

ORDINANCE NO. 24-30

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING: 1) DIVISION 3 “UNSAFE BUILDING ABATEMENT CODE” OF ARTICLE I “PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODES”; AND 2) DIVISION 2 “LEE COUNTY’S BOARDS OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS” OF ARTICLE II “BUILDING CODES” OF CHAPTER 6 “MAINTENANCE CODES, BUILDING CODES AND COASTAL REGULATIONS” OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, TO AMEND EXISTING PROVISIONS RELATED TO APPEALS OF THE BUILDING OFFICIAL’S DECISIONS; DIVESTING THE LEE COUNTY’S CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW OF APPEALS OF THE TOWN BUILDING OFFICIAL’S DECISIONS REGARDING UNSAFE BUILDINGS; AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH SPECIAL MAGISTRATES TO HEAR APPEALS OF THE TOWN’S BUILDING OFFICIAL’S DECISIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY, SCRIVENER ERRORS, CONFLICTS OF LAW, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes provide that municipalities shall have the governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers to enable them to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions, and render municipal service, and exercise any power for municipal purposes, except when expressly prohibited by law; and

WHEREAS, Article X of the Town Charter of the Town of Fort Myers Beach empowers the Town to adopt, amend, or repeal such ordinances and resolutions as may be required for the proper governing of the Town; and

WHEREAS, on September 28, 2022, residences and businesses in the Town of Fort Myers Beach were destroyed by Hurricane Ian, resulting in the loss of lives, the displacement of lives and catastrophic financial losses; and

WHEREAS, although the Town, residents and businesses have engaged in recovery efforts to repair and rebuild structures in existence prior to Hurricane Ian, the Building Official has identified structures that have sustained significant damage and remain in an unsafe condition; and

WHEREAS, the Town’s “Unsafe Building Abatement Code” incorporates the 1985 Standard Unsafe Building Abatement Code to provide a procedure for the Building Official to follow if a structure is determined to be unsafe and requires demolition, with exceptions; and

WHEREAS, the Unsafe Building Abatement Code currently provides that any appeals of the Building Official decision would be reviewed by the Lee County's Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals (the “Board”); and

WHEREAS, the Interlocal Agreement between the Town and the Lee County Board of County Commissioners related to the Board’s appellate review of the Town’s Building Official’s decisions has expired; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Town’s best interest to reassign the responsibility of appellate review of the Town’s Building Official’s decisions to the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate; and

WHEREAS, on the 9th day of September 2024, the Town Council held a first reading of the Ordinance and gave full and complete consideration to the request of the proposed ordinance to amend the Unsafe Building Abatement Code as provided herein; and

WHEREAS, a second reading was scheduled for October 28, 2024 and was continued to November 18, 2024; and

WHEREAS, a Business Impact Estimate was prepared and posted on the City’s website as required by Section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, an advertisement of the public hearing for adoption of the Ordinance was published 10 days prior to the second reading of the proposed Ordinance as required by Section 166.041, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, on the 18th day of November 2024, the Town Council held a second and final reading of the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council determined that adoption of the Ordinance as provided herein is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the public.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That the above recitals are true and correct, and incorporated herein by this reference and are hereby adopted as the legislative and administrative findings of the Town Council.

Section 2. That Section 6-37 of Division 3 “Unsafe Building Abatement Code” of Article I “Property Maintenance Codes,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

DIVISION 3. - UNSAFE BUILDING ABATEMENT CODE

Sec. 6-37. - Exceptions and revisions.

a) Section 105 of Chapter I, Administration is hereby amended as follows:

Section 105, relating to the board of adjustment and appeals, is deleted, and replaced by the procedures set forth for the delegation of authority to the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special

Magistrates Lee County's Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals found in division 2 of article II of this chapter. Any reference to the board of adjustment and appeal as may be in other Chapters shall be amended as provided herein by reference.

b) Sections 302.1.1(4) and 302.1.2-302.1.4 in Chapter III, Inspection and Notice of Noncompliance are hereby amended as follows:

302.1.1(4) A statement advising that any person having any legal interest in the property may appeal the notice by the Building Official to the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrates Lee County Board of Adjustment and Appeals; and that such appeal shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Building Official within 30 days from the date of the notice in accordance with Division 2 of Article II of Chapter 6 of the Fort Myers Beach Code of Ordinances and that failure to appeal in the time specified will constitute a waiver of all rights to an administrative hearing.

