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For Immediate Release – Monday, June 14, 2021

2525 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach, Fla. 33931

Native plant demonstration garden built on Palermo

Town of Fort Myers Beach, FL –Community organizations joined with Town staff recently to build a native plant demonstration garden at the corner of Palermo Circle and Estero Boulevard. This is a pilot project proposed by Town Councilor Bill Veach and supported by his colleagues on Town Council.

Members of The Estero Island Garden Club designed and planted the garden, with help from the community for prepping and planting, and will be maintaining it. The garden has 23 different types of plants including bushes, wildflowers, and ground covers.

“Our garden aims to inspire and educate the public on the importance of native plants in our landscape,” said Randa Veach, Vice President of the Garden Club. “Native plants play a big role in protecting our environment and supporting our native pollinators and wildlife. There will be an educational sign in the garden and labels identifying the plants.”

The Florida Native Plant Society-Coccoloba Chapter provided the plants and donated some. A grant through the Mound House from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Planet Stewardship Education Program, secured by Education Coordinator Penny Jarrett, also helped pay for plants. The grant was received in 2019 and provides funds for water quality testing as well as plants.

Several community members worked alongside staff in the Town’s Public Works Department to prepare the site for the garden. Site preparation included digging up and removing concrete, adding, and leveling garden soil, and unloading and spreading mulch. On May 6, 21 volunteers installed 213 plants in less than three hours.

Special thanks to Marty Harrity of The Whale Restaurant who is providing water for the garden.

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The Town of Fort Myers Beach, incorporated since 1995, is on Estero Island off the southwest Florida coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The beach stretches for seven miles and has sugar-white sand and spectacular shell finds and sunsets. The Town has a variety of unique cultural, parks, recreational and natural settings, as well as shops and restaurants.