

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

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 3:02 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

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to adopt an amended agenda by adding Estero Blvd. lighting issue as the first item; second by MRTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: MRTF Member Howell moved to approve the amended agenda; second by MRTF Member DeGaetano.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – May 26, 2021

MOTION: MRTF Member Spalletta moved to approve the minutes; second by MRTF Larkin

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

VII. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Lighting Project Recap

Chair Johnson summarized the meeting between the lighting consultant and Town Council. MRTF Member Fossum noted that their lighting questions were addressed. Chair Johnson indicated that the lighting consultant discussed moving forward with the bispectral dual luminaire with amber and white lights. Liaison Veach described the nine-panel light. Based on a list of cons, MRTF Member Rusk suggested that they

recommend to Town Council that they remove hybrid lighting from consideration. Liaison Veach explained that an all-amber light was being installed in two locations and a photometric study would be conducted. He stated that the light was approved by all agencies except FP&L. Liaison Veach noted that another presentation by the lighting consultant was scheduled for the Town Council meeting in August. Consensus was reached to wait for a decision by Council before discussing their next step.

Discussion was held regarding different lights and costs. MRTF Member Rusk revealed that she spoke to Charlotte, the office manager at the police department at Treasure Island, regarding their amber lights. Charlotte stated that the officers did not complain about the lights. MRTF Member DeGaetano read the police officers felt that amber lights prevented them from having a clear color for identification purposes. MRTF Member Rusk described her research between amber and white lighting and noted she could identify different colors under the amber light.

Chair Johnson described the bright light situation on Burnt Store Rd. in Cape Coral. After complaints poured in, they had to shield and dim the lights by 40%.

B. Dark Skies

Chair Johnson stated that the dark skies accreditation process was involved and suggested that they start by discussing it. He referenced a new dark skies value-centered outdoor lighting resolution dated January 2021 based on five principles. He questioned whether they were interested in pursuing accreditation. Consensus was reached to continue to research the issue.

Discussion was held regarding providing incentives to businesses, penalties for turtle disorientations, visible blue bulbs in Times Square and positive recognition for compliance. Project Manager Chustz offered to email the lighting ordinance to MRTF Members. He encouraged members to edit the ordinance.

C. Exotic Plants

MRTF Member Larkin distributed a report, including a sample thank you letter. She listed the establishments that provided free parking and suggested they send them a letter. Liaison Veach suggested using the Town's logo and having the Mayor sign the letters. MRTF Member Larkin felt the MRTF logo was official and it was a project between MRTF and the volunteers, not Town Council. She offered to edit the letter and Chair Johnson will forward the logo to her for the letterhead. Liaison Veach questioned sending a letter to volunteers. MRTF Member Larkin remarked that the letter was for the establishments that provided parking; she already thanked the volunteers several times. Chair Johnson suggested they could draft a letter to volunteers for Liaison Veach's signature.

MRTF Member Larkin reviewed the data and noted it would be recorded on a spreadsheet to be completed by August. She discussed drafting a disclaimer letter and questioned whether the Town Attorney could assist. MRTF Member Fossum noted that any letter sent to property owners would have to be approved by Town Council and reviewed by the Town Attorney. Discussion was held regarding the content of the letter, potential legal issues and removing and replacing trees, plants or vines.

Liaison Veach mentioned that Chambers would be under construction in July.

MRTF Member Larkin reported that she requested permission to use the information on Sanibel's website regarding native plants. She stated that she created a PowerPoint with Steven Brown regarding invasive plants to add to the Town's website.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to recommend that Project Manager Chustz request approval from Town Council to post MRTF Member Larkin's invasive species content to the Town's website; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

D. MRTF Brochure

Chair Johnson discussed creating a steering document to help guide them with content. MRTF Member Howell volunteered to start work on the brochure and encouraged input from MRTF. Liaison Veach offered suggestions.

E. Dune Management

Chair Johnson questioned whether they received approval from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for renourishment. Project Manager Chustz replied that the permit application would be submitted in October and they made the list for state funding.

Project Manager Chustz requested feedback on the ordinance distributed at the last meeting. Discussion was held concerning requiring plantings where erosion occurred and encouraging planting where accretion occurred.

Chair Johnson discussed managed beach zones and building frontal dunes. Project Manager Chustz commented that the number one priority was to create a dune incentive program for property without dunes and to assist property owners with reconfiguring existing dunes.

Chair Johnson reviewed Joanne Shamp's Beachfront Landowner Landscape Program. MRTF Member Rusk felt they should ban all raking. Project Manager Chustz replied that they could propose amending the beach raking ordinance, but he questioned how politically feasible it would be. Liaison Veach stated that the bird nesting area in the south portion existed because of beach raking.

Project Manager Chustz suggested that they go through the ordinance and incorporate information from the management policies. Chair Johnson felt that Ms. Shamp's program should stand alone. Project Manager Chustz will provide copies of the documents for MRTF to pick up at Town Hall.

F. Good Citizen Award, aka the "Murphie"

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to award the Murphie to the child Ted for his environmental enthusiasm; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Johnson explained submitting articles for the monthly Shoreline Spotlight section. He reported that MRTF Member Howell was now a full voting member.

VIII. MEMBERS' ITEMS AND REPORTS

MRTF Member DeGaetano noted she was concerned about people taking sand dollars off the beach.

MRTF Member Fossum questioned whether MRTF could be authorized to enforce rules. Project Manager Chustz replied that BASE enforced the rules.

MRTF Member Spalletta questioned whether dogs were allowed in the critical wildlife area. Project Manager Chustz replied negatively.

MRTF Member Rusk updated members on the popup events. She noted the tent bag had to be replaced. Liaison Veach suggested that she contact the Town Manager. She described a basket beach cleanup program at St. Pete's, but baskets were stolen and the program would be discontinued. MRTF Member Rusk would like to create a program to keep the beach clean. She explained a program to partner with FGCU regarding the popup events.

MRTF Member Howell discussed people bothering tortoises at Bowditch. He called FWC and was told that whoever maintained the park had to call them. He stated that people were abusing the animals on the pier and no one was paying attention.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

X. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING – add Adopt a Beach program.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: MRTF Member Rusk moved to adjourn; second by MRTF Member Spalletta.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Adopted 8-11-21 with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: 

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