

**MINUTES**  
**FORT MYERS BEACH**  
**Anchorage Advisory Committee**  
Mound House  
451 Connecticut Street  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 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: Doug Eckmann

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

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

Vice Chair Lurie revealed that Chair Eckmann requested to step down as Chair.

Vice Chair Lurie was unanimously approved as Chair.

AAC Member King was unanimously approved as Vice Chair.

**IV. Approve the Agenda – no vote.**

**V. Approval of Minutes – February 21, 2024**

**MOTION:** AAC Member Lawwill moved to approve the minutes; second by AAC Member King.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

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

**VII. Current Items**

**A. Budget**

Finance Director Joe Onzick was unable to present the budget due to illness. Projects Manager Chustz reviewed projection planning concerning the fee structure. AAC Member Lawwill will send the occupancy history for the last 10 years to Projects Manager Chustz. Discussion was held regarding raising and restructuring fees. Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that they followed suit with other mooring fields for consistency with the standards of operation. AAC Member Nash questioned whether escalated fees based on the length of stay were where they were going or if it required additional study. Harbormaster Gilchrist explained that the longer people stayed, the further they went back in the field. He added

that he was unaware of any other mooring field with that fee plan. Projects Manager Chustz noted that typically, the cost was cut the longer they stayed. AAC Member Nash thought the AAC discussed preventing people from staying an unreasonable amount of time by adjusting fees. Harbormaster Gilchrist stated there was a six-month limit. AAC Member Nash summarized the discussion from a previous meeting and questioned whether they wanted to pursue or study it. Harbormaster Gilchrist responded that the demand was not there yet, but they could explore it in a year or two to deter overuse of the field. He noted they were storing about 10 vessels.

Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that occupancy in the Mooring Field was 70-80% and typically dropped off in April. Discussion continued regarding charging fees based on the length of vessels.

## B. Marketing

Nicole Berzin, the PIO (Public Information Officer), was unable to attend the meeting. AAC Member Nash mentioned reading an excellent comment about the Mooring Field on Facebook. Harbormaster Gilchrist described the PIO's marketing efforts. Dockwa was renewed and other programs would be researched.

## C. Town Vessel Mooring

Projects Manager Chustz reviewed the analysis from Coastal Engineering regarding the costs and pros and cons of the short list of locations. Tropical Shores Way (also referred to as Chapel Street) was determined to be the best fiscal choice. He reviewed the pros and cons of the other locations, as stated in the report included in the agenda packet. AAC Member Schoonover questioned whether they contacted Lee County regarding different locations. Projects Manager Chustz noted that this was for vessel mooring, not a pump-out station. Harbormaster Gilchrist remarked that neighbors were being educated about locating the pump-out boat there and that a few residents had changed their minds. In the meantime, marinas offered their services, but the town had to work outside their hours. Discussion was held regarding parking lot four and contacting the county regarding utilizing Bowditch Point. Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that the town council directed him to investigate town-owned properties, although having all the facilities at Bowditch would be ideal.

**MOTION:** AAC Member Nash moved that Bowditch Point be fully explored as being both a place to keep the vessels and to be able to pump out vessels and/or upland facilities; seconded by AAC Member Lawwill.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously.

Harbormaster Gilchrist confirmed that three lifts were ideal. Chair Lurie shared the results of a survey regarding locations for a pump-out operation and Tropical Shores Way did not receive much support. Respondents preferred that local marinas continue to be utilized. Liaison Atterholt volunteered to contact Commission Sandelli regarding town vessel mooring and a pump-out station at Bowditch. Harbormaster Gilchrist will forward his plan to Liaison Atterholt.

AAC Member Nash would like to see the property on San Carlos investigated. Projects Manager Chustz stated that it was not town-owned. Liaison Atterholt thought Bay Oaks

was chosen. Projects Manager Chustz commented that residents did not support that location, the engineering was extensive and there was no sewer or lift station. He pointed out that the Tropical Shores Way property was zoned commercial and if the town sold it, a commercial entity could develop it.

### **VIII. Member Items and Staff Report**

Harbormaster Gilchrist reported that pump-outs were Monday, Wednesday and Friday and Tuesday and Thursday were available for whoever needed it. Pink Shell was being used for pump-outs, a new upland facility was being explored, another slip was added to the dinghy dock, no overnight dockage and no fishing signs were installed at the dinghy dock and leave engine down signs were ordered. Debris was removed to add two mooring systems, the pump-out boat was repaired, the engine in the service boat had to be replaced and grants were being explored. He described the debris removed from the channel at Moss Marina and FEMA should reimburse the town for expenditures, canals were being inspected and debris removed and bayfront accesses were monitored. The town attorney was gathering information regarding establishing Anchor Limitation Areas (ALA) and noted that only the county could establish those areas. Crab traps in the mooring areas were an issue and the FWC (Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) was contacted regarding laws.

Projects Manager Chustz discussed dredging, renourishment and why it made fiscal sense not to include Laguna Shores in the renourishment project.

AAC Member King thanked Harbormaster Gilchrist and Projects Manager Chustz for their hard work.

AAC Member Hockett questioned setting aside a certain number of balls for people who worked on the island full-time. He would like to see that rather than wet storage. Harbormaster Gilchrist commented that 10% of the balls could be used for liveboards. Projects Manager Chustz noted that there were regulations surrounding the submerged land lease and public use.

Chair Lurie stated that people he talked to raved about Harbormaster Gilchrist and the services in the Mooring Field.

Liaison Atterholt mentioned AAC Member Nash's proposal for a water taxi concept to supplement a water ferry. He will invite the water ferry company to present to the AAC.

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

**X. Set Next Meeting Agenda** – April 17, 2024

**XI. Adjournment**

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

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Adopted 4-17-24 with/without changes. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

Vote: UNANIM. Signature:  4-17-24

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