



MINUTES

Monday, April 22, 2013

**JOINT WORK SESSION
FORT MYERS BEACH TOWN COUNCIL
AND**

**Marine Resources Task Force
TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2523 ESTERO BOULEVARD
FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA 33931**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mandel called to order the April 22, 2013 Joint Meeting of the Fort Myers Beach Town Council and the Marine Resources Task Force at 2:00 p.m. Present along with Mayor Mandel: Vice Mayor Kosinski, Council Members Andre, List, and Raymond; MRTF Chair Bennett, Vice Chair Weeg and MRTF Members Andre, Denegre, Pine, Schindler, and Veach. Also Present: Town Manager Stewart, Staff Liaison Laakkonen, and Town Clerk Mayher.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. DISCUSSION OF ROLE OF MRTF AS AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO TOWN COUNCIL AND AS VOLUNTEERS

Chair Bennett noted the ‘newness’ of the MRTF membership and requested guidance from Council as to what type of work they envisioned for the Task Force.

Town Manager Stewart explained that the main role of MRTF was to assist Council in making policy decisions about a specific area; that MRTF could bring forth an area of concern to Council along with a recommendation; and at times Council could have a general policy decision but look back to the Task Force to provide more detail.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen added that typically when staff would have certain proposed ordinances with an environmental effect that they would bring the proposed ordinance to MRTF for open discussion and recommendations (i.e. beach raking ordinance).

Town Manager Stewart noted that staff was available to assist MRTF with their work.

IV. POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR MRTF

- i. Mulholland Stewardship Award**
- ii. MRTF Brochures**
- iii. Outreach Projects**
- iv. Adopt-a-Beach**
- v. Water Quality Improvement**

Mayor Mandel pointed out that the topic of trash receptacles on the beach was of interest to Council.

Council Member Andre reviewed his list of topics for consideration by MRTF:

- Mulholland Award

Staff Liaison Laakkonen explained the Mulholland Stewardship Award was named after a former mayor of Fort Myers Beach who was known as a conservationist and contributed to the natural resource section of the Land Development Code [Chapter 14]. He added that, when Mr. Mulholland passed away, MRTF and Town Council worked to create an award recognizing groups, businesses, individuals and others that take up environmental stewardship activities which contribute positively to the island. He reported that around Earth Day each year the Town accepted nominations for the award and the recipients would then have their name engraved on the mangrove tree on the wall in Council Chambers. He recounted MRTF's involvement with the award and noted past winners of the Mulholland Award.

Council Member Andre continued to review his list of topics for consideration by MRTF and discussions were held:

- MRTF Brochures – Chair was seeking renewed bids for the brochure; intention to have the brochure in display racks at the beach accesses; Town Manager assigned Staff Liaison Laakkonen the responsibility of obtaining the bids for the MRTF brochure; brochures would also be distributed to the condominium associations, Chamber of Commerce, and businesses.
- Adopt-a-Beach Program – program was written and had been vetted by Legal, and needed someone to administer it or determine how to administer it as an outreach program.

Chair Bennett reported the Adopt-a-Beach Program was on MRTF's next meeting agenda.

Discussion was held concerning the particulars of the Adopt-a-Beach Program.

Town Manager Stewart requested time to be able to determine staff's participation in the administration of the Adopt-a-Beach Program.

Council Member Andre continued to review his list of topics for consideration by MRTF and discussions were held:

- Trash receptacles on the beach – additional locations; shorten distance between receptacles; trash cans in the easement on private property.
- MRTF Budget - \$2,500 annually

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- MRTF – if there was interest in changing the name to one that would be more reflective of an environmental umbrella
- Jet skis – safety concerns with jet ski business operations and jet ski trailers on the beach

Town Manager Stewart asked if Council wanted to task MRTF with safety concerns regarding jet ski business operations and jet ski trailers on the beach, since it could entail changes to an ordinance.

Discussion was held concerning potential amendments to jet ski business operations and beach raking ordinances; and consideration of a brochure outlining ordinance requirements for the related businesses and their employees (i.e. ‘banana boat’ operators).

Council Member List noted her support for MRTF to work on the creation of an informative brochure for the business operators and their employees (i.e. jet ski operators, ‘banana boat’ operators, etc.).

Staff Liaison Laakkonen reported that all of the jet ski operators in the Town were licensed and regulated by Chapter 27; and when the businesses renewed their licenses each year they were sent a copy of the Town’s regulations. He recounted how a sweep was done during Spring Break and that some issues had been found and corrected as it pertained to the jet ski operators. He stated that staff was working on some regulation changes and was working with Legal on the changes which would be given to MRTF prior to review by the LPA and Council.

Council Member Raymond discussed his view that MRTF should look into matters they have concerns about and then come back to the Council with a recommendation.