302.1.2 The notice and all attachments thereto shall be served upon the property owner as identified on the records of the Lee County Property Appraiser and posted on the property. Failure of the building official to serve any person or entity other than the owner of record shall not invalidate any proceedings hereunder nor shall it relieve any other person or entity served from any obligation imposed on that person or entity.

302.1.3 The notice shall be served either personally by hand delivery by Town staff or a process server or by certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the owner of record at the address shown for the owner on the Lee County Property Appraiser's website. Notice shall also be mailed to the address of the building or structure involved in the proceedings. The failure of any person or entity to receive notice, either actual or constructive, other than the owner of record, shall not invalidate any proceedings under this section. Service by certified or registered mail as herein described shall be effective on the date the notice was received as indicated on the return receipt.

302.1.4 Proof of service of the notice shall be by written affidavit indicating the date, time and manner in which service was made. In the event service is not perfected by certified mailing or hand delivery, the property owner shall be subject to constructive service using the methods as provided in Chapter 49, Florida Statutes.

c) *Chapter VI, Implementation* is hereby amended as follows:

601.2.2 Subsequent to posting the building, the building official may cause the building to be repaired to the extent required to render it safe or if the notice required demolition, to cause the building or structure to be demolished and all debris removed from the premise. The cost of repair or demolition, and all reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and costs of notices related thereto, and all collection costs and expenses and the administrative fee as provided hereinafter, shall constitute a lien on the property and shall be collected in a manner provided by law.

d) *Chapter VII, Recovery of Cost of Repair or Demolition* is hereby amended as follows:

If the building official proceeds to demolish the building or structure as set forth herein, the town council shall, by proper resolution, assess the entire cost of such demolition and removal, and all reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and costs of notices related thereto, and all collection costs and expenses plus an administrative fee in an amount as adopted by the town council by resolution, against the real property upon which such cost and fee was incurred, which assessment, when made, shall constitute a lien upon the property superior to all others except taxes. The lien shall be filed in the public land records of the county. The resolution of assessment and lien must indicate the nature of the assessment and lien, the lien amount, and an accurate description of the property affected. The lien becomes effective on the date of filing such notice of lien and shall bear interest from such date at the rate of ten percent per annum until paid. If the resulting lien remains unpaid the town may:

- (1) File suit to foreclose on the lien property as provided by law in suits to foreclose mortgages; or
- (2) Follow any other lawful process or procedure available for enforcement or collection of the lien, including, but not limited to, the Uniform Method of Collection in accordance with any general law of the state relating to the enforcement or collection of municipal liens.

Section 3. That Division 2 “Lee County’s Boards of Adjustment and Appeals” of Article II “Building Codes,” of Chapter 6 “Maintenance Codes, Building Codes and Coastal Regulations,” of the Land Development Code of the Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida, are hereby amended to read as follows:

**DIVISION 2. - ~~LEE COUNTY'S BOARDS OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS~~
APPEALS OF DECISIONS BY THE TOWN'S BUILDING OFFICIAL**

Sec. 6-71. - Applicability of division.

This division shall include, but not be limited to, any contractor, owner, agent, manufacturer or supplier providing construction services or materials regulated by standard codes enforced by the Town of Fort Myers Beach.

Sec. 6-72. - Intent of division.

The town has adopted various standard codes relating to building, plumbing, mechanical, gas, electrical, unsafe buildings, housing and fire. This division is intended to be construed in conjunction with these codes.

~~Sec. 6-73. - Boards established; jurisdiction.~~

~~Lee County has established a construction board of adjustment and appeals known as the Lee County Board of Adjustment and Appeals. The purpose of that board is to hear and decide appeals from the decision of the county's building official and fire official or their designees on any of the various standard codes regulated and enforced by the county except the plumbing code~~

and mechanical code. Lee County has also established separate boards of adjustment and appeals to arbitrate matters involving the plumbing code and mechanical code.

~~Sec. 6-74. — Delegation of authority to Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals.~~

~~(a) The Town of Fort Myers Beach hereby delegates to each of the three Lee County Boards of Adjustment and Appeals the authority to make decisions on appeals that may be filed in accordance with § 6-80 of this division.~~

~~(b) The town attorney will provide legal advice to each of the three Lee County Boards of Adjustment and Appeals when warranted.~~

~~Secs. 6-75 — 6-79. — Reserved.~~

Secs. 6-73—6-79. - Reserved.

