Monroe County Planning Board
Meeting Minutes, October 29, 2026 – DRAFT

A meeting of the Monroe County Planning Board (MCPB) was held on October 29, 2026, at 3:30 pm, in person, via Zoom, and live streamed on YouTube.

Members Present:	William Santos, MCPB Chair; Mike Wiedemer, Vice Chair (via zoom); Dave Watson, citizen member; Tyrese Bryant, citizen member; Elizabeth McDade, citizen member (joined 3:35) (via zoom); Milton Pichardo, citizen member; Victor Sanchez, citizen member; Robert Colby, Legislator (via zoom); Rachel Barnhart, Legislator (via zoom); Richard Tantalo, Dir. of Public Safety; Sean Murphy, Chief of Engineering & Facilities Mgmt. Dept. of Environmental Services
Alternates Present:	Conor McMahon (for Deputy Co. Exec. Amy Grower); Joe Leathersich (for Asst. Co. Exec. Adrienne Green); Joe Taddeo (for Dir. of Finance Jennifer Cesario); Kristina Daugherty, Public Safety
Planning Staff Present:	Pat Gooch, Sr. Associate Planner; Yixuan Lin, Sr. Planner, Secretary to the Board; Lisa Huntoon, Asst. to the Secretary to the Bd.
Others Present:	Parks Dept: Patrick Meredith, Director; Robert Kiley, Deputy Director (both via zoom) Law Dept: Bridget Cook, Deputy County Attorney

Chairman Santos called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.

1. APPROVAL OF THE September 24, 2026 MEETING MINUTES:
Motion: Mr. Watson **Seconded:** Mr. Pichardo **Vote:** Motion Approved

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS:

- Ms. Yixuan Lin shared the Planning Department recently completed another Land Use Decision-Making Training Program session. The department hosted two events in 2026, the first in July and the second in September with approximately 130 total attendees. Each session consisted of four hours of training. Next year we will also provide two sessions with topics still to be determined and additional information will be shared at that time.

3. ACTION ITEM:

a. Amend the 2026 Capital Budget to increase funding for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" Project in the amount of $14,000,000, for a total project authorization of $116,900,000.

Presenter: Sean Murphy, Dept of Environmental Services
Discussion: Mr. Murphy explained that in 2015 the Seneca Park Zoo had created a Strategic Plan and Master Plan Update. Over the years many projects have been completed with the MCPB approving various Capital Improvement Project funding. In 2022 a tropics complex with two separate buildings and a large 150,000-gallon aquarium was the next project to be undertaken but due to the excessive bid costs it did not proceed. Since that time a new architect has been hired and various options have been considered while following strict guidelines to design to the budget. Mr. Murphy provided an overview of the design changes made since the original design in 2022. The new design consists of one building which will include different aquatic features throughout the space. This will amount to approximately 65,000 gallons of water and some will include touch tanks. The revised design was aligned with the project budget in early 2026. However, due to tariffs, rising fuel costs (diesel included), imports on building materials fees, increased costs of manufactured materials, as well as a tight labor market in the building trades, the overall project cost has increased by $14,000,000.

Mr. Murphy provided the below information in response to questions from the Board:

- The $14,000,000 has built in contingencies.
- The scope changes include replacing the one large saltwater tank with smaller freshwater tanks, this will reduce construction costs and improve maintenance levels and is less expensive overall.
- Worked with zoo staff to design exhibits to allow them to simplify maintenance.
- The lower parking lot that is encroaching the park land is temporary parking area for the construction and limited to the construction period. The area will be restored to green space following completion of construction.

Motion: Mr. Bryant **Seconded:** Mr. Tantalo **Vote:** Motion Approved

4. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND MONROE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Vote to recommend the Comprehensive Plan, entitled "Plan Forward, a Comprehensive Plan for Monroe County" to the Monroe County Legislature, pursuant to Monroe County Charter §C5-7 C(2) and Administrative Code §A10-2.

Presenter: Pat Gooch
Discussion: Mr. Gooch stated, the Plan was presented in previous meetings of the MCPB, and a period of time was provided for comments. He then shared the time frame going forward. The required SEQR materials have been prepared and sent out for a coordinated review. If the Board takes action to recommend the Plan today, the County Legislature would introduce the Comprehensive Plan in the November full legislature meeting and the Legislature will hold a public hearing on the Plan within 90 days of the Planning Board's recommendation. Following the Legislature public hearing, the County Legislature will consider the Comprehensive Plan for adoption. Mr. Gooch shared that no changes have been made since the Board has last seen the plan and no comments have been received.

Motion: Mr. Sanchez **Seconded:** Mr. Murphy **Vote:** Motion Approved

5. OTHER BUSINESS:
A draft of the 2027 MCPB Meeting Schedule was handed out for review and will be discussed in the following meeting.

6. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:

- November 19, 2026 at 3:30 pm

ADJOURNMENT:
Motion: Ms. Taddeo **Seconded**: Mr. Tantalo **Adjournment:** 4:04 pm