

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE RESOURCES TASK FORCE
Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

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: Wendy DeGaetano, Greg Fossum, Robert Howell, Steve Johnson, Rose Larkin, Jennifer Rusk and Mary Rose Spalletta.

Staff: Environmental Project Manager Chadd Chustz.

Council Liaison: Bill Veach

IV. APPROVE THE AGENDA

Add nomination of new Chair and Vice Chair and Citizen Patrol Officers.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to approve the agenda; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – September 8, 2021

Correction: Becky ~~Snyder~~ should be Schneider.

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to approve the minutes as amended; second by Chair Johnson

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Perry stated that the cleanup at the Carlos Point nesting area was extensive. He had discussions with the Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) regarding using backpacks to spray the sandspurs in the refuge area. He noted that they would cut back the crow's feet to ½ inch. He indicated that the best way to get rid of sand spurs was to spray or pull them before going to seed. Mr. Perry described the destruction caused by coin vine and the proliferation of Australian Pines around Flamingo. He commented that surrounding islands do not have a problem with coin vine.

VII. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Carlos Point Beach Shorebird Nesting Area Management

Chair Johnson reviewed the discussion with Becky Schneider for members not present at the last meeting. Discussion was held regarding glyphosate and other methods to kill vegetation. Project Manager Chustz mentioned sepsis found in birds and noted that links to human waste were not found. He discussed removing the pines and Scaevola in the Critical Wildlife Area (CWA) and private property. He commented on trying non-glyphosate methods, such as tilling, and determine which one worked the best. He noted that a vinegar option might keep the birds away due to the smell. He preferred using a blow torch, but the FWC and Carlos Point were adamant about using glyphosate. Discussion was held regarding modifying the permit to allow the use of an herbicide and blow torching with FWC's approval, broadcast spraying and using saltwater. MRTF Member Larkin commented on pulling them out by hand and following up with a targeted spray of something.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to send a letter to Rebecca Schnieder that states MRTF loves her plan; however, they object to using Roundup for vegetation management in the Carlos Beach temporary refuge and they prefer that they pursue other methods less detrimental to wildlife and the waterway; second by Council Member Rusk.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MRTF Member Rusk brought up using cornmeal around plants.

Mr. Perry discussed the proper way to till and stated that Carlos Point applied for a permit to use Roundup because their personnel was not trained to rototill properly. He noted that saltwater killed crow's feet and sand spurs.

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to request a resolution from Town Council to prohibit the use of glyphosate products in the Town's EC zone to prevent degrading the environment and waterway; second by MRTF Member Fossum.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

B. Exotic Vegetation

MRTF Member Larkin noted that she submitted information for the website and she created a subcommittee to compare ordinances from Sanibel and Treasure Island. She described a low, medium and high requirement system. MRTF Member Larkin described Treasure Island's customer-friendly opening section concerning their rationale for the process. She reported that the town's tree list was pages long and identical to the Bonita Springs list. She described differences with definitions and enforcement among ordinances. Project Manager Chustz discussed the tree protection ordinance. Chair Johnson suggested that a list of banned invasive plants be added to an ordinance, so property owners did not plant them. MRTF Member Larkin noted her team was updating the tree list. She will forward the ordinances to Project Manager Chustz for distribution. MRTF Member DeGaetano researched prices to remove trees and noted that a general estimate for trees less than 6 feet ran between \$40-\$80. A national company charged a

high end of up to \$3,000 to remove certain trees over 6 feet tall, but the average removal was between \$1,500-\$2,000. She noted that there were many considerations regarding estimates, such as where the trees were located. MRTF Member Larkin described exemptions for Australian Pines in Sanibel. Discussion was held concerning how to move forward with adding Sanibel's information to the town's website.

C. Dark Skies

Chair Johnson reviewed the current lighting ordinance and noted it was stringent. He suggested that they provide educational information regarding proper lighting to Communications Coordinator Jennifer Dexter. Liaison Veach revealed that Town Council was scheduled to discuss which FP&L (Florida Power & Light) lights to use for the downtown sidewalk project. He stated that amber lights were not an option with FP&L yet.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to recommend to Council that they only consider amber lighting when replacing or adding any roadway lighting on the island; second by MRTF Member Larkin.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MRTF Member Howell discussed educating the community concerning dark skies.

D. MRTF Brochure

Liaison Veach indicated he contacted Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) regarding creating the brochure as a class project and the Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP), which used to be the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary. He hoped to secure funding from CHNEP for the brochure. MRTF Member Rusk suggested creating inserts describing current projects for the brochures she distributed at the pop-up events.

