

Puerto Rico voting machines investigated

Phil Stewart, Erin Banco
and Jonathan Landay
REUTERS

WASHINGTON — A team working for President Donald Trump's spy chief, Tulsi Gabbard, last spring led an investigation into Puerto Rico's voting machines, said Gabbard's office and three sources familiar with the previously unreported events.

The sources said the goal was to work with the FBI to investigate claims that Venezuela had hacked voting machines in Puerto Rico but added that the probe did not produce any clear evidence of Venezuelan interference in the U.S. territory's elections.

Gabbard's office, in a statement to Reuters, confirmed the May investigation but denied a link to Venezuela, saying its focus was on vulnerabilities in the island's electronic voting systems. Her team took an unspecified number of Puerto Rico's voting machines and additional copies of data from the machines as

part of its investigation, said a spokesperson for Gabbard's Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Her office said the taking of voting machines and data was "standard practice in forensics analysis."

Noting similar voting infrastructure elsewhere in the United States, it added: "ODNI found extremely concerning cyber security and operational deployment practices that pose a significant risk to U.S. elections."

Venezuela's government did not respond to a request for comment.

ODNI said that some security gaps in voting machines used in Puerto Rico stemmed from their use of vulnerable cellular technology and that software flaws existed that could give hackers access deep into vital electoral systems.

The Puerto Rico operation appeared to be part of an effort by Trump administration officials to pursue unproven allegations of voting fraud, the sources said. The preoccupation with voter fraud dates to Trump's reelection loss in 2020 and has not abated, said the sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss non-public operations.

"What's most alarming here is that Director Gabbard's own team acknowledges there was no evidence of foreign interference, yet they seized voting machines and election data, anyway," U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, told Reuters.

"Absent a foreign nexus, intelligence agencies have absolutely no lawful role in domestic election administration," Warner added. "This is exactly the kind of overreach Congress wrote the law to prevent, and it raises profound questions about whether our intelligence tools are being abused."

Gabbard directly involved

Gabbard's appearance at an FBI raid of an election facility in Fulton County, Georgia, last week highlights her direct involvement in these issues. Last week's FBI raid in Georgia prompted alarm among some national security experts worried that Gabbard and the ODNI have overstepped their authority in investigating a sensitive domestic matter.

Gabbard was not physically present during the operation in Puerto Rico, her office said, even though her agency took on a coordinating role in the investigation.

U.S. officials involved in the Georgia investigation sought records related to the 2020 presidential election that Republican Trump has falsely claimed he lost against Democrat Joe Biden because of widespread fraud.

Domestic election security matters are typically handled by law enforcement agencies, not the nation's intelligence services, say current and former U.S. officials.

Gabbard's office said it had the authority to carry



U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard's office confirmed the investigation of Puerto Rico's voting machines but denied a link to Venezuela, saying its focus was on vulnerabilities in the island's electronic voting systems. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

out the investigation.

"Given ODNI's broad statutory authority to coordinate, integrate, and analyze intelligence related to election security and our known work on understanding vulnerabilities to foreign and other malign interference, ODNI conducted an examination of electronic voting systems used in Puerto Rico's elections," the spokesperson said.

Reuters sources said it was the unproven allegation of Venezuelan involvement in voting irregularities in the U.S. territory's elections that had raised questions about possible foreign interference — something Gabbard had the legal authority to investigate.

The Caribbean island's residents are U.S. citizens but do not have voting representation in Congress and cannot vote in presidential general elections.

Challenging the denials of Gabbard's office about Venezuela's role, the three sources told Reuters that the FBI team involved in the Puerto Rico operation was probing the theory that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government had hacked U.S. voting, an allegation that has strong support among some Trump supporters but for which no evidence has surfaced publicly.

Threats to election security

The operation in Puerto Rico involved the FBI field office in southern Florida whose agents were coordinating with a group overseen by Gabbard investigating threats to election security, said two of the sources familiar with the operation.

This group included U.S. national security officials, law enforcement agents and government contractors, the sources said.

