

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Mound House
451 Connecticut St.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Ron Benak (arrived late), Dan Blanchette, Jim Bougoulas, Keran Farrell, Heidi Jungwirth, James Knickle and Dawn Thomas.

Public Works Director: Jason Freeman

Council Liaison: Dan Allers

IV. COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION (CHAIR & VICE CHAIR)

MOTION: PSC Member Knickle nominated Dawn Thomas for Chair and Heidi Jungwirth as Vice Chair; second by PSC Member Farrell.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 20, 2022

MOTION: PSC Member Jungwirth moved to approve the minutes; second by PSC Member Knickle.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VII. STAFF REPORT AND UPDATES

Lieutenant Matt Chitwood from the Lee County Sheriff's Office reported that operations were back to normal overall. He noted the department was continually monitoring traffic influxes and had a plan to get traffic flowing. They will take over intersections and close side streets if needed. Chair Thomas questioned what they could do to educate people that they have to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Liaison Allers spoke to Commissioner Sandelli regarding congested crosswalks and the Town could install signs at each end of the island.

PSC Member Bougoulas questioned whether the cameras were operating. Manger Freeman replied that six were on the island and the Town Council approved service for five more years.

Liaison Allers brought up community policing and Lt. Chitwood responded that the command staff was reviewing the issue.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

PSC Member Knickle brought up installing street signs with the Town's logo. Director Freeman reported that the signs were ordered without the logo because of the expense. He will provide an update by the next meeting.

PSC Member Jungwirth questioned whether the Town Council had issues they wanted the PSC to concentrate on. Liaison Allers suggested that they identify damaged sidewalks and develop a public awareness message regarding safety issues like trespassing on private property. PSC Member Jungwirth will email a map to Director Freeman so members can split up areas to inspect sidewalks.

PSC Member Farrell mentioned people crossing the street wherever they wanted, which was concerning.

PSC Member Benak brought up bicycle traffic going the wrong way. PSC Member Jungwirth indicated signs were installed before Ian, but she felt they were too small. Liaison Allers noted they were working with the county on the issue, but it probably was not high on their priority list. Chair Thomas brought up fencing off damaged structures throughout the Town. She acknowledged that some people were waiting for insurance, but they needed to protect their property and rope it off for safety. She discussed a neighbor who rented out trailers on their property. Liaison Allers will discuss the issue with the Town attorney. He added that trailers were allowed on homeowner's properties while they were moving forward to rebuild.

PSC Member Bougoulas suggested taking pictures of items that needed to be repaired as they saw them. Director Freeman agreed and noted there were Requests for Action sections on the website for different departments. He questioned whether the PSC should be involved with emergency response management. Liaison Allers felt it would be appropriate and Director Freeman agreed. Liaison Allers suggested starting with lessons learned after Ian. Discussion was held regarding a system to inform the Town who was staying or leaving before storms hit. PSC Member Bougoulas will take the lead in researching ideas to consider. He questioned whether they were responsible for beach safety regarding dangerous items like glass and nails. PSC Member Knickle commented that having temporary caution signs at beach accesses would be great. Liaison Allers mentioned that the Town needs to keep informing people via social media to wear shoes.

PSC Member Blanchett's biggest concern was property safety and getting homeowners to take care of their property. Liaison Allers noted the Town was keeping track of properties on a spreadsheet. He added that despite insurance issues, people had to protect and take care of their property in the interim.

Liaison Allers discussed details and the timeline for the new lighting.

Chair Thomas asked what was being done about derelict boats in canals. Liaison Allers explained the Town's challenges with removing debris in the canals and creating a canal dredging program.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

X. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA – November 28, 2023.

Chair Thomas reviewed items for the next agenda.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: PSC Member Jungwirth moved to adjourn; second by PSC Member Farrell.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

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

Adopted 1/16/2024 with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: Dawn Johnson

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