

**MINUTES  
FORT MYERS BEACH  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
Town Hall  
2525 Estero Boulevard  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

**Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Goggin.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

Members present: Suzanne Bahan, John Goggin, Tom Gressman, Heidi Jungwirth, Jim Knickle and Dawn Thomas (via phone).

Excused: Mike Childs

Staff: Public Works Director Chelsea O'Riley

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - May 18, 2021, and May 25, 2021**

**MOTION:** PSC Member Gressman moved to approve the May 18 minutes; second by PSC Member Jungwirth

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** PSC Member Knickle moved to approve the May 25 minutes; second by PSC Member Bahan.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.**

**VI. LCSO AND FMBFD**

Captain Lalor introduced his assistant, Mark Menora. He noted bicycle thefts were on the rise, along with unlocked vehicle thefts. He did not see a trend with kayak thefts. Director O'Riley stated that bike racks would be available at every beach access. Captain Lalor suggested that people record the model and the serial number of their items and take pictures. Director O'Riley will pass the information to Public Information Officer (PIO) Dexter.

PSC Member Thomas questioned what could be done regarding big crowds and bad behavior on the beach. Captain Lalor replied that events on Memorial Day were still under investigation. He stated that staffing was not an issue and encouraged people to call the Sheriff's Department.

Assistant Chief of the FMBFD, Scott Wirth, broke down the 361 emergency responses in May. He noted that peak season was lasting longer. He reminded viewers that the Fire Department offered several safety classes and encouraged people to visit their website for details.

**VII. STATUS OF CODE BLUE QUOTES** – on hold until next month.

**VIII. MPO MEETING UPDATES** – no update.

**IX. SIDEWALK MARKINGS AND BIKE SIGNAGE UPDATE**

Director O’Riley reported that new beach access signs were ready to be picked up.

**X. STATUS OF BICYCLE BELLS PROCUREMENT**

Director O’Riley stated that they had to find another vendor able to add the Town’s logo to the bells.

**XI. PUBLIC SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS DISCUSSION**

PSC Member Thomas noted that poor lighting correlated with pedestrian and bike safety and lighting was rated as average or poor. She indicated that they wanted more flashing lights at crosswalks. PSC Member Knickle thanked PSC Member Thomas and Administrative Officer Randy Paniagua for compiling the data and organizing the results. PSC Member Bahan agreed that they did an excellent job putting the report together.

Chair Goggin noted that results would be available online. He reported approximately 590 responded and most were residents. He provided a general overview of the results and stated that pedestrian safety was the number one issue and the homeless population second. He indicated that the results would be shared with the lighting consultants. Drugs and public drunkenness were a big concern followed by traffic control, congestion, speed, middle lane passing, animals off-leash, bicycles without audible devices, stopping at crosswalks, non-pedestrian congestion on sidewalks and jaywalking.

Chair Goggin reviewed the results of each question. Respondents indicated there were too few crosswalks and they were hard to see. PSC Member Jungwirth will revive her crosswalk map criteria.

PSC Member Gressman brought up the rapid response flashing beacons (RRFB) and noted they were \$25,000 each a few years ago. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) addressed driver fatigue from too many flashing lights.

Issues with the homeless population included panhandling, aggressive harassment, public drug use, theft, public urination and defecation, personal property on the beaches, trespassing on private property, sleeping on trolley benches, using new construction for homes, drunk and disorderly conduct, presence on vacant properties, panhandling outside of retail businesses, trash and sleeping under the pier and public places. Chair Goggin suggested bringing all parties together, making the public aware of what was going on, developing recommendations and utilizing all resources.

PSC Member Bahan discussed the lack of rehabilitation. She felt that if the homeless refused help, they should not be provided resources. Chair Goggin stated that counseling was provided and reiterated that all agencies providing services should get together to discuss problems.

PSC Member Knickle felt that a comprehensive package of assistance to provide people with help was required. PSC Member Gressman thought that they were enabling the homeless and compared Fort Myers Beach to Naples and Sanibel. PSC Member Thomas agreed and noted that people with mental health issues were a big issue. She agreed that Town Council, the churches and LSCO had to work together. Chair Goggin added that Lee County had to get involved.

Bike lane issues were discussed. Chair Goggin stated that they needed to bring up marking the bike lanes again with Town Council and Lee County. He mentioned added bumpers to the edge of bike lanes. PSC Member Knickle agreed.

Chair Goggin recommended that Town Council meet with bike rental businesses and resorts to enforce compliance with the bell and light law. PSC Members agreed and commented that they were not telling bike rentals how to run their business because bells and lights were a public safety issue and the law. Liability matters with bike rental companies that did not comply were mentioned. Chair Goggin clarified that residents would receive free bells and lights, not businesses. PSC Member Thomas indicated that the law should be included in literature from the bike rental companies.

Chair Goggin stated that it was legal to ride E-bikes on the sidewalk if one pedaled the bike. He commented that the ordinance could be clarified and education was needed. He discussed enforcing the speed limit and noted he would reach out to Chair Johnson of Marine Resources Task Fund (MRTF) since they previously discussed speed limits.

Chair Goggin indicated that a majority of respondents supported Community Policing. He explained why he did not think two officers were enough. He suggested that the Sheriff's Dept. present Community Policing to PSC. Before the presentation, PSC would share the survey results with the Sheriff's Department, including questions regarding how they would address those concerns. PSC Member Thomas agreed that the Sheriff needed to explain what the community could expect. She supported more than two officers as well. PSC Member Knickle described the Community Policing program at Bonita Springs. He stated that FL law prohibited a law enforcement special district and he estimated it would cost the Town \$10 million to create a police department. The majority of respondents felt that police responded in a timely manner. Chair Goggin noted that adding Community Policing would not affect core services. About half of the respondents indicated they would be willing to increase taxes to pay for Community Policing.

Chair Goggin stated he would provide lighting comments to the lighting consultants. He discussed statements concerning safety during the day and at night and feeling safe in particular neighborhoods. The majority of respondents did not have a Community Watch Group and a small group wanted one.

Town Manager Hernstadt mentioned that clarifying the issues was crucial for setting priorities. He noted that community policing and lighting might compete for prioritization and funding. He looked forward to their input.

## **XII. MEMBER ITEMS**

Director O'Riley noted they might have to meet in another location next month due to construction.

## **XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.**

## **XIV. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA – July 20, 2021**

Review summary of results.

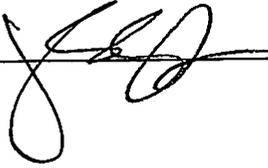
## **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** PSC Member Gressman moved to adjourn; second by PSC Member Knickle.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

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

Vote: 6-0 Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

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