

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Public Safety Committee and Marine Resources Task Force
Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Monday, July 26, 2021
SPECIAL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

PSC Members present: Mike Childs, Chair John Goggin, Jim Knickle and Dawn Thomas (via phone).

MRTF Members present: Wendy DeGaetano, Chair Steve Johnson, Rose Larkin, Jennifer Rusk and Mary Rose Spalletta.

Town Lighting Consultants present: Joe Hancock, Rick Kauffman (via ZOOM) Ed Kramer and Suzanne Lansford.

Town Staff present: Town Manager Roger Hernstadt, Public Works Director Chelsea O'Riley and Environmental Project Manager Chadd Chustz.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

V. PRESENTATION FROM LIGHTING CONSULTANT

Ms. Lansford utilized slides to review the report. Slides included: 2.2 Luminaires: White LED; 2.3 Luminaires: Amber LED; 2.4 Luminaires: Dual Source Amber/White; 2.5 Luminaires: Standalone Solar; 3. Ownership and Controls; 4. Training Considerations; 5. Other Financing Options: ESCOs; 6. Basis of Construction Estimates; 7. Carbon Considerations; 8. System Comparison and 9. Recommendation of a dual-source light.

Chair Johnson disagreed with the anti-amber narrative of the report and noted that it did not match MRTF recommendations. He read an email from Dr. Robin Trindell from Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) that stated white LED lights were not turtle friendly. Mr. Hancock replied that they did not say white LEDs were turtle friendly and they recommended using amber lights during turtle season. He discussed light trespass regarding white LEDs and how the product improved over the years. He stated that all products they discussed were narrow band. Mr. Kramer explained how amber technology evolved and a discussion was held regarding technical details of lights.

Chair Johnson questioned whether short-wave blue light was healthy for humans or wildlife. Mr. Hancock replied that it was not a yes/no question because dosage mattered. Mr. Kauffman discussed different products and the Kelvin scale. Chair Johnson brought up sky glow with short-wavelength blue lights. Mr. Kauffman added information about skyglow, glare and ratings.

Chair Johnson questioned specifications in the system comparison chart. Mr. Kauffman provided a clarification.

Chair Johnson concluded that the recommendation was in direct opposition to stakeholder feedback and the entire process was an exercise in futility. He questioned the mounting height. Mr. Kauffman replied it was 25 feet and more poles would be needed on the Gulf side of Estero Blvd. Mr. Hancock described testing products in the lighting lab.

Chair Goggin questioned whether there were legal and safety implications. Mr. Kauffman described potential litigation issues for not providing decent lighting. Chair Goggin suggested adding the potential liability information to the presentation for Town Council. Town Manager Hernstadt stated that the Town would not be liable if they did not have anything to do with the lighting on Estero Blvd. Chair Goggin questioned shielding issues with the FPL white LED and whether they could design a LED shielding system that would be turtle friendly. Mr. Hancock replied that they could with a Town-owned system, but options were limited with FPL because the Town could not get the service needed to perfect the system. Mr. Hancock added that FPL could not compete with commercial providers because they were not lighting providers. Town Manager Hernstadt noted that they had more flexibility with a Town-owned system due to the ability to customize products. He added that shielding white LEDs was not a guarantee that lights would not have to be turned off.

Chair Goggin stated that it would cost the Town approximately \$1.3 million to add 100 poles regardless of which product was used. Mr. Kauffman indicated that there were many instances of light sources from the sides of the road that had to be considered. Chair Goggin questioned how they determined which lights were turned off to prevent disorientation. Mr. Hancock replied that FPL had a cut list of lights to turn off during turtle season and the list was reviewed every year. He noted that FWC also had a copy of the list.

Chair Goggin questioned why they preferred the option of 2.2 for the entire year for safety, but their final recommendation was to use amber lights part of the year, which was not as safe for pedestrians and vehicles. He felt that the report was contradictory. He questioned whether the white lights that were turned off during turtle season could be replaced with amber lights. Mr. Hancock replied that it was viable. Mr. Kauffman agreed that amber lights would be better than nothing. Mr. Hancock stated that amber lights might need to be shielded too. He suggested that commercial properties with bright lights on Estero and Crescent be investigated.

Chair Goggin confirmed that if white LEDs were used, fewer poles would be needed. He noted that the recommended dual light source was not approved by FPL or FWC and would take months to study. He questioned why there was no analysis regarding the standalone solar light. Ms. Lansford replied that they did not have time to perform calculations, so they used the data in the literature provided. Chair Goggin expressed concern regarding the inventory of the dual light system in the event of a hurricane. He questioned the initial investment with a Town-owned system and ongoing maintenance costs. PSC Member Childs replied that the cost would be astronomical. Town Manager Hernstadt discussed service issues after a hurricane with a Town-owned system and the overall price. Chair Goggin requested an estimate of a Town-owned system to determine whether it was a viable option.

Chair Goggin stated that side street lighting was a big concern. He questioned whether the County was contacted yet. He pointed out contradictory statements regarding amber lights versus white lights from the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department. He suggested that they submit letters stating reasons for their light preference to clear the confusion.

VI. DISCUSS PRESENTATION FROM LIGHTING CONSULTANT

MRTF Member Rusk questioned how they discovered the dual light option and whether they decided on the product before the study. Mr. Hancock replied that dual light technology was developed in the last four years. They discussed using the product at the beginning of the study because the technology was ready. MRTF Member Rusk questioned whether any of the consultants had a financial stake in the dual light product. She discussed contacting Treasure Island regarding statements attributed to their representatives. She noted that there were no complaints regarding amber lights from law enforcement or members of the public. She questioned whether they researched using white lights in other coastal communities.

PSC Member Knickle questioned how many new poles were needed since there were existing poles without lights. Ms. Lansford replied that she would provide a better estimate of the poles required and the initial cost. Mr. Hancock described the verification process by FWC and FPL to approve the dual light and estimated the process would take about six months. He explained the difference between two lights on their chart. PSC Member Knickle questioned whether sample lights would be installed so they could see the difference. Mr. Hancock replied affirmatively.

PSC Member Childs stated that adding more poles on the beachside was not feasible aesthetically or financially.

MRTF Member DeGaetano found the report confusing and the discrepancies disturbing. She indicated that FWC was the guiding force for the Town's lighting needs. She questioned considering lighting that was not approved by any entity.

MRTF Member Spalletta described turtle disorientations and white lights. She stated it was their duty to install lights that were beneficial to humans and wildlife. She noted that turning off lights for half the year was not an option and shielding white lights did not help.

MRTF Member Larkin noted that the PSC was going to check with the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department two months ago regarding a statement concerning a light preference. Chair Goggin replied that he suggested that the consultants speak with them. MRTF Member Johnson revealed that the results of the conversations were in the consultant's report. MRTF Member Larkin noted that the American Medical Association (AMA) recommended using the lowest blue light possible. Chair Johnson discussed the tariff program with FPL and what was covered. Mr. Hancock replied that in-line distribution poles were not covered. Chair Johnson brought up the lack of data regarding traffic accidents and amber lights. He discussed habitat loss with white lights.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Johnson
Susie, Turtle Time permit holder, agreed that it was unwise to install white lights. She discussed a changing landscape and the difficulty of adjusting shields. She stated that changing out the 22 lights would not solve the problem with disorientations.

Chair Goggin stated that he would summarize PSC comments and send them to Director O'Riley.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to adjourn; second by Chair Goggin.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Adopted 8/17 with/~~without~~ changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: 1 Signature: 

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