

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE RESOURCES TASK FORCE**

Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Johnson.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Greg Fossum, Steve Johnson, Jennifer Rusk, Mary Rose Spalletta and Sarah De Beer.

Excused: Greg Holmes and Renee Heil.

Staff: Environmental Project Manager Chadd Chustz.

Council Liaison: Bill Veach

IV. APPROVE THE AGENDA

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to approve the agenda; second by Member Fossum

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 12, 2020

MRTF Member Spalletta reported that there were ~~137~~ 131 turtle nests and many of them hatched.

MOTION: MRFT Member Spalletta moved to approve the amended minutes; second by MRTF Member Fossum.

VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Howell noted that he found one turtle in the pool at the Pink Shell and two while he was kayaking. He researched the topic and suggested that stores be prohibited from selling the turtles.

VII. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Discussion of Ordinance Regarding Yellow-Bellied Slider Turtle Sales

Liaison Veach distributed a document from MRTF Member Spalletta. MRTF Member Spalletta supported banning the sale of turtles and creating a law that gives the Town the right to stop the sale of any live animal. She questioned whether it was too broad

of an approach and whether they should be specific. Chair Johnson reviewed the FDA regulation preventing the sale of turtles less than four inches. He discussed enforcing the law already on the books and he questioned the criteria to become a pet store. Chair Johnson stated he would contact the FDA field office for guidance. Discussion was held regarding potential legal actions. Chair Johnson suggested that they adopt the FDA law that prohibited the sale of all turtles under four inches long. Mr. Howell agreed with adopting the federal law and noted they could draft an umbrella regulation that included banning the sale of reptiles.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to recommend that Town Council adopt the FDA regulation preventing the sale of four-inch turtles or to ban the sale of all reptiles; second by MRTF Member Fossum.

VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

B. Committee Goals to Present to Town Council for Direction

Chair Johnson shared his report to be presented to Council. The list of projects for prioritization included: fertilizer ordinance; reef-safe sunscreen products; filling holes on the beach; Big Carlos bridge rubble for an artificial reef; a fishing pier on the new bridge; boat pump-outs; derelict vessels; invasive species; dune management education and beach raking. Liaison Veach suggested creating action items for each topic. Details were discussed for each item on the list.

C. FMB Dune Management

Manager Chustz reviewed the history of dune management on the beach. He noted there had been several recent violations concerning dune vegetation. He discussed educating people regarding how the dunes were regulated and he addressed the current ordinance. He stated that he would forward information to MRTF Members.

D. Good Citizen Award, aka the “Murphie”

MOTION: MRTF Member Rusk nominated Sue Morris; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was held regarding the two women from Indianapolis who picked up cigarette butts on the beach. Consensus was reached to bank their nomination.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

MRTF Member Spalletta noted there were about a half a dozen nests that have not hatched. Manager Chustz described removing sand spurs and seeds from the beach earlier in the day. Chair Johnson questioned whether parasails were regulated. He commented that a parasail boat came within 30 feet of him when he was anchored in the gulf. He described the negative response from Ranalli when he called to question why they were so close. Manager Chustz noted that permits were due for renewal and he would put Chair Johnson in touch with a staff member. Chair Johnson reported that the Sea Turtle Grant program had funds available and questioned whether they could apply for a grant. Manager Chustz noted he was aware of the program.

Liaison Veach noted that volunteers would pick up sand spurs at 9:00 on Friday and at 8:00 on Saturday. He commented that Penny Jarrett was interested in raising the awareness of shorebirds. He suggested coming up with ideas for vegetation in Times Square. He reminded members to fill out paperwork to renew their memberships.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Howell thanked MRTF Members for following up on the sale of turtles.

X. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING – add Times Square foliage recommendations.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

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

Vote: _____ Signature: _____

- End of document