

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

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Veach. Members present: Greg Fossum, Renee Heil, Greg Holmes, Steve Johnson, Jennifer Rusk and Bill Veach.

Excused: Mary Rose Spalletta

Staff: Environmental Services Coordinator Chadd Shustz.

Council Liaison: Rexann Hosafros

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 12, 2020

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to approve the minutes; second by MRFT Member Holmes.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

•Bob Carron (?) represented EBIA and Bay Beach. They were pleased that MRTF was discussing the boating safety zone. He offered to help them with pictures or whatever they needed.

•Dave Miser, President of EBIA and Harbor Point Association, observed that approximately 30% of boats violated the minimum wake in the area. He described the volume of traffic around the Fish Tale canal.

•Rick Rosen, resident, echoed safety concerns in the back bay. He indicated that the Reduce Speed sign at the south end was facing the wrong way. He noticed an increase in speed in the area.

V. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Boating Safety Zones

Chair Veach reviewed why the signs were replaced after Hurricane Irma. He indicated that staff was investigating strategies to reduce the speed. Liaison Hosafros added that the Town did not change the signs.

Public Works Director Chelsea O'Riley described two paths they could take. Coordinator Shustz reviewed boating restricted areas and seasonal restrictions. Director O'Riley stated that they had to follow a process and they received reports from Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Coordinator Shustz described 1.c. from a document displayed on the screen. He indicated they put out a letter of interest to hire a contractor to provide evidence to the FWC concerning the area 37 to 57. He mentioned boating citations provided by FWC and the Sheriff's Office. Chair Veach questioned installing a kayak launch and whether the Caloosa Blue Way went through the area. Coordinator Shustz replied that it hugged the area and there were access points. Chair Veach suggested looking at the manatee angle. Coordinator Shustz indicated it would require a study.

MRTF Member Rusk described a video she took showing boats traveling faster than they should. She stated it was a safety issue. Director O'Riley encouraged residents to share their opinions with the FWC. Liaison Hosafros clarified that the State and the FWC had to approve or disapprove any ordinance Town Council passed.

Director O'Riley stated that the FWC agreed that submitting a study, report and video would be feasible. MRTF Member Johnson agreed with pursuing that approach. Director O'Riley commented that she would keep them updated. Liaison Hosafros questioned whether a kayak launch would be helpful in light of the 500 feet regulation.

B. Educational Signs at Beach Accesses

Chair Veach suggested that they request more money for additional signs. He described the signs for new members. MRTF Member Holmes suggested they install signs at each beach access.

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to request that Town Council add six more interpretive signs to the TDC funding request; second by MRTF Member Heil.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Veach described moving the signs to different locations.

C. Reusable Bags

MRTF Member Johnson indicated they had two open spots for sponsors. MRTF Member Rusk revealed that Diamond Head sent her request to their marketing department and she was waiting to hear back from another company. (Microphone cut in and out.) Discussion was held regarding contacting the Chamber of Commerce and MRTF Member Johnson offered to contact them. MRTF Member Heil offered to reach out to the new owners of Fish Tale and she approached Blue Ribbon Events. MRTF Member Rusk commented that the Tuckaway created their own bags.

D. Good Citizen Award aka the "Murphie"

MRTF Member Rusk nominated Girl Scout Troop 2055 who made a turtle time presentation, spent the day picking up trash and created a video and poster concerning saving turtles.

MRTF Member Johnson stated that Isle Winds condo invested in wildlife lighting for the entire condominium. He reminded members the turtle mural was in the bank.

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to nominate the Girl Scout Troop 2055; second by MRTF Member Holmes.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to put Isle Winds into the bank; second by MRTF Member Heil?

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

MRTF Member Heil suggested that they utilize education to encourage businesses to use marine and reef-safe sunscreen. She offered to gather scientific information and she explained the danger of the chemicals on humans, wildlife and the environment. She was very concerned with the

impact of chemicals on the mangroves. Chair Veach mentioned that she could write an article for the newspaper. MRTF Member Heil agreed. She mentioned tagging onto a skin cancer initiative with the American Cancer Association next year during Spring Break. MRTF Member Rusk questioned whether they participated in Earth Day events. Liaison Hosafros replied that they did one year.

MRTF Member Johnson brought up nominations for the Mulholland Award. He questioned the status of the glyphosate ban. Chair Veach noted the fertilizer ban had passed. MRTF Member Johnson questioned why the Estero lighting was removed from the agenda. He stated that a second lighting consultant was involved. He indicated that Dania Beach and other cities had installed solar LED lighting. He noted the Town would consider public and private options and he thought things were moving in the right direction.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim H.?, resident, discussed the Manatee Sanctuary Act. He stated that a study was not required by the statute and he believed there was an opportunity to make many observations. He spoke to the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve and they also conducted observations from time to time. He thanked MRTF and staff for everything they did. Coordinator Shustz indicated that the information was in their meeting package.

John Russo, resident, appreciated what MRTF did for the community. He mentioned three criteria that could stop it: manatees, citations and boater safety. He stated manatees had been in his canal for 35 winters and they were there now. He questioned how they could do a study out of season. He commented that the lack of violations was a result of the lack of police in the area. Mr. Russo stated that no one was following the speed limit and he begged the Sheriff's office for help. He stated that they were almost up to \$300,000.00 worth of damage to property.

VIII. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING – add lighting and sunscreen.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to adjourn the meeting; second by MRFT Member Johnson.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Adopted 6/17/2020 with/without changes. Motion by Steve Johnson
(DATE)

Vote: 7-0 Signature: [Signature]

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