

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Mound House - 451 Connecticut Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Eckmann.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Douglas Eckmann, Jim Hockett, Chris Riedel King, Ted Lawwill, Sam Lurie and John Wesley Nash.

Excused: Ed Schoonover

Staff: Harbormaster Austin Gilchrist and Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

IV. APPROVE THE AGENDA

MOTION: AAC Member Lawwill moved to approve the amended agenda; second by AAC Member King.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. ELECT ACC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

MOTION: AAC Member Hockett moved to nominate Douglas Eckmann as chair; second by AAC Member Nash.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Chair Eckmann moved to nominate Sam Lurie as Vice Chair; second by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 19, 2023 – no minutes

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

VIII. CURRENT ITEMS – Draft AAC Priorities for Town Council Approval

Chair Eckmann felt the most significant issue was adequate shore facilities and added that they needed first-class facilities rather than second-class. He acknowledged that finding a suitable location was difficult.

AAC Member Lurie noted that a one-year contract for \$36,000.00 was signed with Matanzas for temporary upland services. He questioned the status of the property behind the town hall and swapping land with the fire department. Liaison Atterholt revealed that the fire department and

the Town would not be swapping properties and discussions regarding where to locate the new town hall were ongoing. AAC Member Lurie stated that a temporary office and storage shed will be set up under the bridge. Discussion was held regarding the Tourist Development Council (TDC's) role.

AAC Member Lurie indicated that the Town council mentioned involving the AAC regarding dredging the canals. Liaison Atterholt described a potential system for maintaining the canals and noted that one of the previous interim town managers was engaged with developing details.

Chair Eckmann suggested that the AAC could work on other maritime issues and thought they should advise on the canals.

AAC Member Hockett mentioned getting the Mooring field and services up and running as a priority. AAC Member King brought up improved services to bring people to the beach and market the Mooring field. AAC Member Nash added dredging the canals to a minimum of six feet below low tide for larger vessels to promote the Mooring field. He wants to see all the markers reverified and promote the Mooring field outside Florida.

AAC Member Lurie stated that the main focus of the AAC was to comply with the Submerged Land Lease and the Harbor Management Plan. AAC Member Lawwill felt it would not be unreasonable to take on dredging the canals. He stated that the mooring field was close to breaking even due to grants. Liaison Atterholt brought up a private water ferry system and hoped the AAC would encourage them. Commercial travel in residential canals was discussed. A consensus was reached to support the water taxi and anything nautical.

IX. MEMBER ITEMS AND REPORTS

Harbormaster Gilchrist agreed that they needed a nice facility. He suggested that everyone read the Harbor Management Plan on the website. He explained that before Ian, they were starting to be known as a premier mooring facility in the area. He stated that the fees were raised because they wanted the mooring field to be affordable but not sustainable, where people could take advantage of residency through the waterways. He was working with law enforcement regarding the lease agreements. He described the swing radius on the mooring systems and how vessels performed in the water. Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that the mooring field would be rebuilt and reimbursed by FEMA. The field had been running as wet storage only, but as of November 1, 2023, short-term liveaboards would be allowed. A temporary dinghy dock was available behind the town hall property and signs were installed to prevent people from using the old dock under the bridge. Thirteen systems were available and boaters were starting to come through the area. Approximately 25 pump-outs were being done monthly and temporary services were used to dispose of the waste, which would be reimbursed through a grant. He stated that 90% of the pump-outs were from marinas and 5% were from anchored vessels.

Harbormaster Gilchrist indicated that Matanzas agreed to let them use their dock for dinghy dockage on the side of the canal. The staff was working on repairing a temporary dock until the permanent dock was complete. The new mooring field was being rebuilt because the firm that did the recent dredging project damaged it. Staff assessed the damaged ramps at Miramar, Bayside, Bayview and the Mound House and the town will apply for grants to repair the ramps. Contractors removed most of the large debris, and the staff removed debris that continued to work loose from under docks. FEMA sent representatives down regarding removing canal debris. The sheriff's department was conducting derelict vessel investigations to have the submerged vessels removed. Staff was working with the sheriff's department concerning monitoring and enforcement of the waters due to increased traffic.

Liaison Atterholt suggested that drone footage up and down the beach be uploaded to the website so people could see what the water looked like. Harbormaster Gilchrist described how staff inspect the mooring systems.

AAC Member Nash discussed charging vessels per foot since larger vessels would reduce the number of moorings and provide additional revenue. Harbormaster Gilchrist commented that rates have always been flat, but he will research flat rates versus by the foot. He indicated that they were using Dockwa but were exploring other programs.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT – no public comment.

XI. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA – November 15, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

Add Bay Oaks and other alternatives.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: AAC Member Lawwill moved to adjourn the meeting; second by AAC Member King.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Adopted 11-15-23 with/without changes. Motion by _____
(DATE)

Vote: UNANIMOUS Signature: 

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