Martin County - Growth Management

Advertiser:	12056304
Insertion Number:	N/A
Size:	2 Col x 5.75 in
Color Type:	N/A

N/A
A-12-AII
LDR 25-04 Ar 11 New

Friday, February 6, 2026

The Stuart News
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS	
The Martin County Local Planning Agency and the Board of County Commissioners will conduct public hearings on the following item:	
AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING DIVISION 6, SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, ARTICLE 11, PLANNED-MIXED-USE VILLAGE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, MARTIN COUNTY CODE, REQUIRING PLANNED-MIXED-USE VILLAGE ZONING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; SEVERABILITY; APPLICABILITY; FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; EFFECTIVE DATE; AND CODIFICATION.	
Subject: This is a request by Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, P.A., on behalf of Mattamy Palm Beach LLC for approval of an amendment to Division 6, Site Development Standards, Article 11, Planned-Mixed-Use Village Land Development Regulations, Martin County Code, to add excavation standards for projects within the Planned-Mixed-Use Village Zoning District.	
Public Hearing: Local Planning Agency	
Date:	Thursday, February 19, 2026
Time:	7 PM or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard.
Public Hearing: Board of County Commissioners	
Date:	Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Time:	9 AM or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard.
Place: Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996	
All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard.	
Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 288-5495, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996, no later than 7 days prior to the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.	
If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Upon the request of any party to the proceeding, the proceeding will be granted an opportunity to cross-examine any individual testifying during a hearing upon request. If it becomes necessary, a public hearing may be held.	
Anyone with a disability requiring accommodation to attend this meeting should contact the St. Lucie County Community Risk Manager at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting at (772) 462-1546 or T.D.D. (772) 462-1428. Any questions about this agenda may be referred to St. Lucie County Community Risk Manager at (772) 462-2822.	
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/ ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA /S/ JAMES FOWLER, CHAIR	
PUBLISH DATE: Friday, February 6, 2026	

ST. LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

NOTICE OF 2nd READING OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners is scheduled to review and consider the following County-initiated proposal for adoption by Ordinance:

ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE SECTION 8.00.04 — FENCES, WALLS, EMBANKMENTS, AND HEDGES; ADJUSTING FLORIDA FOR FENCE MATERIALS; IF A PLANNED WITHIN CERTAIN PLANNED ZONING DISTRICTS AND IS GREATER THAN ONE ACRE, WITH A LAWFULLY PERMITTED DWELLING UNIT AND ON AN UNPAVED, PRIVATELY MAINTAINED ROAD, TO CONSTRUCT A FENCE IN WHICH THE FENCE IS TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTIES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; APPLICABILITY; FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; CODIFICATION; AND EFFECTIVE DATE; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION.

APPLICANT: ST. LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PURPOSE: The Board of County Commissioners are proposing amendments to the County's Land Development Code's fencing regulations that allow new fence properties with the RE-1, RE-2, RE-3, RS-3, RS-4, RS-5, and RS-6 zoning districts, located on a parcel of one (1) acre or greater with a lawfully permitted dwelling unit on an unpaved, privately maintained road, to construct a fence in which the fence is to be maintained by the owner of the properties. These properties represent a greater rural atmosphere with larger parcels and limited subdivision. If adopted, this section would not apply to trees or barbed wire fence. Fence would need to be maintained and kept free of hazardous protrusions and loose wires.

The PUBLIC HEARING on this item will be held in the Commission Chambers, Roger Polkis Annex, 3rd Floor, 2300 Virginia Avenue, Port Pierce, FL on **Tuesday, February 17, 2026, beginning at 6:00 pm or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard.**

All interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard. Written comments received in advance of the public hearing will also be considered. Written comments to the Board of County Commissioners shall be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Division at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled hearing. Comments will be distributed to the Board members in advance of the meeting and included in the record provided the comment complies with the requirements of the Florida Public Record Act. The Planning and Development Services Department — Planning offices located at 2300 Virginia Avenue, Port Pierce, FL during regular business hours. Please call Amy Offenbach, Planner, at (772) 288-5495, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 320-3131, or the Office of the County Administrator at (772) 288-5490, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Comments by the public will be accepted during the hearing. Any questions about this agenda may be referred to St. Lucie County Community Risk Manager at (772) 462-1546 or T.D.D. (772) 462-1428.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
/S/ JAMES FOWLER, CHAIR

