

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

Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, September 14, 2022

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Chair Johnson.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Members present: Wendy DeGaetano, Robert Howell, Steve Johnson, Rose Larkin and Jennifer Rusk.

Excused: Greg Fossum and Mary Rose Spalletta.

Staff: Environmental Services Project Manager Chadd Chustz

Council liaison: Bill Veach (arrived late).

IV. Approve The Agenda

Chair Johnson noted that Item E. was removed last month.

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

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2022

MOTION: MERTF Member Larkin moved to approve the minutes; second by Chair Johnson.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comment – no public comment.

VII. Current Items

A. Staff Report

Project Manager Chustz reported a large swath of dead sea oats on the southern end of the CWA and was unsure what caused it. A complaint regarding ripped-out mangrove saplings around the 8000 block of single-family homes was reported around the same time in August. Project Manager Chustz wondered whether the sea oat destruction resulted from a herbicide application. He indicated the Beach Bar might be planning a dune out

front and other properties were in the process of doing the same. Staff met with the Army Corps of Engineers to review the beach renourishment project and there were no significant concerns. Shorebird nesting season on Carlos Beach was complete and signs were removed. Nine sea turtle disorientations were being reviewed for enforcement.

Discussion was held regarding photos of dead sea oats. MERTF Member Rusk suggested adding educational information to water bills or sending letters to property owners.

B. MERTF Budget FY22

Chair Johnson reviewed last month's budget motion. MERTF Member DeGaetano will investigate printing generic t-shirts for the beach cleanup event. MERTF Member Rusk noted that MERTF was charged \$750.00 for the town's tent. Chair Johnson will check the numbers with Communications Coordinator Jennifer Dexter.

Chair Johnson will check about replacing the seasonal signs and he will research infrared scopes and other options. MERTF Member Rusk requested \$360.00 to set up the pop-up booth at the Farmer's Market in Santini Plaza on the first Thursday of every month for the next six months. Chair Johnson suggested requesting \$60.00 for the September event since the FY23 budget had not been approved. MERTF Member Rusk preferred to pay in total upfront. Chair Johnson mentioned negotiating the price, but MERTF Member Rusk was uncomfortable asking for a discount because they were affiliated with the town. Project Manager Chustz had to leave the meeting.

MOTION: MERTF Member Howell moved to allocate \$360.00 for the Thursday pop-ups from the FY22 budget; second by MERTF Member DeGaetano.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved that the remaining dollars in the printing budget for FY22 be applied to the pop-up booth and the committee items be applied for MERTF Member DeGaetano with authorization to attempt to print t-shirts for the beach cleanup event and that Chair Johnson be allowed to continue researching the flare as an option and if they were able to fund the equipment for staff and he would take care of the seasonal signs; second by MERTF Member Howell.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

C. MERTF Budget FY23

Chair Johnson reported that he requested \$10,000.00 from Town Council, with \$6,000.00 for the pop-up events and \$4,000.00 for the pamphlet.

D. MERTF Pamphlet

MERTF Member Rusk displayed and reviewed the mock-up. MERTF Members agreed that the font was difficult to read. Discussion was held regarding adding safety information. MERTF Member Rusk indicated that the brochure would be 17 "x 11" with 12 panels. MERTF Members agreed to add live shelling and the Mound House to one of

the panels and chose some pictures to include with the wrack line information.

E. Dark Skies

Chair Johnson shared a document from the Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) regarding their issues and concerns with the uplights in the town's lighting plan. FWC essentially rejected the current lighting plan at Bayside Park. Chair Johnson explained the timeline caveat and commented that a new plan would have to be reviewed by the FWC. He added that the FDEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection) was incompetent in its ability to administer the permit.

F. Invasive Plant Project

MERTF Member Larkin noted that the information was on the town's website.

G. Propeller Guards

MERTF Member Howell discussed the lack of education when renting boats. He suggested creating an incentive for boat rental companies to install propeller guards. Liaison Veach brought up a GPS that set off an alarm when renters entered a prohibited area. Chair Johnson noted that many rentals do not have GPS systems on the rental boats. MERTF Member Howell stated that he reached out to local marinas, but they were not interested. MERTF Member Rusk mentioned purchasing manatee stickers to give to rental companies that installed propeller guards. MERTF Member Howell will contact the state regarding offering a discount on boat rental licenses for businesses that added propeller guards. Chair Johnson commented that the FWC was working on boating safety for marine mammals and turtles and he will bring back information for the next meeting.

H. Good Citizen Award, aka the "Murphie"

MOTION: MERTF Member DeGaetano moved to award the Murphie to the new family and the sea turtle story; second by MERTF Member Larkin.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Members' Items and Reports

MERTF Member Larkin reported on biodegradable polymer gels to put on dune vegetation. She suggested contacting other coastal communities to find out what they used successfully.

MERTF Member Rusk stated the next pop-ups would be October 8, 11, 15, 22, 25 and 29 at Times Square, Newton Park and hopefully Bowditch Beach.

MERTF Member DeGaetano will participate in a kayak beach cleanup on September 17, 2022. No items from other members.

IX. Public Comment – no public comment.

X. Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Remove MERTF Budgets FY22 and FY23 and invasive plant project.

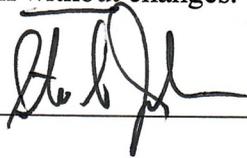
XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Adopted May 10, 2023 with/without changes. Motion by Maryrose Spalletta
(DATE)

Vote: 6-0 Signature: 

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