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

Town requests easements to be signed by beachfront property owners for sand replacement

Town of Fort Myers Beach, FL – Fort Myers Beach on Estero Island is a seven-mile stretch of white sand on the Gulf of Mexico that took a direct hit during Hurricane Ian on September 28, 2022, along with the rest of the Town.

While the beaches are still wide, the storm created many scours, and approximately two and half feet of elevation was lost. During the storm, sand was displaced from the Beach and washed back into the Gulf or over the island entirely and into Estero Bay.

Recoverable sand has been sifted (cleared of debris) so that it is safe to return to the beach. This sand will be used to partially repair the many scours and gouges that the storm created and to restore the beach back to a more natural and protective state. These are the three programs that will accomplish this:

- Construction of an emergency berm to protect from smaller storms and surges;
- Renourishment of the beach to return it to its pre storm elevation;
- Replacement of sand by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) on private properties applying for additional sand.

To accomplish the emergency berm and renourishment of the Beach, the Town needs beachfront property owners to sign a temporary construction easement to place sand on the beach areas that are private property. Signing this easement only gives the Town permission to place sand on the owner's private property. It does not give the Town rights to private property. The easement document along with construction plans and other information can be found at www.fmbgov.com/beach.

The first step in this process will be to build an emergency berm. Typically, walking up the beach to a property is already four to five feet above sea level. The berm will only add one to two feet depending on the lost elevation. See the cross section in the construction plans for the R monument near your property for details.

The State of Florida's permit lasts for 15 years and authorizes the Town to oversee beach management activities. These activities include reducing dune heights and maintaining a positive slope to allow the beach to drain and prevent pooling in the middle of the beach.

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The engineered design elevation of six and a half feet is above sea level, not ground level at a person's home. This is described as six and a half feet above sea level (0.3 NAVD88). The berm will be placed near a structure or seawall but can be configured in accordance with the Town's Dune Management Plan to accommodate the property owner's preferences.

The Estero Island Nourishment Project that was in process before Hurricane Ian is also still moving forward, scheduled to start in the Fall of 2023. This project will add approximately one million cubic yards of sand to the beach creating recreational space and protecting against storm surge impacts. This will be adding 200 feet of beach in some areas that lost beach. In areas where the beach is wide, the project will add elevation.

Town staff are working hard to rebuild the Town and the beach and are here to cooperate with beachfront property owners in the management of the Town's most precious natural resource. Questions and concerns can be directed to Chadd Chustz, Environmental Projects Manager, at chadd@fmbgov.com.

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