

MINUTES
Town of Fort Myers Beach
Cultural and Environmental Learning
Center Advisory Board “CELCAB”
Bay Oaks Recreation Center – 2731 Oak St.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Thursday, March 28, 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, Betty Simpson, Cherie Smith, Ellen Vaughan and Becky Werner.

Excused: Patrick McKeown

Town Staff: Director Culture, Parks & Recreation Jeff Hauge and Museum Manager Adam Knight.

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 22, 2024

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

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Funk, resident, commented that the trash cans at Newton Park needed to be set up, debris removed, and a metal bracket removed from the ground. He would like to see the park, including the bocce ball courts and tiki huts, repaired as soon as possible.

Greg Miller, resident, agreed that the trash was an issue.

V. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Director Hauge reported they would have access to Newton Park in six to eight months. The tiki huts and bocce courts will eventually be replaced and portable restroom trailers will be available in a couple of weeks. He will have the trash removed and the Strandhill access will remain closed for safety reasons. Discussion was held regarding the location of the restrooms.

Manager Knight reported that he and the staff were doing a lot of outreach and he listed events he attended and will attend. He listed groups who rented rooms in the Mound House. The shell mound tour hours were expanded, the March lecture was a success, there was a collaborative event regarding a southwest Florida climate conversation last week, the next lecture is April 9, free admissions would be offered on the first Fridays of every month and the kayak tours would be expanded. Chair Hill requested copies of the manager’s report before each meeting so members

could attend events and Manager Knight will forward the report. He noted attendance was about 70% of what it was before Ian. Director Hauge recognized the staff for their efforts and hard work. An aerial picture of the Mound House taken by Jacob was shared.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Newton Park Redevelopment/Redesign

Director Hauge mentioned that his sketch of the restroom location was not exact and there would be some wiggle room with the placement. Chair Hill stated that they needed to determine what the property constraints were and where the property line ends. Director Hauge replied that it would be staked next week. Expanding the parking and replacing the outdoor shower were discussed. CELCAB Member Vaughan suggested that decisions they make regarding the temporary placement of items match up with the eventual permanent placement for plumbing and electrical hookups. CELCAB Member Simpson agreed that they should not redevelop twice and should zero in on parking and the restrooms. CELCAB Member Vaughan suggested that a landscape planner be hired to advise them. CELCAB Member Werner said they discussed moving the restrooms closer to the beach at the end of the parking lot. Since the temporary restrooms were closer to Estero, the plumbing and electrical would have to be redone if they were moved. Director Hauge responded that the final location might come down to cost. CELCAB Member Smith felt they needed some type of overhead structure where the house was for educational purposes. Director Hauge stated that any permanent structure must be elevated, but an open-air tent would work. The tiki huts and picnic tables would be replaced.

Chair Hill questioned whether there was anything else they wanted to add besides what was on their report. She brought up the sign at the entry gate and stated that the Town Council had not approved it. Liaison Atterholt thought a variance would be approved. Chair Hill added that a sign in the back on the handicapped parking ramp would provide greater exposure.

Liaison Atterholt suggested that the permanent restrooms be located on the north side of the property with the thatched roof and the man-made structures in the same area. The other half would provide the view corridor and natural plantings. He brought up the swing set facing the water. He suggested hiring an architect to design a hardened restroom to make it interesting and unique to Fort Myers Beach. Chair Hill responded that most items would have to be phased in. Liaison Atterholt questioned whether Newton Park could be incorporated into FEMA's master plan for the town. Director Hauge will follow up with FEMA. He indicated that FGCU (Florida Gulf Coast University) was willing to help with the landscape project on the berm.

A discussion was held regarding adding a larger chickee hut the size of the old meeting room. Manager Knight stated that the previous chickee hut was 30x40 feet.

CELCAB Member Henderson addressed the need to be conscious of accessibility for handicapped people since so many visited the park. Director Hauge noted they were working on access. CELCAB Member Vaughan suggested installing a restroom that looked like a tiny house. Discussion continued regarding restroom locations.

Consensus was reached to allow Director Hauge and the staff to work out the plan's finer points. He will contact the town manager regarding FEMA's plans to provide a designer.

B. Museum Assessment Program

Manager Knight described the background of the assessment program and reported that they were accepted into the organizational assessment portion of the program. They had access to the map program and the portal will open on April 8, 2024. CELCAB Members were required to attend the peer review meeting in person over the summer. The self-assessment program was a year-long process and included a year-long self-assessment worksheet.

C. Permanent Collection Storage at Mound House

Manager Knight stated a full-time museum registrar would be hired to handle the inventory process. The town would move into compliance with state ethic rules and laws regarding cultural property. He suggested installing a storage location in the second-floor bathroom and securing it with a lock. The Digging Deeper exhibit currently in the bathroom would be relocated downstairs into the living room display and the living room objects would be moved into storage. Discussion was held concerning storing the living room items.

Manager Knight described the duties of the museum register and noted the town had a legal obligation under state law to know what was in their collection. CELCAB Member Werner questioned whether the collection could eventually be stored in a suitable town-owned facility. Manager Knight looked at current town properties, but anything was possible. Chair Hill questioned how much of the collection could be stored in the bathroom. Manager Knight replied that everything could fit with a small pathway for access. He described the dire state of some of the artifacts and stated the bathroom was a better scenario than the current storage unit. Manager Knight said that a town-owned facility would be the best storage option and would take him about a week to move and reinstall the items. Removing the bathtub was not an option, but the sink would be removed.

Manager Knight proposed moving the living room because he felt the Digging Deeper exhibit had more educational value. Discussion was held concerning removing the living room exhibit and relocating the exhibits in the bathroom to make room for the registrar to work. CELCAB Member Werner would rather lose the bathroom and leave the living room intact. Chair Hill suggested they table the discussion to their next meeting.

D. Mound House Roof Update

Director Hauge reported that the roof will be repaired and completed by April 2, 2024.

VII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

CELCAB Member Vaughan reported that the Artful Intersections 4.0 fundraiser, which was moved indoors due to the wind, netted over \$18,000. Town Council members offered experiences that resulted in over \$6,000.00. She indicated the event would be held in the Mound House next year.

CELCAB Member Henderson felt the meeting was productive.

No items from other members.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Funk, resident, commented that a big dump truck was jumping the seawall at Newton Park and the new seawall would be destroyed. He stated the driver was driving on the beach and leaving deep ruts in the beach access. This morning, he noticed the area was completely fenced off. Mr. Funk discussed the events surrounding his sit-in at Newton Park. He stated the beach access had to be open.

Greg Miller, resident, explained that moving the restrooms on Estero near the bus stop would be a disaster. He suggested building a one-story structure in the center of the property with blow-out walls so it did not have to be elevated. He discussed reversing the truck access on Strandview Ave. He thanked CELCAB for all their work.

IX. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA AND DATE – April 25, 2024

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: CELCAB Member Werner moved to adjourn; seconded by CELCAB Member Henderson.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Adopted 6/20/2024 with/without changes. Motion by Becky Werner / seconded by Cherie Smith
(DATE)

Vote: 6-0 Signature: Amy Bell, Town Clerk

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