E. Pier Wildlife and Citizen Patrol Officers

MRTF Member Howell stated that activities at the pier were out of control. He described people harming wildlife and the lack of enforcement. Chair Johnson noted that rangers were in Lynn Hall Park and they should patrol the pier. MRTF Member Howell commented that he never saw a ranger at the pier during his daily beach walks. He suggested they give a small group of people the right to enforce ordinances and issue citations. He stated that when he called FWC, he was told to call the Sheriff's Office and vice versa. Chair Johnson noted that neither MRTF nor the town had jurisdiction at the pier. Project Manager Chustz forwarded pier contacts to MRTF Member Howell. Liaison Veach cautioned that approaching strangers could be dangerous, but beach patrol and the sheriff were experienced in de-escalating situations. MRTF Member Rusk brought up creating a slip or card with information to distribute to people who were breaking ordinances. Liaison Veach commented that he would forward information MRTF developed in the past to Project Manager Chustz. Consensus was reached to move forward with the idea. MRTF Member Rusk suggested contacting Lee County to update

their signs on the pier. MRTF Member Howell stated that he would contact Lee County.

F. Good Citizen Award, aka the “Murphie”

MRTF Member Larkin stated that after they were done treating a residence, Dynamic Pest Control pulled someone else’s trash bags from the canal and hauled them away. MRTF Member Rusk noted that seven-year-old Bodie loved wildlife and his Halloween costume this year was a loggerhead turtle. Chair Johnson pointed out they still had a person in the bank who returned live sand dollars to the gulf.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to award the Murphie to Bodie; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. REORGANIZATION

MOTION: MRTF Member Fossum moved to renominate Steve Johnson as Chair.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: MRTF Member Rusk nominated MRTF Member Fossum as Vice Chair.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

IX. MEMBERS’ ITEMS AND REPORTS

Project Manager Chustz reviewed FWC guidelines from a webinar concerning the Imperial Beach nesting birds’ species. He indicated that the comment period was open and Communications Coordinator Dexter released an educational newsletter. He listed activities on the beach that could be impacted by the guidelines and sent a link for the online tool to all MRTF Members.

MRTF Member Spalletta stated that number 87 was the only nest left.

Chair Johnson commended Town Council for reaching a consensus regarding amber lighting.

MRTF Member Fossum revealed that most of his friends with boats did not know about using the town’s pump-out boat or marinas even though they belonged to yacht clubs. He proposed selling flags for \$25.00, so they could put the flags out when they were ready for a pump-out. MRTF Member Fossum felt that E. coli in the back bay could be from those boaters. He requested the topic be added to a future agenda. Project Manager Chustz noted that the pump-out boat was under the scope of the Anchorage Advisory Committee. MRTF Member Fossum revealed he had a long conversation with Harbormaster Austin Gilchrist (microphone cut out).

MRTF Member Rusk thanked the Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation for their \$1,000.00 donation. She was invited to speak at their October 20, 2021, meeting at the Pancake House. She provided a list of pop-up supplies and questioned how to proceed. MRTF Member Howell revealed that he knew some teachers who may donate items. MRTF Member Rusk proposed incorporating a beach cleanup station with a pop-up. She commented that she would like to have a pop-up at the Shrimp Festival and questioned whether she could use the town’s tent. Liaison Veach was not sure of the status of the tent. MRTF Member Rusk asked whether she was allowed to stick the town logo on the tent she used. Liaison Veach did not think anyone would complain.

MRTF Member Larkin requested direction regarding the vegetation ordinance and her subcommittee. Project Manager Chustz will resend Chapter 10 to MRTF Members for their review

and input to assist MRTF Member Larkin.

MRTF Member Howell brought up prop cages for rental boats to prevent damage to seagrasses and wildlife.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Perry discussed Treasure Island and stated there was no comparison to Fort Myers Beach. He felt the only way to solve the problems at the pier was to contact Sheriff Marceno directly and pressure Commission Sandelli. He stated that the sheriff deputies should be walking to the end of the pier instead of sitting in their cars talking. He noted that the people around the pier area had become more difficult in the last few years and talking to them about rules did not help. He discussed the proposed new regulations for the shorebird nesting species and had been in contact with the FWC. He remarked that offshore boat racing would be prohibited between February 15 and September 1. Mr. Perry thought the proposed regulations were good.

XI. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Remove Carlos Point, brochure and pier wildlife. Add renourishment and cigarette receptacles for Times Square.

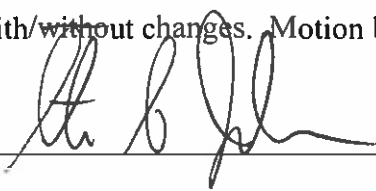
XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to adjourn; second by MRTF Spalletta

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Adopted 11-10-21 with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: 

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