

NRB RESPONSE TO COUNTY COMMISSION REGARDING BARRIER ISLANDS MUNICIPALITIES

At the May 6th Pinellas County Board of Commissioners meeting, there were comments made by Commissioners regarding the barrier island municipalities. Specifically, that we have no leadership and cannot govern ourselves. Therefore we would like to share the video of that meeting (comments begin at 2:16:40) along with the letter prepared, approved, and submitted, by the NRB Board of Commissioners in response.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtGoA0soCSM>



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Town of North Redington Beach

MAYOR
JAY SUPER

May 8th, 2025

COMMISSIONERS
STEVE BRADLEY
RICK NAGRABSKI
COREY THORNTON
KEVIN KENNEDY

Chairman Brian Scott
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court St # 501
Clearwater, FL 33756

TOWN CLERK
MARI CAMPBELL, CMC

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1001 S. FORT HARRISON AVE
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Re: May 6th, 2025 Meeting Comments

Dear Chairman Scott,

Upon viewing the May 6th meeting of the Pinellas County Commissioners, we were dismayed and quite frankly insulted to hear the comments made by Commissioner Peters and Commissioner Latvala regarding the lack of leadership of our towns and the inability to react after the devastating hurricanes of last year.

We would like to correct these misleading statements with facts.

Statement: Commissioner Peters stated there is no leadership on the barrier islands.

Fact: While the long-term Mayor resigned and Two Commissioners retired earlier this year, North Redington Beach has a Mayor and a full board of Commissioners including the Vice Mayor, who has served for 14 years.

Mayor Jay Super, who also lost his house in the storms, stepped up and is an engaged, active, and responsive Mayor. Two new Commissioners took on the responsibility of leadership and the Commission is more engaged than in previous years in all aspects of governing. The Town Clerk has 22 years with the Town and provides deep historical knowledge.

In short, a change in leadership does not equal no leadership.

Statement: Commissioner Latvala stated we could not pick up our own debris.

Fact: North Redington Beach had debris and monitoring contracts in place for many years. Both contracts were immediately activated on Friday morning, September 27th, after Helene moved through on Thursday night.

Both the debris removal and monitoring companies were ready to begin collection but were unable to start due to the County not having collection sites ready. As they awaited the collection sites becoming operational, Milton was closing in and the trucks had to relocate while the storm passed. Milton made landfall on October 9th and our debris removal trucks were certified on the 11th and removal began on the 12th.

Debris runs were made throughout the month of October with the final run occurring early November. A separate mission was requested through FDEM and the town had a final sand removal and street cleaning at the end of November.

There was no request to the County for assistance with any debris removal.

Statement: Commissioner Latvala stated we couldn't get permits issued even after 6 months.

Fact: Demolition permits were issued immediately. Renovation permits were delayed due to the extreme length of time it took to receive the substantial damage estimates from Tidal Basin. Once these estimates were received, they had obvious errors. For example, a two-building identical duplex received damage of 100% to one and 51% to the other. These calculations had to be reassessed by our building department. Once the information was corrected, permits have been continually issued with 330 storm related permits issued to date.

Fact: Delayed permitting occurred with the hotels and commercial properties along Gulf Boulevard due to the County Property Appraiser's office having incorrect/insufficient valuations of the buildings. Once the valuations were issued, permitting began.

There was a request to the County for assistance in obtaining a copy of the contract for Tidal Basin. This public records request was not fulfilled despite multiple requests.

Statement: Commissioner Peters stated we do not have the technology to handle storm situations.

Fact: To be proactive for future storms and not be dependent on a company provided to us by Pinellas County, North Redington Beach is in the process of contracting with a FEMA-approved software company that will allow our building department to handle the substantial damage estimates. Our contracted building department, Safebuilt, is a nationwide company that can "scale up" and pull resources so the estimates can be completed and issued within weeks instead of months using this software.

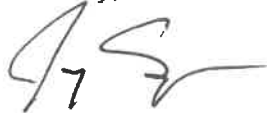
There was no request to the County for assistance in procuring this system.

Commissioner Latvala stated that we needed to prove that we could govern ourselves. The Town's ability to handle the needs of our residents during this unprecedented event of back-to-back storms has been proven. The Town Hall was never closed, daily emails provided information to our residents and all efforts were made to assist in any way possible.

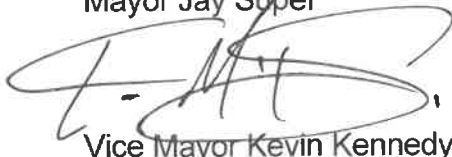
Our after-action review indicates the largest item to be corrected is the issuing of the largely incorrect substantial damage estimates, which we have already taken steps to correct.

In closing, we request that future discussion of our Town's leadership and governance be done truthfully, professionally and with respect.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jay Super



Vice Mayor Kevin Kennedy



Commissioner Rick Nagrabski



Commissioner Steve Bradley



Commissioner Corey Thornton

Cc:

Vice Chair Dave Eggers
Commissioner Kathleen Peters
Commissioner Chris Latvala
Commissioner Chris Scherer
Commissioner Vince Nowicki
Commissioner Rene Flowers
County Administrator Barry Burton