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2525 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach, Fla. 33931 / www.fmbgov.com

Town Council's June 7 meeting featured a full agenda including recognition of former Mayor Dan Hughes

Town of Fort Myers Beach, FL – Town Council's meeting on Monday, June 7, was the last one until August and several actions focused on budget, the annual audit, and special events as well as recognition of former Town Councilor and Mayor Dan Hughes.

In addition to serving as Town Councilor and Mayor, Dan was on the Town's first Local Planning Agency and was the chairperson of the Audit Committee. (He resigned as the chairperson at the June meeting of the committee.) Dan has been instrumental in the development of the Town since its beginning in 1995.

The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget is underway. Staff recommended a millage rate of .9500 but cautioned Councilors that in some cases recurring revenue would not fully support recurring expenses. Town Councilors approved a preliminary millage rate of .9900 up from last year's rate of .9500. As budget development progresses through the next few months, the millage rate could be lowered to .9500 but not increased.

Town Councilors also approved the inclusion of the five-year Capital Improvement Plan into the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget with the addition of placeholders for the Mooring Field upland services facility and expansion, the Bayside Park dock, and the Estero Boulevard Lighting Project. The other projects included are intersection improvements at Old San Carlos and Estero Boulevards, stormwater improvements, and the redevelopment of Bay Oaks Recreational Campus, Bayside Park, and Times Square.

The financial auditing company Mauldin & Jenkins presented its audit report from Fiscal Year 2019-20 which was accepted previously by the Audit Committee and now by Town Council. Town Council also accepted a \$283,550 proposal to replace and upgrade the audio visual system in Council chambers.

A special event permit was accepted for the recurring Times Square Sunset Celebration on Friday evenings with the possibility of adding Saturday evenings. A second special event permit was approved for the "Dig the Beach Volleyball Series" to be held on the beach behind the Wyndham Hotel on June 26-27 and July 17-18, 2021. This event is expected to draw 150 teams per day.

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The Town of Fort Myers Beach is on Estero Island off the southwest Florida coast facing the Gulf of Mexico and backed by Estero Bay. Known for white sugar sand and spectacular sunsets and shell finds, the Gulf beach stretches for seven miles. Incorporated since 1995, the Town has a variety of unique parks, recreation, cultural facilities, shops, and restaurants.

In other business, Town Councilors:

- Appointed Kristin Westbrook, Sharon Eldred and Forrest Critser to the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, and appointed Robert Howell, ex-officio member of the Marine Resources Task Force (MRTF), to a voting member;
- Adopted resolution 21-32 repealing emergency declarations and resolutions regarding the state of emergency declared in Governor Desantis' Executive Order 20-52;
- After a second reading and public hearing, adopted Ordinance 21-04 which approves an amendment to the Land Development Code for uses and setbacks on non-conforming lots;
- Performed the first public hearing for Ordinance 21-05 to grant right of way to Peoples Gas System, a division of Tampa Electric Company, with the second hearing scheduled for the August 2, 2021, meeting;
- Authorized the Town Manager to increase a state loan for the North Estero Phase 2, Parts 1 and 2, and Tier 1 side streets water main projects;
- Adopted fiscal sustainability plan for the Town's stormwater system as required by SRF Loan SW360830;
- Approved Change Order #2 in the amount of \$14,363.37 with Ajax Paving Industries of Florida, LLC, for the traffic signal and lighting under construction at Old San Carlos and Estero Boulevards to include turtle-friendly lighting;
- Approved Resolution 21-26 for an interlocal agreement with Lee County for maintenance of the traffic signal under construction at Old San Carlos and Estero Boulevards;
- Received a report from MRTF about new bio-degradeable straws and the straw ordinance as well as the Pop-Up Education Booth.

During public comment, topics included the straw ordinance, a possible facility for upland services for Mooring Field, the Lee County Sheriff's search for an outreach center, and community policing.

During Councilmember, Town Manager, and Town Attorney items, topics included the desire for a full-time financial director, summary of legislation and legal actions, performance reviews of Town Council's employees, reorganization of committees and the leadership conference, the Estero Boulevard Lighting Project, a joint letter to legislators about water quality, and future policy discussion relating to naming Town facilities after residents who have been instrumental in the development of the Town.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 2, 2021, at 9 a.m., at Town Hall, 2525 Estero Boulevard.

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