

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

Town Hall  
2525 Estero Boulevard  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. by MERTF Member Rusk.

**II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Roll Call**

Members present: Wendy DeGaetano, Robert Howell, Rose Larkin and Jennifer Rusk.  
Excused: Greg Fossum, Steve Johnson and Mary Rose Spalletta.  
Staff: Environmental Services Project Manager Chadd Chustz

**IV. Approve The Agenda**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Larkin moved to approve the agenda; second by MERTF Member Howell.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2022**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member DeGaetano moved to approve the minutes; second by MERTF Member Larkin.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

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

**VII. Current Items**

**A. Staff Report**

Project Manager Chustz reported that staff was following up with a second request for additional information from Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to address the state's concerns regarding the town's proposed dune management plan. He noted that property owners at Terra Mar requested to be included in the renourishment project even though their beach was not designated as critically eroded. He explained that it was on private property and would need a CCCL permit. Staff will follow up with the property owners. He reported that some areas flooded last month due to the heavy rains. Trash continued to be a problem on the beach and FDEP suggested using a barber rake. He indicated that shorebirds were having a tough time, but the least tern colony was

productive. Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) biologists reported that residents in the 8000 block were being aggressive towards them and bonfires were observed. Lights on the beach were still a problem and Project Manager Chustz will provide citation numbers at the next meeting. He reported that he was working with businesses regarding obstructions on the beach. He stated that Diamond Head declined to sign the STC contract, but they were doing things independently.

B. Sunshine Law

Town Attorney Herin, Jr. participated via phone and reviewed the Sunshine Law. A discussion was held regarding requesting material from other members for the pamphlet, the pop-up schedule process and scheduling additional meetings.

C. MERTF Budget FY22

MERTF Member Rusk noted that \$3,000.00 was allocated for the pop-ups, \$4,000.00 for MERTF items and \$3,000.00 for the pamphlets. MERTF Member Rusk indicated that she never received the logo tent and MERTF Member Larkin noted that other items were not included in the budget. MERTF Member Rusk will follow up with the Town Clerk. She described the new banner and a valance that wrapped around the tent. Discussion was held regarding whether the pamphlet would be printed before the end of the fiscal year and how to allocate the money if not.

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Howell moved to hold off discussing the FY22 and FY23 budgets until the next meeting; second by MERTF Member DeGaetano.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

D. MERTF Budget FY23 – to be discussed at the next meeting.

E. MERTF Pamphlet

MERTF Member Howell gave MERTF Member Rusk information regarding a photographer and Project Manager Chustz will distribute it to other members. MERTF Member Rusk presented a rough draft of the pamphlet and a quote of \$500.00 to create it. The quote came from Mr. Keith Stone, who designed the beach access signs. She requested approval to move forward with the pamphlet.

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Larkin moved to work with Mr. Stone on the pamphlet; second by MERTF Member Howell.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

MERTF Member Rusk described the content to be included in the pamphlet.

F. MERTF Projects

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Howell moved to put the information concerning the invasive plant project on the town's website. *Second by Wendy DeGaetano*

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

MERTF Member DeGaetano questioned whether MERTF could sponsor a beach clean-up event, including kayaks and paddleboards to clean up the bay. She mentioned providing t-shirts or water bottles.

G. Good Citizen Award, aka the “Murphie”

MERTF Member Rusk mentioned key players who made the shorebird nesting a success. MERTF Member Larkin described two Lee County Parks & Rec employees who removed invasive asparagus ferns. MERTF Members unanimously decided to award the Murphie to the two Lee County Parks & Rec employees. MERTF Member Rusk will bank her nomination.

**VIII. Members’ Items and Reports**

MERTF Member Howell requested another discussion regarding propeller guards. MERTF Member Rusk stated that she was proud of the community, the pop-up events and MERTF Members.

MERTF Member Larkin reiterated her request for cigarette butt containers in Times Square. MERTF Member DeGaetano will provide information regarding a project at the next meeting. MERTF Member Rusk noted that the June pop-up dates were on the town’s website. August pop-up dates were August 9, 2022 and August 23, 2022, at Newton Park. Times Square was scheduled for August 20, 2022, and August 27, 2022. MERTF Members approved the dates and locations.

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

**X. Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

Add plants on the website, propeller guards and citation data.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member DeGaetano moved to adjourn; second by MERTF Member Howell.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Adopted 8/10/2022 with/without changes. Motion by Steve Johnson  
(DATE)  
Vote: 4-0 Signature: [Signature]

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