

**MINUTES**  
**FORT MYERS BEACH**  
**MARINE RESOURCES TASK FORCE**  
Town Hall  
2525 Estero Boulevard  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

**Wednesday, February 8, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Veach. Members present: Greg Holmes, Tony Lubig, Shannon Mapes, Eldon Ridener, Mary Rose Spalletta and Bill Veach.

Excused: Keri Hendry Weeg

Council Liaison: Anita Cereceda

Staff: Rae Blake

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INVOCATION**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 11, 2017**

Correction: Louise Celwieh Kowitch

**MOTION:** Ms. Spalletta moved to approve the minutes as amended; second by Mr. Holmes.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT - no public comment.**

**V. CURRENT ITEMS**

**A. Water Quality Testing Discussion - Shannon Mapes**

Ms. Mapes noted that the new website had less information than before and it was harder to locate. She suggested a link on the front page. After taking an informal survey, she discovered that people did want to know about beach quality in the simplest format possible. She indicated it would be advantageous for them to update the website. Ms. Mapes read the mission and job description of MRTF. She spoke to Rick Armstrong at the Lee County Environmental Lab and asked him several questions. He stated that the EPA told them what to test for and he noted that E. coli was the most harmful to humans in the bay. She spoke to Tracy Fanara, (sp?) Ph.D. from Mote Marine Laboratory regarding why certain nutrient pollution markers were not tested for in the Gulf and she replied that they degraded too quickly and were diluted in the circular currents. Ms. Mapes noted that the bays were typically more polluted than the Gulf and were tested regularly. Ernesto de la Vega from Lee County Hyacinth Control District, stated that lawn runoff and leaking septic tanks were a huge source of pollution. He stated it was not worthwhile to monitor something that might be there unless there was evidence to support it. He supported a canal pilot program to set a baseline and measure spikes from there. She stated that Fort Myers Beach fertilizer ordinance was 3 feet from any body of water, the ordinance in Fort Myers was 10 feet and Sanibel's ordinance was 25 feet. Ms. Mapes indicated that testing in the Gulf did not provide a definitive answer and their best course would be to test and monitor the canals. She

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stated that they had to update the fertilizer ordinance to 25 feet and educate residents that the ordinance existed. Swales and water tank filtration systems, as installed under Delmar, would be helpful according to Scott Baker, Public Works Director. The biggest threat to the beaches is the quality of the bay water.

Mr. Lubig stated that he was very concerned with toxins and poisons coming down the river.

Ms. Spalletta conducted an informal survey and many people tried to find information and had difficulty with the search. The beach rental vendors indicated that visitors were concerned about the water temperature and whether they would step on anything. The vendors noted that visitors trusted that the water was safe. Ms. Spalletta stated they had to make sure not to duplicate testing being done by other levels of governmental and they had to make sure the information was available to people who were concerned about their general health.

Mr. Ridener agreed with Mr. Lubig about the runoff from the river. He questioned what they could do.

Ms. Mapes stated that the fertilizer ordinance could be changed on a local level. Mr. Ridener questioned whether the current ordinance was being enforced. Ms. Mapes did not think so.

Mr. Holmes indicated that the focus should be on Fort Myers Beach. His neighbors were concerned about dumping in the back bay and indicated that it had been getting worse over the last five years. He noted there were 45 groups already testing the water and he wanted to spend his time doing something helpful.

Chair Veach spoke to David Polk, State Coordinator for the Healthy Beach Program, who stated that there were two categories: protecting the environment from people and protecting people from the environment. Most testing was for E. coli. Chair Veach described how other beaches around the country displayed alerts or preemptive advisories. Mr. Polk indicated that most of the of over-the-limit readings were from two estuaries in their bays and bayous, not on the beaches. He noted that it took 48 hours to get test results and it was expensive. Chair Veach stated that all websites he visited had generic warnings and he felt it was worth putting on the Town's website. He felt they should set a good example and concentrate on the back bay. Chair Veach thought that spot testing before and after an event would be useful. He recommended a website with general beach conditions including links to weather, water temperature, water quality, weather events and a web camera.

Ms. Cereceda questioned Ms. Mapes regarding additional proactive steps. Ms. Mapes replied that the stormwater system needed to be put in. Mr. Baker has been stating that if the bay gets too polluted the state will force the Town to install a multi-million dollar storm system at the Town's expense. Ms. Mapes noted the canals were filthy and she was not interested in testing Gulf water. She described her flooded street and she questioned whether they could test before, during and after a Lake Okeechobee release. She discussed conducting baseline testing in the canals and discussed the water quality on her recent kayak trip. She mentioned installing oyster beds in the canals.

Chair Veach recommended suggesting that beach conditions be linked on the website and funds be available in their budget for emergency testing. Ms. Blake will address Council concerning the fertilizer ordinance.

Mr. Ridener questioned whether condominium associations were aware of the ordinance and whether they should be required to sign it. Discussion was held regarding avenues for getting information out to citizens.

#### Recommendations:

-Create a dedicated page with a summary of beach conditions that include water quality that can be updated weekly with links and a disclaimer.

**MOTION:** Ms. Spalletta moved to recommend the above to Council; second by Ms. Mapes.  
**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

-Budget funds for water quality testing at the Environmental and Stormwater Technician's discretion to gather the information she needs to keep the water quality web page relevant.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lubig moved to recommend the above to Council; second by Mr. Holmes.  
**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

-Bringing the fertilizer ordinance in line with other municipalities.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lubig moved to recommend the above to Council; second by Ms. Mapes.  
**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was held regarding stormwater, water testing, dirty canals in Cape Coral, outfalls on the Island, impervious surfaces, blocked swales and flooded streets. Chair Veach recommended that the Town give priority to retention and leeching through swales and basins and existing right-of-ways or through acquisition of vacant lots if appropriate and economical. Goal Nine of the Comprehensive Plan, impervious surfaces, education and financial incentives were discussed.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lubig moved to recommend that Council implement Goal Nine of the Comprehensive Plan; second by Mr. Ridener.  
**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

#### B. Songwriting Festival

Chair Veach suggested that the songwriting festival be removed from the agenda. Discussion was held concerning the float for the Shrimp Festival.

#### C. Good Citizen Award aka the "Murphie"

Ms. Cereceda nominated Eddie Foster, The Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation and Corey Francisco. (sp?) Chair Veach suggested Tree Andre.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lubig moved to nominate Eddie Foster; second by Ms. Spalletta.  
**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

### VI. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Chair Veach noted that the interpretive signs were moving through the TDC approval process.

### VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Leon Moyer, resident, stated that they did not have to be overly concerned about the stormwater drainage. He remarked that they should not compare themselves to Sanibel Island; they should be looking for good water quality. He discussed nitrogen pollution at the bird island sanctuary,

fish gutting and sea grass. He stated that there did not seem to be enforcement of the fertilizer ordinance and the problem was with landscape companies. He noted that septic tanks did not leak and were not necessarily the problem. It was the concentration factor that caused the problem.

**VIII. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

Remove water quality and songwriting festival.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Ms. Spalletta moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Holmes.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ with/without changes. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

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