

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Town Hall
6231 Estero Blvd.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Monday, January 26, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair King.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Chris Riedel King, Ted Lawwill, Sam Lurie, John Wesley Nash, Ed Schoonover

Excused/Absent: Jennifer Rusk.

Staff Liaison: Harbormaster Curtis Ludwig

Council Liaison: None

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 24, 2025

MOTION: AAC Member Nash moved to approve the minutes, seconded by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

VI. STAFF REPORT AND UPDATES

Harbormaster Ludwig reported the following:

- The new work boat has been christened and is now functioning and already being used by the Town.
- The enforcement boat, which had previously been stolen, has been recovered and is currently in the shop undergoing necessary repairs.
- Staff is currently working to secure a wet slip at Walker's Cay and to plans to discuss a possible agreement with the facility.
- Once the enforcement boat is functioning again it will be stationed on the south end of the island for canal patrols and enforcement operations in coordination with Code Enforcement.
- The pump-out boat is operating without issue, and Mooring field activity rose significantly over the holidays and though it did slow, it is steadily increasing once more.
- The first and second mooring field are currently at or near capacity, with availability primarily in the third field near Salty Sams.
- Staff continues to coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard to return service to Mooring Balls 4-9.

- Coast Guard construction tender, Anvil, is scheduled to install channel markers at reflection points of the channel. The vessel's swing radius should not interfere with the channel. This work is expected to provide more room.
- The Anvil is going into dry dock around March or April and he hoped they could assist the Town before that time period.
- The roundtable meeting which included vendors, rental companies, and other stakeholders was organized by Mari Torgerson and focused on education on no-wake and slow speed zones in the back bay.
- Participants were provided with informational materials to share with renters.
- Staff is working to develop a QR-code based application that will allow users to view jurisdictional boundaries and applicable speed zones while on the water.

Chair King thanked Mari Torgerson for leading the roundtable discussion. She mentioned that John Good from MIASWF and Jacki Liszak were leads for the app.

In response to Chair King's inquiry, Harbormaster Ludwig indicated that a timeframe has not been determined.

AAC Member Lurie thanked Mari Torgerson for her commitment. He noted that Ms. Torgerson had suggested to provide rentals a printable version of the speed zones and not just an app.

AAC Member Schnoonover requested a review of the signage situation in the back bay.

Harbormaster Ludwig confirmed that, per Lee County, in coordination with FWC and LCSO, all required signage in the back bay is currently installed. He noted that discussion has occurred regarding the possible addition of more signage in the future. Responsibility for the signage rests with Lee County, as proper signage is required for FWC and LCSO to enforce speed zones. He explained that enforcement is supported by the presence of posted signs, and without signage, violations cannot be enforced. He further stated that signage placement has been double-checked, particularly following the most recent meetings.

Harbormaster Ludwig reported the following:

- Staff reported that they met with Matanzas Inn to negotiate the Town's contract, which includes upland facilities and docking spaces. He noted that a cost increase was anticipated.
- The Town is exploring the option to relocate marine operations staff into a vacant office space at Matanzas Inn to move out of the current trailer and provide the Team a more permanent, spacious, and functional location. He will provide updates on the progress of negotiation.
- Agendas will be available to view on CivicPlus moving forward, though his team will still be sending the packets out.
- The Town hired a new staff member who will be responsible for the Town minutes moving forward, and he advised that they may look different than previous minutes.
- There are 17 vessels anchored in the back anchorage area and 52 vessels were in the mooring field.
- There was discussion at the MERTF meeting of the Heli Tours and the launch pad in Estero Bay, the helicopter tour operator relocated their operations outside the Town's jurisdiction and is now positioned beyond the 1,000-foot boundary near Bowditch and is now in the

County's jurisdiction.

- The AAC rules and regulations document is with the attorney's office and he would follow up with them next week.

Chair King noted that the AAC rules and regulations were presented to Town Council on December 1, 2025. She suggested, that once the rules and regulations were codified that they should be included alongside the 2026 objectives on the back of future agendas to serve as reference for AAC members.

VII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

AAC Member Lurie inquired about the potential use of air tags or similar tracking devices on all Town vessels to assist in locating them if stolen, as well as for general oversight of movement during the workday.

Harbormaster Ludwig stated that he will explore the feasibility of it, though there are budget restraints that could limit the implementation.

AAC Member Lurie expressed concern of the lack of the required anchor lights on some vessels.

Harbormaster Ludwig mentioned that most vessels were compliant. He agreed to ensure that the anchor light requirement be mentioned in future versions of the welcome packet.

Responding to Chair King, Harbormaster Ludwig said that there were no applicants for the AAC committee's open spot but he would circle back with the committee after confirming.

AAC Member Lawwill discussed the ^{Occupancy} occupational figures from May to December of last year and notes that he is missing November's data. The ^{Occupancy} occupation has been running with an average at 49% to 40% in those months, though it did increase in December to 50%.

