

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

Town Hall  
2525 Estero Boulevard  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 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 Services Project Manager Chadd Chustz

Council Liaison: Bill Veach

**IV. Approve The Agenda**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Spalletta moved to approve the agenda; second by MERTF Member DeGaetano.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2022**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Spalletta moved to approve the minutes; second by MERTF Member Fossum.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Public Comment – no public comment.**

**VII. Current Items**

**A. Sea Turtle Conservation**

Project Manager Chustz reported that reminding people to shade or turn off lights was ongoing. He noted that warnings were sent to vendors and some homeowners regarding obstructions on the beach. He stated that Town Council voted to go back to requiring 45% windows instead of 15%. Chair Johnson reviewed the data presented at the Town Council meeting. Discussion was held regarding drafting a recommendation to Town Council. Chair Johnson questioned whether there was a measurement of the number of warnings or fines. Project Manager Chustz was not sure how the numbers were reported.

MERTF Member Rusk described the enforcement process at Longboat Key. Project Manager Chustz noted that he did not keep statistics on how many complaints he received. He described the town's

enforcement process as required by Chapter 162 of the state statute. MERTF Member Rusk questioned the response time when a resident called to report a violation. Project Manager Chustz replied that he did not think the statute included time limits, but he would check. He stated that Turtle Time alerted him to potential violations. He noted that the town was looking for compliance and there has been improvement, but there were violations every night.

MERTF Member Howell questioned whether beach patrol could help with enforcement. Project Manager Chustz responded that they worked until 9:00 p.m. He stated that citations had not been written yet, but approximately 150 warnings had been issued. MERTF Member Spalletta questioned whether Town Council could ensure property owners had their addresses visible. Project Manager Chustz replied that sometimes it was difficult to see numbers at night. MERTF Member Rusk stated that there was a database the town could use to identify properties.

#### B. Shorebird Conservation

Project Manager Chustz reported that the Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) was doing a good job with reports. There was a washover of tern nests and sand spurs still an issue. MERTF Member Larkin questioned organizing a sand spur pulling event with different entities next year. Chair Johnson noted they needed to reach out to the FWC early in the season. He stated he would send an email to Becky Schneider.

#### C. Exotic Vegetation

MERTF Member Larkin noted that the website had not yet been updated with a list of properties with invasive plants. She stated that photos of invasive plants were posted as being native plants on the website and recommended changing the photos. The tree protection ordinance was in the public hearing process. She described information included in the water bill and noted it was at the bottom of the multi-page statement. She questioned why fertilizer information was not included in the June 2 water bill. Chair Johnson recommended that MERTF Member Larkin contact Communications Coordinator Jenny Dexter regarding the list for the website.

#### D. MERTF Pamphlet

MERTF Member Rusk reported that she was waiting for pictures and graphics to submit to the printer. She indicated that the Shell Museum in Sanibel might be interested in providing graphics for the pamphlet. MERTF Member Spalletta provided a prototype pamphlet and MERTF Member Rusk questioned what members wanted. Ideas were discussed. MERTF Member Rusk stated that people were interested in seashells and bird guides. She noted that she was working on obtaining close-up pictures of birds and she would bring back a prototype. She felt there was enough content but not enough graphics.

Liaison Veach described creating empathy, telling a story about the beach and contacting a professional to create a fold-out or booklet including information about cultural aspects of the island. MERTF Member Rusk requested permission to continue working with Sanibel and questioned whether she could add their logo to the MERTF pamphlet. Liaison Veach replied that various logos were included in other town brochures. MERTF Member Rusk encouraged members to submit input, graphics and photos. MERTF Member Spalletta will email her ideas to Project Manager Chustz.

#### E. MERTF Budget

Chair Johnson noted that new signs were needed for beach accesses. Project Manager Chustz stated

that approximately \$7,000.00 was available in their current budget. He added that donations rolled over, but budget funds did not. MERTF Member Rusk passed around an activity book to distribute during pop-up events. She received approval to obtain a quote for printing. Chair Johnson stated that approximate costs had to be included with any budget request. MERTF Member Larkin suggested purchasing ads in newspapers and window clings for turtle season. Liaison Veach was unsure about the town's policy for purchasing informational ads.

E. Good Citizen Award, aka the "Murphie"

**MOTION:** Chair Johnson moved to award the Murphie to the Coast Guard; second by MERTF Member Spalletta.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

### VIII. Members' Items and Reports

MERTF Member Spalletta reported that the sea turtle nests were in the mid-forties. She will not be able to attend July's meeting.

Chair Johnson described a cigarette butt recycling program and noted the information was sent to members. He also sent information regarding Jude's Water Sports, which was a watercraft business with non-internal combustion engines.

MERTF Member Fossum will not be able to attend the July meeting.

MERTF Member Rusk suggested they develop an enforcement plan for lighting violations to present to Town Council.

MERTF Member Larkin brought up the cost of cigarette containers at Times Square and researched the cigarette recycling program. She suggested obtaining input from the Public Works Department. Chair Johnson recognized the Webers at the Wyndham.

IX. Public Comment – no public comment.

X. Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Remove exotic vegetation.

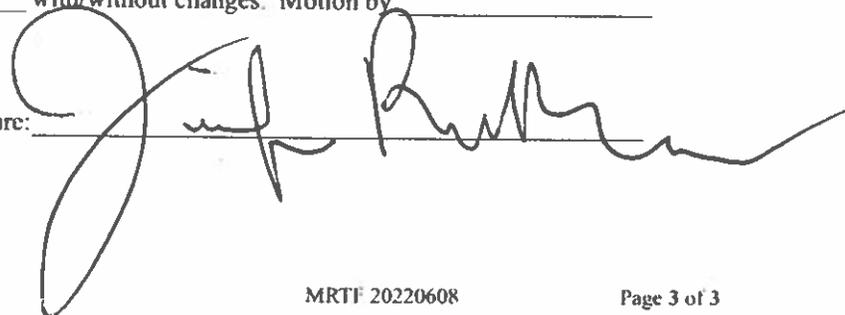
### XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ with/without changes. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: 

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