. The project was tied to an ongoing code enforcement case, and approval would bring the property into compliance. Ms. Servia explained the property is designated Rural Agricultural and zoned A-5 Agricultural. Discussion centered on whether the venue should be classified as a commercial operation or considered agricultural or agritourism-related in nature. Staff noted that commercial uses in the Rural Agricultural category are generally limited under the Comprehensive Plan and raised concerns about consistency if the venue were considered fully commercial. The applicants, argued the property qualifies as an agricultural and agritourism use because it maintains an agricultural exemption, contains cattle operations, and has historically operated as agricultural property. They stated they had already completed significant improvements including handicap accessibility upgrades, paved parking, driveway work, and voluntarily agreed to install a fire suppression water tank for safety purposes. The applicants requested relief from several proposed county conditions they felt were excessive and more appropriate for large commercial developments. Commissioners generally praised the venue, describing it as beautiful, well maintained, and beneficial to the community. Several commissioners stated they supported private property rights and appreciated the applicants’ investment in the property. However, some also expressed concern that the venue functions similarly to a commercial event center and emphasized the need for accountability, safety standards, and county oversight. County Attorney clarified that if the board formally classified the project as agritourism under Florida law, the county would have little to no regulatory authority over the operation. Instead, commissioners ultimately leaned toward recognizing the venue as a nontraditional banquet hall use associated with agricultural property while still retaining some county oversight and conditions. Commissioner Gross made a motion to close the public hearing seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, the motion carried unanimously. After discussion, the board voted unanimously to approve the development plan with modified conditions. The approved conditions retained requirements related to maintaining minimum acreage, fire access, roadway access, septic compliance, and project expiration timelines, while removing several conditions related to environmental studies, buffers, traffic analysis, and other requirements viewed as overly burdensome for the project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, to adopt this Resolution. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-046

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business before the Board, Chairman Hickox adjourned the meeting at 9:00PM

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

MANDY HINES
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

STEVE HICKOX
CHAIRMAN**BOARD DOCUMENTS 05-26-2026 PUBLIC MEETING**

Attachments: Speaker Cards 05-26-2026
Supplemental document 05-26-2026
OSH 2026-05-02 Impact Assessment on Crime
2026-05-19 AHAC Letter of Support
2026-05-26 COMP-0015-2025 Base Density BCC March

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide eight (8) copies of the written material . If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4800 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.