

MINUTES
Town of Fort Myers Beach
Cultural and Environmental Learning
Center Advisory Board “CEL CAB”
Mound House - 451 Connecticut Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Tuesday, January 16, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Hill.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Members present: Kerrie Henderson, Barbara Hill, Patrick McKeown, Cherie Smith, Ellen Vaughan and Becky Werner.

Excused: Betty Simpson

Town Staff: Director Culture, Parks & Recreation Jeff Hauge

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

Chair Hill recognized Lorrie Wolf for her service to the community.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order by CELCAB Member Smith.

MOTION: CELCAB Member Smith moved to approve the amended minutes; seconded by CELCAB Member Werner.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Pugliese, resident next to Newton Park, stated that he shared a 20-foot driveway with his neighbor and the park. He noted that it was turned into beach access 17a several years ago. Regarding rebuilding Newton Park, he suggested that the Town not install structures that people could sleep on or damage, not use shells on the walkway, put garbage cans with lids closer to the beach and the large sand trucks damaged the cement pad and bricks to the driveway entrance. Discussion was held regarding what would or would not be rebuilt on the property.

V. TOWN ATTORNEY SUNSHINE LAW PRESENTATION – tabled until next month.

VI. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Director Hauge stated the berm project was complete at Newton Beach and the beach renourishment project would start back up in March. There was no site plan yet and Chair Hill questioned whether the Town would reimagine what would happen on the site. Director Hauge responded that it probably would

not be the same as it was. CELCAB Member Henderson commented that she played bocci ball every week. Adding restrooms was discussed and CELCAB Member Vaughan described installing restrooms with plumbing elevated above the flood zone while the toilet remained on the ground level. Chair Hill suggested drafting a master plan for the property now. Liaison Atterholt mentioned CELCAB creating a master plan and presenting it to the Town Council.

MOTION: CELCAB Member Werner moved to recommend that the Town Council contract with a landscape designer to bring back tentative ideas for Newton Park to be reviewed by CELCAB; seconded by CELCAB Member Henderson.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Director Hauge indicated that the Tourist Development Council (TDC) provided funds for a temporary restroom trailer and permanent restrooms should be reimbursed by FEMA. CELCAB Member Werner noted that a grant from the Florida Community Trust may be available.

Museum Manager Adam Knight reported that the lecture from last Tuesday was not on the website yet due to audio issues, but he hoped to fix it and upload it soon.

Director Hauge stated that the material for the Mound House roof was no longer available, so other materials had to be sourced. Manager Knight reviewed the number of visitors and indicated many improvements had to be made to the property, including replacing the sign on Estero Blvd. He noted that approximately 1/3 of visitors were island residents, 1/3 were Fort Myers Beach residents, 1/3 were out-of-state visitors, 1/6 were from Lee and Collier Counties and the other 1/6 were from other areas of Florida. He discussed direct mailing marketing and outreach events by staff, such as distributing rack cards to hotels. CELCAB Member Henderson suggested targeting zip codes with Facebook and Instagram ads. Manager Knight responded that they had not done advertising this year with Facebook and Instagram and the numbers from Spotify were from last fiscal year. CELCAB Member McKeown added that Florida Weekly ran electronic ads last year. Manager Knight noted that marketing was a major line item in the Strategic Plan.

CELCAB Member Smith stated that a gentleman who lived in Cape Coral was making a documentary on the Mound House and the underground exhibit to be aired on YouTube. Liaison Atterholt suggested that Nathan from The Observer and Ed Ryan from Beach Talk Radio be invited for a historical tour of the property.

Manager Knight reported that a position for a collections and exhibits coordinator was created and the person would be dedicated to handling the collections and exhibits issue. The person would also be tasked with digitizing the inventory. The American Alliance of Museums required a series of core documents for accreditation, including a collection management plan, which Manager Knight was in the process of creating. He listed other documents required and noted it was a multi-year process. He described applying for an organizational map, what it would entail over several weeks and who would be involved in the process.

CELCAB Member Smith questioned whether the new staff could be introduced to CELCAB at a future meeting. Manager Knight described the backgrounds of two new educators.

Chair Hill questioned the fee schedule and Manager Knight replied that it did not change. Manager Knight will distribute the schedule of activities.

VII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION –Newton Park Renaming

Director Hauge noted that some people wanted to keep the name the same. Liaison Atterholt wondered whether they should design the park before discussing a name change and CELCAB members supported the idea.

Discussion was held regarding the talk by Dr. Mike Savarese, who was affiliated with the water school at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU).

VIII. FRIENDS OF MOUND HOUSE REPORT

Discussion was held regarding the legality of having three CELCAB members on the Friends of the Mound House board. Liaison Atterholt suggested that the Town attorney weigh in on the issue. Chair Hill described how the relationship between the two groups should work. CELCAB Member and President of the Friends Ellen Vaughan reported that their monthly meeting was scheduled for Monday, followed by a discussion of plans for the March 22, 2024, fundraising event.

IX. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

CELCAB Member Smith noted that the documentary gentleman would contact Manager Knight regarding lighting at the underground exhibit. No items from other members.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pugliese revealed that he was told that the Town had to pay a portion of the parking at Newton Park to Strandview and he had no idea why. CELCAB members were unaware of the arrangement.

XI. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA AND DATE – February 22, 2024

CELCAB Member Werner indicated she could not attend the meeting. Director Hauge explained that she could participate virtually if a quorum was present and CELCAB members approved. Director Hauge commented that the next meeting would be at the new trailers if they were ready. Chair Hill questioned whether they could return to their regular Thursday schedule and Director Hauge responded affirmatively.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: CELCAB Member Vaughan moved to adjourn; seconded by CELCAB Member Smith.
VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Adopted 2/22/2024 with/without changes. Motion by Betty Simpson
(DATE) Seconded by Chris Smith
Vote: 6-0 Signature: Amy Balcer, Town Clerk

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