Sec. 6-80. - Right of appeal; notice of appeal.

(a) Whenever the building official or fire official or their designees shall reject or refuse to approve the mode or manner of construction to be followed or materials to be used, or when it is claimed that the provisions of a code do not apply, or that an equally good or more desirable form of construction can be employed in any specific case, or when it is claimed that the true intent and meaning of a code or any of the regulations thereunder have been misconstrued or wrongly interpreted, the owner of such building or structure, or his duly authorized agent, may appeal from the decision of the building official or fire official or their designees to the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrates Lee County's appropriate Board of Adjustment and Appeals. Notice of appeal shall be in writing and filed within 30 days after the decision is rendered by the building official or fire official or their designees. All requests for appeal shall be on forms provided by the building official with payment of the appropriate fee.

(b) In the case of a building or structure which in the opinion of the building official is unsafe or dangerous, the building official may, in his order, limit the time for such appeal to a shorter period.

Sec. 6-81. - Variations and modifications.

(a) ~~Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ A Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate, pursuant to an appeal from a decision of the building official or fire official or their designees, may vary the application of a code to any particular case when, in its opinion and based upon sufficient evidence, the enforcement thereof would do manifest injustice and would be contrary to the spirit and purpose of a code or public interest, or when, in its opinion and based upon sufficient evidence to the contrary, the interpretation of the building official or fire official or their designees should be modified or reversed.

(b) Any decision of ~~Lee County Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate to vary the application of any provision of a code or to modify an order of the building official or fire official or their designees shall specify the variation or modification made, the conditions upon which it is made, and the reasons therefor.

(c) Variances to the floodplain regulations must meet the additional criteria in article IV of this chapter.

Sec. 6-82. - Decisions.

(a) Every decision of ~~Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate shall be final; subject, however, to any remedy an aggrieved party might have at law or in equity. Every decision shall be in writing, ~~and shall indicate the vote upon the decision.~~ Every decision of ~~Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ shall be signed and attested to by the chairman of the board.

(b) ~~Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ The Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate shall, in every case, reach a decision without unreasonable or unnecessary delay.

(c) If a decision of any of ~~the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrates~~ Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals reverses or modifies a refusal, order or disallowance of the building official or fire official or their designees or varies the application of any provision of a code, the appropriate official shall immediately take action in accordance with such decision.

(d) Any aggrieved person may obtain judicial review of the decision of ~~Lee County's Boards of Adjustment and Appeals~~ the Town of Fort Myers Beach Special Magistrate by filing a petition for writ of certiorari in the circuit court. Such petition must be filed within 30 calendar days after the ~~board of adjustment and appeals'~~ Special Magistrate's decision, but not thereafter, pursuant to the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. The original petition for writ of certiorari must be filed with the clerk of the circuit court. Copies of the petition shall be filed with the building official for forwarding to the town attorney.

Secs. 6-83—6-110. - Reserved.

Section 4. That the town council intends that the provisions of this ordinance be made a part of the Fort Myers Beach, Florida, Code of Ordinances, and that sections herein may be renumbered or re-lettered and the words or phrases herein may be changed to accomplish codification; regardless, typographical errors that do not affect intent may be corrected with notice to and authorization of the town manager without further process.

Section 5. Whenever the requirements or provisions of this Ordinance conflict with the requirements or provisions of any other lawfully adopted ordinance or statute, the most restrictive shall apply.

Section 6. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, word, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason, declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional

or invalid, such decision will not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared.

Section 7. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption by the Town Council.

The foregoing Ordinance was adopted by the town council upon a motion by Council Member King and seconded by Mayor Allers, and upon being put on a roll call vote, the results were as follows:

Dan Allers, Mayor	Aye
Jim Atterholt, Vice Mayor	Aye
John R. King, Council Member	Aye
Karen Woodson, Council Member	Aye
Scott Stafford, Council Member	Aye

ADOPTED this 18th day of November 2024 by the Town Council of the Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida.

TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH


Dan Allers (Nov 22, 2024 13:44 EST)

Dan Allers, Mayor

ATTEST:


Amy Baker (Nov 25, 2024 13:06 EST)

Amy Baker, Town Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY FOR THE
USE AND RELIANCE OF THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH ONLY:**


Nancy Stuparich (Nov 25, 2024 12:20 EST)

Vose Law Firm, Town Attorney

This Ordinance was filed in the Office of the Town Clerk on this 22nd day of November 2024.