

**MINUTES  
FORT MYERS BEACH  
MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESOURCES TASK FORCE**

Town Hall - 6231 Estero Blvd.  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931  
Wednesday, October 8, 2025

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nusbaum.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Roll Call**

Members present: Bill Althoff, Sharon Hegstrom, Robert Howell, David Nusbaum, Ed Rood and Jennifer Rusk.

Staff: Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz

Council Liaison: John King

**IV. MERTF Chair & Vice Chair**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Althoff nominated Dave Nusbaum as Chair, seconded by MERTF Member Rood.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Howell nominated Jennifer Rusk as Vice Chair, seconded by MERTF Member Hogstrom.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**V. Approve The Agenda**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Althoff moved to approve the agenda, seconded by MERTF Member Howell.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously.

**VI. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – September 18, 2025**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Hegstrom moved to approve the minutes, seconded by MERTF Member Rood.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously.

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

## VIII. Current Items

### A. Mulholland Award

Chair Nusbaum revealed that an additional application was omitted from the packet at the last meeting. Mary Rose Spalletta was nominated by Steve Johnson. Manager Chustz read the nomination into the record. Chair Nusbaum suggested that both applicants receive the award since it had been paused for three years. MERTF members agreed.

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Howell moved to award the Mulholland Award to Tunaskin for 2024 and Mary Rose Spalletta for 2025, seconded by MERTF Member Rusk.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously.

### B. Sea Turtle Cards

Chair Nusbaum noted that, by looking through the film, the cards indicated whether a light was turtle-compliant. MERTF Member Howell displayed the cards he made in conjunction with Turtle Time Inc. and asked permission to put the town's logo on them.

### C. Beach Access Signage

MERTF Member Rusk shared pictures of signs. Manager Chustz suggested that members agree on a mock-up to present to the town council. MERTF Member Rusk indicated that all the graphics were ready to go, but they should check with the town council first for direction. Liaison King stated that public works was in the process of installing dog signs at each access and he suggested that MERTF contact Community Services Director Jeff Hauge for more information. He also noted that the town lacked the authority to issue tickets for dogs off-leash and that the Lee County Sheriff's Department should be contacted.

Manager Chustz will meet with Director Hauge and give a presentation on all the signs at the next meeting. MERTF members agreed.

### D. FL Arbor Day – January 16, 2026

Chair Nusbaum suggested that they advise the town council to promote Arbor Day and encourage the community to plant native trees. MERTF Member Howell suggested that MERTF purchase trees to distribute to residents. Chair Nusbaum indicated that the budget will prohibit purchasing trees this year, but he will reach out to organizations about fundraising. Liaison King suggested contacting the town attorney regarding legal issues.

## IX. Members' Items

MERTF Member Rood would like to start removing Australian Pines on the beach before February. He discussed contacting homeowners and hiring a chemical company to use poison on the tree stumps. Manager Chustz said removing them from the CWA (Critical Wildlife Area) was on the list, along with contacting homeowners.

MERTF Member Howell indicated that the plantings on the dunes looked great.

Chair Nusbaum asked whether Manager Chustz had heard from Dr. Savarese. He replied that he has a meeting with him soon. A discussion was held regarding educating people about adding dunes and vegetation to their property.

MERTF Member Rusk noted they received \$6,800.00 to print 20,000 children's books and pay the graphic artist, but if they only print 15,000, they could purchase trees with the approximately \$1,900.00 remaining.

**MOTION:** Chair Nusbaum moved to print 15,000 and use the balance to be determined at the next meeting for turtle cards or towards Arbor Day, seconded by MERTF Member Hegstrom.

**VOTE:** The motion carried 5-1, with MERTF Member Rusk dissenting.

MERTF Member Rusk reported that the library offered to store the extra books and she requested help moving them. She shared a picture of overflowing garbage cans under the bridge at the Mooring Field. MERTF will have a pop-up at the Sand Sculpting Contest and she asked for help staffing the booth on November 22, 2025. The Matanzas Pass Park trail was being redone. She asked who installed the solar lights at Veterans' Park. Director of Community Development Frankie Kropacek replied that the town added them for public safety until amber lights were installed.

Chair Nusbaum reported that the town council approved the use of the town's logo on the MERTF award. He donated \$500.00 to the Friends of Little Estero Island to purchase additional awards to present to recipients.

## **X. Staff Update**

Manager Chustz indicated that there were some low spots with the beach renourishment, and it would be addressed in a trucking project. He noted that 160,000 dune vegetation plants had been planted and encouraged residents without dune vegetation to contact him if they changed their minds. Staff were adding yellow stakes to delineate the plantings from the accesses. Sand spurs were being removed from certain areas of the beach on a one-time basis, and it was up to the property owner to maintain their property.

MERTF Member Rusk brought up trash at commercial construction sites and Manager Chustz will ask the Code Enforcement Team to educate the workers.

- A. FL Sunshine Law Training - October 22, 2025, from 10:00-noon
- B. Environmental Projects

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

## **XII. MERTF Award**

MERTF Member Rood nominated Breanna Frankel and her assistant from FWC (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) for going above and beyond trapping iguanas on the beach in the heat in July and August.

MERTF Member Rusk nominated the college hunks for cleaning up the beach.

Chair Nusbaum described why he endorsed Ms. Frankel and her assistant.

MERTF Member Rusk banked her nomination.

MERTF Members unanimously voted to award the MERTF to Ms. Frankel and her assistant.

**XIII. Set Agenda for Next Meeting** – November 13, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Add toxic substance disposal in 2026.

**XIV. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** MERTF Member Howell moved to adjourn, seconded by MERTF Member Rood.

**VOTE:** The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ with/without changes. Motion by \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

Vote \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT