

typo pl

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

The Mound House – 451 Connecticut St.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, July 12, 2023

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chair Johnson.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Members present: Wendy DeGaetano, Steve Johnson, Rose Larkin, Jennifer Rusk and Mary Rose Spalletta.

Excused: Greg Fossum and Robert Howell.

Staff: Environmental Services Project Manager Chadd Chustz

IV. Approve The Agenda

MOTION: MERTF Member Spalletta moved to add Staff Update to the agenda permanently; second by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: MERTF Member DeGaetano moved to approve the amended agenda; second by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

V. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes – June 14, 2023

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to approve June 14, 2023, minutes at the August meeting; second by MERTF Member DeGaetano.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public Comment



Leon Moyer, resident living on a boat, noted that Bonita Bills installed locks on their water facets to prevent people from using water. He expressed concerns regarding boat launch places and suggested that MERTF address the topic.

VII. Current Items

A. Hurricane Recovery – Staff Update

The berm was on pause due to shorebird nesting and should resume in September. Project Manager Chustz indicated that 80% of the sand was on the beach and the Town would seek additional state funding for upcoming projects. Shorebirds were having a successful season, the streetlights were outfitted and Florida Power & Light (FP&L) were adjusting the lights on side streets to prevent them from tilting. The renourishment project will consist of 1.1 million cubic yards and planting the dunes will take place after the project is completed. Discussion was held regarding property owners and renourishment issues.

1. Beach Accesses

Project Manager Chustz confirmed that gradual slopes would be added to the berm for access. MERTF Member Rusk questioned what public works was doing to prepare before the next hurricane and Chair Johnson will contact Director Freeman. Chair Johnson noted that a Let's Go FMB subcommittee was addressing boat launch accesses. Discussion was held regarding which accesses were still functioning.

2. Vegetation on Town Properties

MERTF Member Larkin noted that the Estero Island Garden Club suggested that people or groups sign up to take over vegetation on the side street parking for beach access. MERTF Member Rusk added that a Keep Lee County Beautiful representative said they would help organize and plant with direction from the Town. The Estero Island Garden Club spoke at a Town Council meeting and offered to lead the replanting effort. MERTF Member Larkin was unsure whether the Town accepted the garden club's offer. Chair Johnson indicated that Communications Coordinator Jenny Dexter could add a garden club link to the Town's website.

Chair Johnson discussed the timeline for MERTF Member Larkin's tree and vegetation ordinances. He suggested tabling the vegetation ordinances to review and vote on final recommendations. Project Manager Chustz will resend the tree and vegetation ordinances to MERTF members.

B. Shoreline Spotlight Article

MERTF Member Spalletta will submit an article for August, followed by Chair Johnson in September and MERTF Member Fossum in October.

C. Council Report Update

Chair Johnson reported that MERTF Member Fossum reviewed the motions from the June meeting. MERTF Member Spalletta spoke about the inaccuracies brought up at the Town

Council meeting. Chair Johnson stated that he responded privately and the record still needs to be corrected.

MOTION: MERTF Member Spalletta moved to recommend that the record from the Town Council meeting be corrected and request that something be done to ensure a similar attack does not occur; second by Chair Johnson.

VOTE: No vote.

Chair Johnson suggested that he read his response at the next council meeting to correct the record. MERTF Member Rusk stated that the meeting was embarrassing, awkward and hurt her feelings. She was offended and requested that Town Council apologize to MERTF. MERTF Member Spalletta felt it was bad policy to attack any committee member, especially in public. MERTF Member Rusk agreed and stated that the comments diminished their advice.

MOTION: MERTF Member Spalletta moved that Chair Johnson read his response at the next Town Council meeting; second by MERTF Member Rusk.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Members' Items and Reports

MERTF Member Spalletta reported that the turtles were hatching but not in the new berm yet. New nests were coming in daily.

MERTF Member Larkin noted that their project identifying invasive plants received a recognition plaque from Lee County at the Master Gardner's Conference last October.

MOTION: Chair Johnson moved to inform Town Council that Lee County recognized the Town's actions; second by MERTF Member Larkin.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

MERTF Member Rusk reviewed her comments from the last meeting and stood by her statements. She acknowledged making mistakes and learning about the environment. She described her day at the Mound House with the pop-up event at the beach kid's camp. She revealed that a check for \$4,700.00 was donated via a GoFundMe account set up by Patti Smith for the beach kids' activity book.

Discussion was held regarding MERTF's recommendations for rebuilding Bayside Park and FEMA requirements.

MERTF Member Rusk noted that the next pop-up event for the beach kids will be July 19, 2023.

IX. Public Comment

Leon Moyer reported that facilities were unavailable for people who had to travel to the Town by dinghy.

X. MERTF Award

Discussion was held regarding who was in the bank and who won the award last month. Chair Johnson nominated the veterinarian practice that helped with animal control post-Ian. MERTF Member Rusk nominated Patti Smith for the GoFundMe donation to print the activity book. Chair Johnson nominated the Community Foundation for their donation. The veterinarian practice won the Murphie Award and the other two remain in the bank.

XI. Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Add Rebecca Schneider from the FWC and vegetation ordinances.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: MERTF Member Spalletta moved to adjourn; second by Chair Johnson.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Adopted 9/13/2023 with/without changes. Motion by Mary Rose Spalletta
(DATE)
Vote: 6-0 Signature: 

- End of document