

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES TASK FORCE
Town Hall Council Chambers
2731 Oak Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Thursday, December 12, 2024**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Rusk.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call – not recorded

Members present: Vice Chair Rusk, Bill Althoff (virtually), Robert Howell, David Nusbaum, Ed Rood and Sharon Hegstrom.

Staff: Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz

Council Liaison: John King

MERTF Members vote allowed MERTF Member Althoff to participate virtually.

IV. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for MERTF

MERTF Member Rood nominated MERTF Member Nusbaum for Chair. The nomination passed. Chair Nusbaum nominated MERTF Member Rusk for Vice Chair. The nomination passed.

V. Approve The Agenda – not recorded.

MOTION:

VOTE:

VI. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2024

Remove the dollar sign: She received two proposals from Panther Printing: \$7,000.00 for 16,000 or \$10,000 for 5,280.00, including the changes. Ms. Knoll would charge \$45.00.

MERTF Member Howell stated that his first Pink Shell science talk ~~was~~ will be on October 23, 2024 ...

MOTION: Not recorded.

VOTE:

VII. Public Comment

Bill Perry discussed the maintenance of an area and noted it worked very well. The property owners will have more say and control on what happens and they wanted to get back to what it once was. The snowy plovers preferred to nest on non-vegetated sandy beaches and it was a

desirable location after Hurricane Ian. He discussed the difficulties of securing permits to till after getting the green light from the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). He suggested creating a plan similar to what they had on the south end.

The recording started with a gentleman mentioning Leonardo Arms to the Holiday Inn.

Chris Lissner, President of the Homeowners Association of Terra Mar, noted the estuary was open to the Gulf and the renourishment project stopped at the south and north ends of the estuary. Owners wondered why it stopped at those areas.

VIII. Current Items

A. Beach Management along the 6000, 7000 and 8000 Blocks

Projects Manager Chustz displayed aerials to indicate the new area the snowy plovers decided to use as their nesting grounds. He discussed the erosion in that section and maintaining it. Concerns had to be addressed regarding what the property owners want to happen there and address the wildlife manager's concerns about threatened species. He noted that the area in question was not designated as critically eroded. He discussed the Erosion Control Line (ECL). Chair Nusbaum indicated that an FWC representative was happy with how the 6000 block residents ran the last two hatchings and mitigated the beach back to pre-nesting conditions.

Projects Manager Chustz displayed and discussed a flowchart with Imperiled Beach Nesting Birds (IBNB) guidelines. He advised the 6000 block residents to create a beach management plan for what they wanted to do, submit an area-wide permit for those activities and propose mitigation to the FWC. Chair Nusbaum will contact the FWC and invite them and beachfront property owners to a meeting.

Mr. Perry described what a take permit allowed him to do while raking in the past.

MERTF Member Howell discussed educating people in the south end to help them understand. Projects Manager Chustz indicated that he spoke to a regional bird biologist and she will meet with residents in January. He will provide her contact information.

Projects Manager Chustz discussed the 7000 block project and displayed a map of the area. He explained that the CBRA zone was the Coastal Barrier Resource Act and offered to provide a link for more information. He explained that the berms and vegetation wiped out by Helene and Milton would be replenished.

Projects Manager Chustz suggested that the property owners on the 8000 block also create a beach management plan. MERTF Member Hegstrom suggested that signs be added informing people to stay off the berms.

Chair Nusbaum will contact the FWC to schedule a time for discussion and he will report back in January. The recording skipped and started with Chair Nusbaum discussing a take permit with the 6000 block and the Chevron case.

B. Estero Bay Water Quality

MERTF Member Rusk suggested a joint meeting with the AAC for a presentation by Captains for Clean Water. Chair Nusbaum will contact Chair King of the AAC to schedule a meeting. MERTF Member Rusk will ask the coordinator to contact both Chairs for availability. MERTF Member Howell will have the Calusa Waterkeepers contact Projects Manager Chustz.

C. Exotic Vegetation Management

MERTF Member Rood distributed a picture of a tree. Projects Manager Chustz noted he would discuss the issue with the Town Manager.

IX. Members' Items

MERTF Member Rusk thanked the Community Foundation for their \$5,000.00 donation, the Chamber of Commerce for supporting Turtle Time, Inc. at the Sand Sculpture event and the Woman's Club for allowing Turtle Time to set up at the Christmas event at Bay Oaks. She noted that Osprey monitoring season was coming up and she is the Osprey monitor. She asked the community to contact her regarding Osprey nests.

Chair Nusbaum asked MERTF Member Rusk to contact Turtle Time for a presentation. He wanted to explore the community's adoption of nests and the installation of cameras on nests to capture hatching. MERTF Member Rusk explained why cameras monitoring nests was not a good idea. Chair Nusbaum acknowledged the work and years of service of Rose Larkin and Steve Johnson on the committee.

X. Staff Update

Projects Manager Chustz mentioning Thursday, January 9, 2025. April 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., will be moved to Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. He will send a reminder out.

The big piles of sand will be used to fill in scour areas and berms. He displayed a map to identify emergency berms. He noted that the town will get more sand from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state to restore the sections impacted by Helene and Milton and some of the sand will be spread out to restore the grade. The renourishment project was pumping in front of Margaritaville and the buried pipe at the south end should be up by February or March.

A marine debris project was kicking off next week west of the Matanzas Pass bridge to prepare the area for nesting season. Debris will be removed from canals, the Mooring Field and navigable waterways qualified for FEMA reimbursement.

XI. Public Comment

Bill Perry was talking about a tank full of dirty water that turned clean during a meeting. He discussed why people in the 8000 block were upset regarding nesting areas that were cordoned off. He indicated that the more people become involved, the better the cooperation will be, which will improve the whole program. He stated they needed a five-year take permit for a group of properties. He will invite people from Carlos Point and Island's End to attend MERTF meeting in person or virtually.

XII. MERTF Award

Chair Nusbaum described the purpose of the award for new members. MERTF Member Hegstrom nominated Chris King for cleaning up the beach every day. Projects Manager Chustz described her energy level and persistence. MERTF Member Rood nominated Mr. Perry for donating his time over the years. Chair Nusbaum stated that he nominated Mr. Perry, Chris and Ginger Weber last spring for the efforts bringing the beach back, but he was told they did it for profit. He felt that, despite getting paid, they were committed to trying to get the birds back and established.

They went above and beyond their jobs and he nominated them for their ongoing work for the beaches. Projects Manager Chustz added that Bill's son William Perry had been working on getting his bird monitoring credentials. Chris and Ginger Weber also received their bird monitoring credentials. MERTF Member Rood noted that Mr. Perry spent a lot of personal time interacting with property owners, town staff and the FWC.

MERTF Member Rusk nominated a sightseeing boat company Captain for going above and beyond.

The majority voted for the Perrys and the Webers to receive the award.

XIII. Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Keep A. under Current Items.

XIV. Adjournment

MOTION: MERTF Member Nusbaum moved to adjourn, seconded by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

Adopted 1/29/2025 with/without changes Motion by ALTHOFF
(DATE)

Vote 8-0 Signature David Nusbaum

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