

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES
FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026
9:00 a.m.**

Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Dondero called the June 26, 2026, Town Council & Planning Commission Workshop to order at 9:04 a.m.

Attendance and Absences

In attendance were Mayor Edie Dondero and Councilmembers Steve Gallagher, Mark Giler, Chris Keefe, Sarah Long, Bob Shields, and Cindy Van Horn; Planning Commission Chair Jocelyn Cenna; Planning Commission members Randy Bartholomew, Jeff Bowers, and Stephen Soulas; Town Manager Maureen Hartman and Town Clerk Matt Amerling. Planning Commission member Brian Gander was absent. Public attendees: 1.

Mayor Dondero moved the public comment period before the presentation.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Presentation and interactive discussion by the Rossi Group regarding an analysis of the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the development of a strategic planning framework for the Town's Comprehensive Plan

Ann Marie Townshend of The Rossi Group facilitated the discussion, outlining the major topics in the Comprehensive Plan including town profile, land use policies, environmental chapter, community infrastructure, and required elements such as population growth, housing growth, and boundary expansion positions. The meeting focused on reviewing the current plan requirements and preparing for a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis as part of the planning process. Council and Planning Commission (PC) members discussed the framework for updating South Bethany's comprehensive plan, explaining how the vision drives policy positions, goals, and objectives. Ms. Townshend outlined requirements for the Town profile, including accurate municipal boundaries, updated demographics, and information about economic and physical conditions; also noting that South Bethany is a built-out community with only about 40 remaining buildable lots, and emphasizing the need to balance demographic data between full-time residents and the broader community through an upcoming survey.

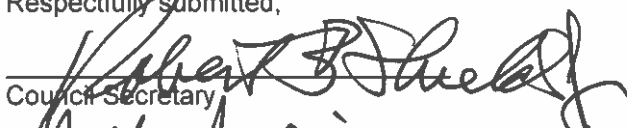
The presentation reviewed current housing statistics, including approximately 1,348 total housing units with 340 being owner-occupied, and highlighted that home values are higher than the County and State averages. Environmental considerations were discussed, including sensitive natural areas, beach preservation, canal water quality, and challenges related to flooding and sea level rise, with previous plans focusing on canal management and beach nourishment. The group discussed the town's role in water quality management, explaining that while the state handles nutrient-related issues, the town is responsible for land use practices that minimize pollution. The members reviewed community infrastructure requirements, which include canals, transportation, stormwater management, and flood protection systems. The group confirmed plans to launch a resident survey the following week, which will remain active for two months and include both digital and paper options for distribution, as well as discussing upcoming public engagement activities, including a monthly coffee and conversation event with Savannah next month, planning a public workshop for later summer, and presenting to the Planning Commission in September.

Council and commission members participated in an exercise on identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for the community's Comprehensive Plan. Members discussed various issues including lack of public transportation, pedestrian infrastructure, cultural activities, and water quality concerns in the canals. Key priorities from the discussion included enhancing resiliency to storms and sea level rise, improving pedestrian and bicycle safety, and addressing beach restoration and flooding mitigation. The group also debated how to accurately represent canal water quality issues, deciding to focus on navigability and education.

Adjournment

Motion by Mayor Dondero, seconded by Councilwoman Cindy Van Horn to adjourn the June 26, 2026, Town Council & Planning Commission Workshop meeting at 10:27 a.m. Motion carried 7-0.

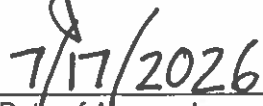
Respectfully Submitted,



Council Secretary



Town Clerk



Date of Approval