Town Manager Stewart suggested that the following be added to the next MRTF meeting agenda:

- If any of the members have a concern, to review them with the Staff Liaison in an attempt to identify if there were already rules and/or guidelines that addressed that matter; and it could then be defined to be an enforcement issue or a need for a regulation change.

Mayor Mandel suggested MRTF offer their opinion on the proposed Lee County’s Personal Watercraft Ordinance and how it might relate to the Town’s ordinances.

Council Member Andre continued to review his list of topics for consideration by MRTF and discussion was held:

- Boat from Parrot Key that was running too close to the mangroves

Discussion was held concerning speed zones and manatee zones near the waters of the mangroves; enforcement of regulations in the subject area by the Lee County Sheriff’s Office.

Chair Bennett reported he researched the subject boat and learned that they appeared to operate out of Parrot Key, but the operation of the tours seemed to occur in the Hurricane Bay area which was out of the jurisdiction of the Town, but came under the LCSO. He added that there was a video posted to the business website showing the operation of a boat at high speeds through the mangrove area.

Mayor Mandel pointed out there were two other topics, Outreach Projects and Water Quality Improvement, listed on the Agenda.

Ms. Weeg announced that Hands Across the Sands was scheduled for May 18th.

Council Member Andre noted that the Town had some tables and chairs, a pop-up tent, and a banner for MRTF.

Town Manager Stewart discussed the topic of restroom facilities on the beach, and asked if Council wanted MRTF to address the matter or keep it in-house.

Council Member Raymond pointed out that the issue was already being reviewed by CRAB.

Discussion was held concerning MRTF having a full membership and being able to work on issues during the summer months.

Town Manager Stewart told of an instance that took place after the BP oil spill when a MRTF member made policy comments on-camera which the Town Council had not addressed. He explained that it would be best if any public comments related to policy came from Council.

Discussion was held regarding MRTF meeting reports in the newspaper.

Mr. Veach questioned if MRTF could encourage beachfront people to plant dune vegetation and to inform what was permitted.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen indicated that was an old MRTF outreach project called 'Beachscape' and it could still be a possible MRTF topic.

Discussion was held regarding the backgrounds of 'Beachscape' and beach renourishment; and implementation of the regulations that existed for the north end of the island where renourishment occurred and to have the same implemented for the remainder of the island.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen reviewed the intense DEP permitting process that occurred with the renourishment on the north end of the island (i.e. relating things into mitigation credits, etc.).

Town Manager Stewart expressed his opinion that 'Beachscape' would be a perfect issue for MRTF to address.

Consensus of the Town Council agreed that MRTF should review 'Beachscape'.

Council Member List noted her preference for MRTF to address the Mulholland Stewardship Award. She questioned who placed Water Quality Improvement on the Agenda and why.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen reported he placed the topics on the Agenda, and noted that Mr. Schindler had some questions regarding water quality issues in the back bay. He added that water quality issues was a

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'catch all' phrase that had included things such as but not limited to the fertilizer ordinance and rain barrels.

Town Manager Stewart suggested there were two items regarding the Mulholland Award:

1. The current recommendation was behind schedule; and needed a recommendation as quickly as possible.
2. Finding a way to make the community more a part of nominating and identifying potential recipients.

Mayor Mandel pointed out the Town's work with Coast and Harbor Engineering.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen reported Coast and Harbor Engineering was working on a long-term coastal management plan for the Town which involved things such as but not limited to modeling of how the island would react to waves and erosion and nourishment over time, effects of different sediment inputs, and mapping the island.

Ms. Weeg stated she could put information about the Mulholland Award in this week's newspaper.

Chair Bennett requested staff update the Award dates on the Town's website.

Staff Liaison Laakkonen discussed his belief that a member of MRTF should be assigned as the lead person when the Task Force addressed a particular topic.

Town Manager Stewart recommended when matters were discussed at a MRTF meeting that consensus be reached and defined.

Council Member Andre questioned if MRTF wanted to prioritize matters today.

Town Manager Stewart pointed out that one of MRTF's priorities was the Mulholland Award.

Council Member List requested staff give copies of prior Mulholland Award nominations to MRTF in order for them to see how it was handled in the past.

Chair Bennett asked for a summary of the winners for the past five years.

Discussion was held concerning the promotion of the Mulholland Award in the newspaper.

Chair Bennett asked to set a deadline for the applications today.

Discussion was held concerning the date of the next MRTF meeting and possible deadline dates for the award applications.

Consensus of Council agreed to place the Mulholland Award on the June 17th Council Meeting Agenda; however, the back-up information would be forwarded after the original packet was sent out.

V. ADDITIONAL MEMBER ITEMS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Adopted _____ With/Without changes. Motion by _____

Vote: _____

Michelle D. Mayher, Town Clerk

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