

**FORT MYERS BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL – SPECIAL SESSION
Town Hall – Council Chambers
2523 Estero Boulevard
Ft. Myers Beach, FL 33931
October 19, 2005**

Mayor Van Duzer called a Special Session of the Town Council to order on Wednesday, October 19th at 4 PM. He noted that all Council members were present. He asked Town Attorney Anne Dalton to read a declaration. Ms. Dalton indicated that there had not been an opportunity to formulate an agenda for this meeting, thus she would read a portion of the media release about the declaration before reading the declaration itself, so as to make public what the parameters of the meeting were.

Ms. Dalton read: “The Town of Ft. Myers Beach will hold a special Town Council meeting today at four o’clock to declare a State of Emergency without curfew, as the Island prepares for a possible hit from Hurricane Wilma.” She said discussions during this meeting would be limited to that topic only.

Mayor Van Duzer announced that a prepared State of Emergency declaration had been prepared in resolution form, and although he had no intention of reading it in its entirety, he indicated that it was a standard resolution used to when Town Council declares a State of Local Emergency.

Dep. Town Manager John Gucciardo explained that the resolution was copied from a template of a previous similar resolution, and though it needed some clerical corrections, nothing as to the content or the intent of the Council needed to be changed. Referring to Page 2 as an example, Mr. Gucciardo pointed out that it referred to only two members being present, which was not the case in this instance. Mr. Gucciardo wished to explain these clerical errors because there had been a rush to make the emergency declaration due to the timing of the expected arrival of Hurricane Wilma. He said all the clerical errors would be corrected.

MOTION: Vice Mayor Rynearson made a motion to adopt the resolution that declared a state of local emergency. Councilman Massucco seconded the motion.

Mr. Gucciardo had taken a call during the motion, and then explained it had been from Emergency Operations. He said they had held a meeting at 3 PM that same day, at which several Town representatives had been in attendance among others. He said they had hoped to get some clarification from Lee County as to what their actions were going to be, particularly regarding the opening of shelters, but that the County had not given specific information about that as yet. He said they had reported at the meeting that until the storm passed the Yucatan Peninsula and entered the Gulf of Mexico, there was no way to predict when it would impact Florida. He said until that time, there was no way to predict where it would make landfall, or when, but it was expected to hit Florida sometime on the coming Saturday. He indicated that most models predicted landfall

south of Estero Island, which was a better scenario for the Island. He hoped he would have more definitive information in terms of track and intensity by the following day, which was why the Town Staff had asked that a meeting be held on each of the following days so as to keep everyone updated on information from Emergency Operations. He hoped there would be more information about shelter openings, as he felt it would greatly impact what the Town's options would be in terms of evacuations if it became necessary. He stressed the "if", because at this point in time, evacuation was not being considered.

Ms. Segal-George added that this meeting was being televised, and that the plan was to televise the scheduled 10 AM meeting on the following day as well. She said that Ms. Lambert had also arranged for the Mayor to go on the local cable channel to give updates at noon and at five o'clock on the following day. She said the Town had undertaken a "media blast" with the information about the meeting and updates, with announcements having been sent to newspapers, radio and television outlets in the area. She said the announcement also appeared on the Town's website and on the Town's emergency number. Mayor Van Duzer asked what the emergency number was, and Mr. Gucciardo said it was 765-0919 ext. 140. Mayor Van Duzer added, for the benefit of any public watching the meeting from home, that everyone in Town was in high gear and moving to make sure the Town was prepared so as to offer all the protection to the Islanders as was possible.

Councilman Reynolds, referring to a list of things the Council was moving to approve, asked that the Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager to be sure that contractors hired to do work be overseen properly so that the Town is not overcharged. He then apologized for his appearance, which he attributed to his having spent the day putting up his storm shutters in the hot and humid weather.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Reynolds said there had been questions in the past about the declaration of emergency and the prospect of having to evacuate the Island, and he wanted to dispel any thought in the minds of the public of staying on the Island if a mandatory evacuation was announced. He said the storm heading toward the Island was "wicked", and that he planned to leave if an evacuation was ordered, and hoped everyone else on the Island would do the same thing for their own safety. Mayor Van Duzer noted that there would be opportunity to make announcements of that sort should an evacuation be ordered. At that point, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo List
Transcribing Secretary