

MINUTES
Town of Fort Myers Beach
Cultural and Environmental Learning
Center Advisory Board “CELCAB”
Mound House - 451 Connecticut Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, August 16, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Chair Hill.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Members present: Barbara Anderson Hill, Betty Simpson, Becky Werner and Ellen Vaughan.

Excused: Kerrie Henderson, Cherie Smith and Lorrie Wolf.

Town Staff: Director Culture, Parks & Recreation Jeff Hauge

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 21, 2023

MOTION: CELCAB Member Simpson moved to approve the minutes; second by CELCAB Member Werner.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Woman stated that she loved the wildlife signs and vibe at Newton Park pre-Ian.

V. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Director Hauge indicated that Newton Park would remain a passive educational park and the restrooms and tiki huts would be replaced. Discussions were ongoing concerning whether a structure would be built. Chair Hill stated that they had to be mindful of the Town’s obligations concerning the trust and she discussed options such as tents or pergolas for special events rather than building a structure. Director Hauge noted that he was waiting for a design and would present it to CELCAB when it was complete. He indicated that he had the original landscape plan and artwork. CELCAB Member Vaughan questioned whether the Town had success with using online surveys. Director Hauge replied negatively but added that staff had discussed it, but they were not quite there.

Director Hauge was waiting for a structural engineer for the underground exhibit. Extra parts had to be ordered for the A/C unit. The exhibit could open in a couple of weeks or a couple of months, depending on when the structural engineer could inspect the exhibit. New plants and vegetation will be ordered and new timbers were put down around the drive. Director Hauge brought up adding a pergola, but Chair Hill noted that the area in question was originally for tents. Installing shade structures on the property was discussed. Expanding the parking was discussed and

CELCAB members recalled how the neighbors rallied against the current parking situation. Chair Hill stated that they had an agreement with Beach Baptist Church for overflow parking. Director Hauge will speak with Pastor Shawn. Chair Hill suggested signing a new agreement if the old one expired.

Museum Manager Adam Knight reported that the website was contracted through the BlackFrog Agency. He noted that the group toured the property and heard their wants, needs and operations. He expected the new website with an online store and a seamless membership site to go live at the beginning of the season. He described other functions of the website to help with efficiency. Manager Knight reviewed the hours and days of operation for the grounds and museum. Director Hauge added that they would talk with Beach and Street Enforcement (B.A.S.E.) about keeping the gates open longer than 4:30 p.m.

He tabled the discussion concerning putting Mound House on a map for a promotional concept. Chair Hill explained how a marketing plan should work in a perfect world. She noted that the marketing plan should be developed a year in advance with funds available to allow for opportunities along the way. Chair Hill discussed prioritizing digitizing the entire collection and suggested that the Friends support that effort.

Director Hauge reviewed the activity report distributed by Manager Knight. CELCAB Member Werner suggested a discount for group tours with 10 or more participants. Director Hauge agreed and will make a recommendation. He encouraged ideas to draw people to the Mound House and was working with hotels regarding excursions. He stated he would send out the fee schedule to discuss before the budget discussions.

Upcoming events included several tours by Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and the Island Hopper Songwriter Festival in September. Museum Manager Knight described topics and speakers for the lecture series scheduled through the end of the year. Director Hauge described the events planned at the Mound House on September 28, 2023. He stated that the summer camp was a success and that the staff did an excellent job. He estimated there were an average of 21 kids per day. He indicated that his Bay Oaks report included the summer camp activities.

Chair Hill suggested creating an organizational chart at some point and Director Hauge agreed.

VI. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Renaming Newton Park

CELCAB Member Simpson explained the history of changing the name and noted that CELCAB discussed the name of Seven Seas but felt it meant little after Ian. Chair Hill added that Newton Park was not donated to the Town. CELCAB Member Werner thought they should rename it now but not name it after a living or dead person. She wondered about a nature-affiliated name and suggested a survey to poll the residents. CELCAB Member Vaughan mentioned Calusa Park and she was not averse to naming it after a deceased member of the community. Liaison Atterholt would like a name that honored the history of the property. Chair Hill mentioned another side of the Newtons and felt that the name would have been justified if they were philanthropic regarding the property. She supported a name change and suggested they connect the name to the location, like Gulf Botanical Park. CELCAB Member Werner agreed and suggested contacting Communications Coordinator Jenny Dexter for advice on soliciting opinions. Chair Hill encouraged everyone to bring ideas for a new name to the next meeting.

B. Review of Florida Trust Grant

Director Hauge stated that they were obligated to have 24 events before the end of the year and a representative was impressed that the town had a plan to move forward. The representative was not concerned about whether a building was on the property.

VII. FRIENDS OF MOUND HOUSE REPORT

CELCAB Member Vaughan reported that Museum Manager Knight wrote a great article for Florida Weekly. As a result, the Friends were offered a framed reprint for \$100-\$300 and the Friends offered to pay up to \$300.00. Chair Hill would like to leave the decision to the staff's discretion. If it does come to fruition, she suggested hanging it in the lobby of the Town Hall tent.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Liaison Atterholt described a potential ferry service.

CELCAB Member Vaughan suggested adjusting the meeting time to allow for a bigger gap between meetings during the day.

No items from other members.

Director Hauge reported that there will be a grand opening for the little league field on August 28, 2023, from 4:00-6:30 p.m.

Museum Manager Knight mentioned a cultural branch meeting with Resilient Lee and described a draft of initiatives and recommendations.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

X. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA AND DATE – September 20, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: CELCAB Member Werner moved to adjourn; second by CELCAB Member Vaughan.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Adopted 10/18/23 with/without changes. Motion by Bobby Simpson
(DATE)

Vote: all Signature: Rashawn Hill

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