

**MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
MARINE RESOURCES TASK FORCE
Town Hall
2525 Estero Boulevard
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Veach. Members present: Greg Holmes, Tony Lubig, Shannon Mapes, Eldon Ridener, Mary Rose Spalletta, Bill Veach and Keri Hendry Weeg. Council Liaison: Rexann Hosafros for Anita Cereceda
Staff: Rae Blake

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INVOCATION

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - December 14, 2016

MOTION: Ms. Spalletta moved to approve the minutes; second by Ms. Weeg.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

•John Heim, Southwest Florida Clean Water Movement and resident, stated that water quality testing was in the best interest of everyone. He described the Everglades Coalition Conference he attended. He noted they could not solve the Lake Okeechobee discharges, but they could be proactive with informing the general public of the water quality.

•Louise Colwich, resident, discussed localized water testing. She noted the website was difficult to decipher and she wondered whether it could be updated. She described water testing in Maryland and she revealed that she met people who were interested in helping and would test the water at no cost. She brought up autonomous monitoring as a way to start to help clean the waters.

V. CURRENT ITEMS

A. Water Quality Testing

Ms. Blake indicated that copies of the presentation were available.

Jack Green and John Cassani played a video of the formation of the Waterkeeper Alliance. He described the River Watch and stated that they were accepted by the Waterkeeper Alliance and, as of December, were now called the Calusa Waterkeeper. Mr. Green indicated that they would be first responders and would respond to pollution events.

Mr. Cassani stated they were an international organization with a little over one thousand square miles of water within their jurisdiction. They have a water pollution hotline and volunteers to monitor the water. He stated they were trying to develop a consortium of partnership in the sector. He hoped they could work together and he described their operational model of ongoing

monitoring and responding to illegal or illicit activities. He stated that once the rangers have been trained and certified, they would be sampling on periodic, consistent basis. Ms. Blake questioned the amount the spent on water quality issues. He replied that they were only two weeks old and did not have that information. He stated that the implications as far as human risk were profound and they were willing to work with the Town if there was an opportunity. He stated they existed on fundraising, grants and memberships.

Ms. Blake provided a water quality testing overview. She described what Lee County tested for on a monthly basis in the Estero Bay area, location of testing sites, random site testing, weekly red tide samples and samples from the off shore data buoy. The Florida Health Department tested three different locations once a week for one type of bacteria. The Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve had three data buoys and a volunteer monitoring program that tested water on a monthly basis at sunrise. Ms. Blake indicated that they needed to be specific with their request of what to test. She provided examples of several questions to ask to narrow the testing.

Ms. Mapes indicated that people were interested in QR codes that contained information on whether it was safe to swim. She noted that testing took a couple of days to complete.

Mr. Lubig supported testing in person as opposed to relying on the data buoy.

Mr. Holmes questioned what the residents wanted. Chair Veach replied that citizens requested that water quality issues be addressed at a recent Town Council meeting.

Ms. Weeg stated that making the information more accessible on the website would be helpful. She questioned the cost of testing for a particular bacterium. Ms. Blake listed prices for testing various bacteria.

Chair Veach suggested researching the issue more before making a recommendation to Council. He noted they had to figure out the question before they could come up with an answer.

Ms. Mapes suggested testing for nitrites and nitrates. She mentioned using a color chart to indicate whether it was safe to swim.

Mr. Ridener questioned whether the beach had ever been closed. Ms. Weeg stated it had not closed in her lifetime.

Ms. Mapes suggested polling beach goers to ask them what they wanted the water tested for. She questioned testing on the gulf side. Discussion was held regarding currents.

Ms. Blake noted that nitrogen levels were a good indicator of the general health of the water. She stated that the canals were not monitored weekly.

Ms. Spalletta noted the first issue was public safety and the second was to identify particular problems in the water. She mentioned finding pollution sources on the beach.

Chair Veach suggested researching websites for examples the Town could follow. He discussed spot testing and red tide issues.

Chair Veach recommended researching public safety health issues. He added the topic to the February agenda.

Ms. Hosafros noted that public input was concerned about health and Caloosahatchee issues.

Ms. Weeg suggested testing a couple of canals.

B. Songwriting Festival

Chair Veach reported that Sheena Brook would not be able to assist them and he has not heard from Nancy McPhee regarding a slot at the Island Hopper. Ms. Cereceda has not contacted him regarding surveying downtown businesses.

VI. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Mr. Holmes brought up dredging at the south end.

Chair Veach discussed the float for the Shrimp Parade. Mr. Lubig will provide the trailer.

Chair Veach relayed that the interpretive signs and the brochure were on the recommended list for Tourist Development Council funds. He spoke to Mick Curtis and Jim Rodwell concerning MRTF's master naturalist-type course specific to the Island. They will work with Chair Veach regarding the curriculum.

Ms. Spalletta requested more time to research water testing.

Ms. Blake indicated that she would test for heavy metals in the back bay; however, testing was expensive.

Shannon Mapes introduced herself.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mr. Heim discussed red tide, testing for chemicals in the water, public health and safety.

VIII. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Add testing for nitrogen hot spots and fecal bacteria.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Lubig moved to adjourn; second by Ms. Weeg.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Adopted _____ with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: _____ Signature: _____

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Review & Adopted 2/9/17