PUBLISH DATE: Friday, February 6, 2026

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Martin County Board of County Commissioners will conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of LDR 25-03, an ordinance amending the Martin County Land Development Regulations:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING ARTICLE 3, ZONING DISTRICTS, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, MARTIN COUNTY CODE, UPDATING THE TERMS, PERMITTED USES AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS REGARDING ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; SEVERABILITY; APPLICABILITY; FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; CODIFICATION; AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

Public Hearing: Board of County Commissioners

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Time: 5:00 PM or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard

All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard. The meeting will be held in the Commission Chambers on the first floor of the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida. Written comments may be mailed to: Paul Schilling, Director, Martin County Growth Management Department, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. For more information, including copies of the original application or agenda items, contact Amy Offenbach, Planner, at (772) 288-5495.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 320-3131, or the Office of the County Administrator at (772) 288-5490, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Comments by the public will be accepted during the hearing. Any questions about this agenda may be referred to St. Lucie County Community Risk Manager at (772) 462-1546 or T.D.D. (772) 462-1428.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/
ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
/S/ JAMES FOWLER, CHAIR

PUBLISH DATE: Friday, February 6, 2026

ST. LUCIE COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

February 19, 2026

NOTICE OF A PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

The St. Lucie County Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to review and make a recommendation regarding the following petitioned item by the applicant for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Lucie County, Florida by Ordinance.

ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY AMENDING LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE CHAPTER 704.00, DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS, SECTION 704.00, AREA, YARD, HEIGHT, AND OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS, TABLE 7-10 (LOT SIZE AND DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS) TO INCREASE MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE BY BUILDINGS IN THE RS-2 (RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE-FAMILY) ZONING DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR MULTIPLE PROPERTIES SERVED BY CENTRAL WATER AND SEWER, PRIVATE STREETS, AND A MASTER STORMWATER SYSTEM; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING FOR ADOPTION.

Applicant: Robert Dudley, with Noble Oaks Estates LLC

File Number: TLDC-252-000044.

Location: Land Development Code Text Amendment applying to multiple properties zoned RS-2.

Purpose: Request to amend Land Development Code Section 704.00, Table 7-10 to increase maximum lot coverage by buildings in the RS-2 (Residential, Single-Family - 2) zoning district from 20% to 30% when properties are served by central water and sewer, private streets, and a master stormwater system.

The Planning and Zoning Commission's meeting on this item will be held in the Commission Chambers, 2nd Floor, Potras Annex, 3rd Floor, St. Lucie County Administration Building, 2300 Virginia Avenue, Port Pierce, Florida on **Thursday, February 19, 2026, beginning at 6:00 pm or as soon thereafter as possible**.

All interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard. Written comments received in advance of the public hearing will also be considered. Comments to the Planning and Zoning Commission should be received by the Planning and Development Services Department at least 3 days prior to the scheduled hearing. The petition file is available for review at the Planning and Development Services Department offices located at 2300 Virginia Avenue, 2nd Floor, Port Pierce, Florida during regular business hours. Please call (772) 462-1540 or TDD (772) 462-1428 if you have any questions or require additional information about this petition.

The St. Lucie County Planning and Zoning Commission has the power to review and recommend to the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners, approval or disapproval for any applications within their area of responsibility.

The proceedings of the Planning and Zoning Commission are electronically recorded. **RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS**

STATUTORY: If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Planning and Zoning Commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings. For such purpose, he or she need only record the verbatim record of the proceedings, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Upon the request of any party to the proceeding, individuals testifying during a hearing will be sworn in. Any party to the proceeding will be granted an opportunity to cross-examine any individual testifying during a hearing upon request. If it becomes necessary, a hearing may be continued.

Any person with a disability requiring accommodation to attend this meeting should contact the St. Lucie County Risk Manager at (772) 462-1546 or T.D.D. (772) 462-1428.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION/
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY
ST. LUCIE COUNTY (FLORIDA)
/S/ RYAN BINNER, CHAIRMAN
PUBLISH DATE: Friday, February 6, 2026