Chair King noted that the numbers were being calculated from 89 mooring balls and asked for clarification on how many mooring balls were in service now.

Harbormaster Ludwig clarified there were actually 82 mooring balls in service.

AAC Member Lawwill commented that he would recalculate the numbers from the 82 in service.

AAC Member Nash remarked that the revenue has increased this year to \$22,083 compared to last year at \$17,767.

Harbormaster Ludwig noted that the incoming revenue was not just from the rate increase but from the volume and capacity usage. He added that the daily and short-term rentals have increased. The monthly rate was increased to \$532 a month.

Responding to committee questions, Harbormaster Ludwig, would look into the discrepancy regarding ball 13. He pointed out that they are not fully staffed and are collaborating with HR to hire staff. He noted that the storm that occurred the past Sunday caused one vessel's line to breach in the mooring field and now the vessel is anchored outside of Snook Bight and is going through

45-55%
Check
max
bound

the derelict vessel process. He stated there were no failures of hardware from the Town and the vessel's own line was what had been breached.

AAC Member Nash wished to invite the new public information officer to a meeting to discuss what information should be distributed on social media.

AAC Member Lurie thanked Beach Talk Radio for having Mari Torgerson as a guest to explain the no-wake zone. Additionally, he thanked Jim Atterholt for his service as the committee's liaison.

Chair King clarified that the committee liaison would most likely be chosen when the Council seat is filled.

AAC Member Lurie mentioned that House Bill 164 deals with anchored vessels and is pertinent to the anchorage area and derelict boats. He noted that the bill may prove useful to assist the harbor master in maintaining the mooring fields.

Harbor master Ludwig commented that he is collaborating with the FWC and vessels are tagged and their owners are going to be held accountable. Though removing the vessels through the legal process can take a few months.

AAC Member Lurie noted that some of the items that the House bill mentions are that boats must be mechanically sound and able to be moved, on-site inspections and the ability to contact authorities to clean up some areas.

Chair King presented the AAC rules and regulations as the committee's objectives to Town Council at their meeting on December 1, 2025.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Cruiser's Appreciation Day Discussion and Planning.

AAC Member Lurie commented that he contacted Chef Rizzo at Snug Harbor and they were receptive, mentioned to reserve the date as soon as possible. He suggested using the same laminated menu as last year. It would be \$25 per plate, which included the tax, tip and drink. He requested approval to sign the agreement. Additionally, he noted that there was a \$2,000 minimum for the food.

Chair King requested that staff follow up to determine who has the authority to sign the agreement.

AAC Member Lurie commented that he would be in charge of securing the meal and talking to the potential sponsors Snug Harbor, Matanzas Hotel voucher, Matanzas restaurants, voucher and gift, Wahoo Willy's and SOB.

Chair King would reach out to the Whale, Nervous Nellies, the Lighthouse, Beach Talk Radio, and complete the event permit. She asked if Staff could ask AAC Member Rusk to confirm whether she would be handling outreach to the non-profit organizations.

AAC Member Schnoonover suggested charging the non-profit organizations a \$25 fee. Following committee discussion, the consensus was to wait until the next meeting to discuss the potential of the fee charge or the reduction of meals alongside AAC Member Rusk, who could provide further insight.

AAC Member Lurie said that he would put in the reservation with the \$2,000 minimum.

Harbormaster Ludwig would be reaching out to the vendors in the upcoming week. He would ask AAC Member Rusk for the sponsor letter that would potentially be sent to the non-profit organizations.

Chair King listed that the VIP list last year included up to 4 mooring field boaters, the committee and a guest, Town Council members and a guest, Marine Ops and a guest and BTR and a guest.

AAC Member Nash agreed reach out to the Islander, Nervous Nellies, and Yucatan Lighthouse.

AAC Member Schnoonover agreed to reach out to the Women's Club, the Community Foundation, the Friends of Mound House, and the Pancake House.

AAC Member Lawwill agreed to do Snook Bight and the storage area at Santini Plaza.

AAC Member Nash agreed to reach out to Legno and Freaky BouTiki and the rest of the vendors in Santini Plaza.

Chair King confirmed that April 12, 2026 is the event date. She will provide the members with the corrected sponsor letter by the end of the week.

AAC Member Lurie announced that there was a Hazmat Day that would be coming to the Town in February.

AAC Member Nash requested that, once the Hazmat Day dates are confirmed, the information be shared with boaters in the mooring field.

Chair King announced that Friends of the Library would be holding a book sale on Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. She said that for a \$10 donation, attendees can fill a bag with books.

MOTION: AAC Member Schnoonover moved to approve the laminated menu as presented by AAC Member Lurie, seconded by Chair King.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

X. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA – February 23, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: AAC Member Schoonover moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by AAC Member Lurie.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Adopted 2/23/26 with/without changes. Motion by Sam Lurie
(DATE)

Vote: unanimous Signature: Chris Reedel KS