

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Mound House - 451 Connecticut Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, November 15, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chair Lurie.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Jim Hockett, Chris Riedel King, Ted Lawwill, Sam Lurie, John Wesley Nash and Ed Schoonover.

Excused: Douglas Eckmann

Staff: Harbormaster Austin Gilchrist and Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz.

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

IV. APPROVE THE AGENDA

MOTION: AAC Member Hockett moved to approve the agenda; second by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 18, 2023

AAC Member Riedel's name was misspelled.

MOTION: AAC Member Riedel King moved to approve the minutes as amended; second by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

VII. CURRENT ITEMS – Staff Report

A. Anchored Vessels

Harbormaster Gilchrist distributed and described the anchored vessel report. Projects Manager Chustz noted that it was shared with the Lee County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) concerning potential environmental impacts. Harbormaster Gilchrist indicated the report was generated every 60 days. Projects Manager Chustz commented that a representative from the LCSO would attend a meeting to discuss their options regarding the anchored vessels, especially the ones not pumping out. Discussion was held regarding abandoned

vessels. Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that the Town only had jurisdiction over vessels in the Mooring Field.

B. Strategic Action Plan

Harbormaster Gilchrist described the document for the new members. AAC Member Nash suggested a water taxi service and explained how it differed from a water ferry. Generally, a water ferry ran on a fixed schedule and transported more passengers. He described how the services operated in Annapolis. Discussion was held regarding details surrounding both entities.

AAC Member King suggested they remove unnecessary items, prioritize the remaining items and add foundational operational requirements. Vice Chair Lurie noted the cover page included operational requirements. AAC Member King suggested that duplicate entries be combined. Vice Chair Lurie indicated that they would review and edit the plan at the next meeting.

Staff Report - Harbormaster Gilchrist reviewed pump-out data and indicated that many vessels were meeting the pump-out boat at the Mooring Field. The facilities were up and running, materials for the dinghy dock were being ordered, Matanzas provided docking from their canal, 13 systems were operational and a PO (purchase order) was written to rebuild the systems. He described how they inspected the systems. He was pursuing Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) grants to improve boater access and infrastructure. He indicated that a few groups participated in cleaning up trash on Bird Island, a side-scan was scheduled to scan the canals to reveal what was submerged and FEMA was assisting in removing debris from the canals. Debris in the channels was being removed and metal detectors were purchased to help locate debris on the beachfront. He discussed available boat ramps and indicated the observation piers were useable and did not sustain much damage.

Discussion was held regarding posts on social media telling people to avoid the beach because it was still dangerous and the water quality was poor. Project Manager Chustz stated that the water quality bounced back two to three months after Ian. Liaison Atterholt suggested that positive reports from monitoring entities be forwarded to Communications Coordinator Dexter to add to the Town's website.

A land location for the sewer pump-out was still being explored.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

ACC Member King queried what made the Mooring Field self-sustaining and noted overlapping items with Marine & Environmental Resource Task Force (MERTF). Projects Manager Chustz explained that some topics would naturally crossover. He stated that the Town needed to develop a program to inspect the canals annually and gather and monitor data to be eligible for grants. AAC Member Lawwill commented that some canals were private and some were public land. Project Manager Chustz replied that the canals were prioritized based on several assessments.

AAC Member Schoonover reviewed the objectives of the AAC and felt there was an opportunity to define their role better. He looked at the AAC as more of a management committee rather than an advisory committee. Liaison Atterholt indicated that the definition of the AAC could be modified anytime.

Vice Chair Lurie stated that the AAC was integral to the plans for the upland services building when it was going to be located at Bayside Park.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

X. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA – December 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: AAC Member King moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

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