

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

Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Chair Veach. Members present: Greg Holmes, Steve Johnson, Louise Kowitch, Shannon Mapes, Keri Hendry Weeg and Bill Veach.

Excused: Mary Rose Spalletta

Staff: Rae Burns

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment

IV. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Beach Sign Discussion – Interpretive Signs

Ms. Burns stated that she did not have anything new to report but she hoped to by the next meeting.

B. Trash on the Beach – Reusable Bags

Mr. Johnson noted that they received their first pledge for \$2,500.00 and he will attend the next Chamber of Commerce meeting. Ms. Mapes will also attend the meeting at Charlie's Boathouse and she has an appointment to speak to a potential sponsor. Mr. Johnson noted that there were 21 potential sponsors to contact. He created a flyer to distribute. Ms. Mapes indicated that they needed to include a tax-exempt form for a 503(c) organization. Ms. Burns will provide the form to be included with the flyer. Chair Veach will submit a letter to the newspapers regarding details.

Chair Veach noted that Ms. Spalletta was researching the cost of bags. He stated that he found a large range of prices and many vendors offered samples. Ms. Hendry Weeg will contact the representative from the Lani Kai and Chair Veach will contact Fish Tale. Mr. Johnson will email his current list of information to members.

Chair Veach noted that Town Manager Hernstadt offered Town funds for the program. Ms. Mapes commented that it would take away the community part of the project. Chair Veach indicated that if the Town was willing to pay for a portion, they could charge sponsors less. He suggested discussing the option next month after they contact potential sponsors.

Chair Veach will contact Ms. Spalletta regarding obtaining samples of bags. He discussed graphics on the non-logo side. Mr. Johnson read the current information. Chair Veach will edit the information and forward it to Ms. Burns for discussion at the next meeting.

C. Fertilizer Discussion

Ms. Mapes referred to the article in the paper written by Rae Ann Wessel regarding water pollution and yard fertilizer runoff. She proposed that they ban herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers indefinitely. She discussed the toxicity of ingredients and how they affected the Island and its inhabitants.

Ms. Kowitch questioned enforcing the existing Ordinances and she noted that Bonita Springs and Naples decided to address the issue of water quality in Estero Bay in different ways. Ms. Burns reminded everyone that they had two code officers for the Island. She stated that photos should be included with complaints so they could investigate and send citations based on the evidence even if the violation occurred after hours. She discussed the consequences for violators.

Ms. Burns did not foresee full Council support for a fertilizer ban. Chair Veach felt this was the time to ban all fertilizers to set an example. Ms. Mapes discussed Naples allowing fertilizers in the summer and she noted that they were revisiting the action. Ms. Mapes questioned whether they could propose three individual motions to ban herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers separately. Ms. Kowitch questioned organic alternatives. Ms. Mapes noted that alternatives existed. Ms. Kowitch questioned working with other Towns regarding a collective response. Ms. Mapes agreed that setting an example was important and she cited the Town's straw ban as an example.

Chair Veach suggested reaching out to Council to gauge their support. He suggested focusing on a fertilizer ban first. He questioned whether the State allowed them to enact a local fertilizer ordinance. Ms. Burns will research State laws.

MOTION: Chair Veach moved that MRTF investigate the feasibility of banning all fertilizers year-round; second by Ms. Hendry Weeg.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Veach will draft a document regarding fertilizer data.

D. Murphie Award

Chair Veach nominated Doug and Courtney on Sabal Dr. who have a gold certified yard. Mr. Johnson nominated Mark Friend and Trevor Bixby for rescuing a turtle while on jet skis.

Doug and Courtney were awarded the Murphie.

V. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Keri Hendry Weeg – offered to share her research concerning beach access improvements. Chair Veach noted TDC funds were available for the Town to clean and maintain the accesses. He spoke to Town Manager Hernstadt regarding ideas for minimal improvements to accesses that were environmentally friendly, such as not letting water drain on the beach and installing opaque walls to prevent car lights from shining on the beach. Discussion was held regarding colorful paint, pocket libraries, benches and native vegetation for a potential neighborhood adopt-a-beach access program.

Discussion was held regarding red tide.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Richardson, resident, liked the direction MRTF was going and she supported reusable bags. She mentioned that the Garden Club may start recognizing native friendly gardens and she suggested the possibility of working in tandem with MRTF in the future.

VII. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING – October

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chair Veach moved to adjourn the meeting; second by Ms. Mapes.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

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

Vote: _____ Signature: _____

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