



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 25-1841A, Version: 1

Subject:

Resolution relating to extending the waiving of double the normal building permit fee and floodplain permit fee for storm reconstruction and repair through June 30, 2026.

Recommended Action:

Approval to adopt a resolution extending the waiving of double the permit fee for building permits and construction in a floodplain permit fee within the unincorporated County and communities of Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks Beach, Oldsmar, Kenneth City, and Safety Harbor, submitted from December 31, 2025 through June 30, 2026, for after the fact permits for work already commenced or completed on storm damaged properties directly or indirectly, by Hurricane Helene or Hurricane Milton. There are an estimated 3,000 damaged homes in the unincorporated County that have not pursued permits for repairs underway or completed. The fee waiver is subject to the following conditions:

- This waiver is applicable to after-the-fact permits for work to demolish and repair storm damage.
- This waiver is applicable to after-the-fact permits for work to demolish a “substantially damaged” structure as that term is defined in Section 158-182 of the Pinellas County Code.
- This waiver is applicable to after-the-fact permits for work to reconstruct, alter, or modify a structure that sustained such damage to elevate that structure or otherwise bring it into compliance with the County’s floodplain regulations and the Florida Building Code.
- This waiver is applicable to after-the-fact permits to repair a manufactured/mobile home that sustained damage and is required to obtain a Construction in a Floodplain permit in compliance with the County’s floodplain regulations.
- This waiver is not applicable to after-the-fact permits for accessory outdoor amenities including, but not limited to a swimming pool, driveway, patio, screen cage, and shed.
- This waiver is not applicable to after-the-fact permits for new construction unrelated to storm damage.
- This waiver will expire on June 30, 2026.
- While the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget of the Building Services Fund in the Building and Development Review Services Department included revenues associated with “double the permit fee” associated with after-the-fact permits, it does not anticipate an increase due to after-the-fact permits related to storm damage (estimated at \$1.9M). Therefore, waiving this doubling of fees will have no fiscal impact. The full permit fee will be collected to fund the work that will be done.

Strategic Priorities:

Healthy and Safe Communities
2.2 Enhance Community Safety

Summary:

If demolition, repair, or reconstruction work is performed without permits and inspections required under the Florida Building Code, it will (i) increase the likelihood that the work will fail to comply with the Florida Building Code, thereby reducing the safety and value of the affected property, and (ii) jeopardize the 40% discount on flood insurance currently applied to all residents in the County through FEMA's Community Rating System. Therefore, the risk of such unpermitted, uninspected work poses an immediate danger to the public health, safety, and welfare that requires emergency action.

It is necessary to protect the public interest and incentivize the highest degree of compliance with the Florida Building Code and County's Floodplain Management ordinance by permitting work already commenced or completed by waiving double the normal permit fees for after-the-fact building permits and construction in floodplain permits.

Background Information:

On September 24, 2024, pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 252.38(3)(a)5 and Pinellas County Charter Section 2.04(k), the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution 24-68 declaring a state of emergency within the boundaries of the County due to Helene (as may be extended or expanded from time-to-time, the Emergency”).

On October 5, 2024, the Governor of the State of Florida issued Executive Order 24-214 to declare an additional state of emergency in certain counties, including Pinellas, due to a tropical weather system then designated as “Tropical Storm Milton” and ultimately designated as “Hurricane Milton” (“Milton”).

On September 18, 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution 25-119 which waived the “double the normal fee” for already commenced or completed storm repair through December 31, 2025.

The impact of the two storms affected over 8,500 properties in the unincorporated County and the communities of Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks Beach, Oldsmar, Kenneth City and Safety Harbor. Considering the impact of extensive number of damaged properties and the considerations of residents needing to get back in their homes and business owners back operational, the waiving of double the normal fees is necessary to encourage compliance with the Florida Building Code and the County's Floodplain Management ordinance.

Fiscal Impact:

- This item has no fiscal impact on Pinellas County.

Funding for this resolution is not in the FY26 Budget of Building and Development Review Services in the Building Services Fund. The full permit fee will be collected and any *additional* revenue (the department estimates approximately \$1.8M) that would have been collected associated with the “double the permit fee” was not a budgeted amount as it is specific to only storm-impacted properties.

Staff Member Responsible:

Kevin McAndrew, Director, Building and Development Review Services

Partners:

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution