

MINUTES
FORT MYERS BEACH
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Mound House - 451 Connecticut Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
Wednesday, December 20, 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: Doug Eckmann, Jim Hockett, Chris Riedel King (via phone), Ted Lawwill, Sam Lurie, John Wesley Nash and Ed Schoonover.

Staff: Harbormaster Austin Gilchrist and Environmental Projects Manager Chadd Chustz.

Council Liaison: Jim Atterholt

IV. Approve the Agenda

MOTION: AAC Member Nash moved to approve the agenda; second by AAC Member Schoonover.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Minutes – November 15, 2023

AAC Member ~~Schoonover~~ Hockett reviewed the objectives of the AAC and felt there was an opportunity to define their role better.

MOTION: AAC Member Lurie moved to approve the minutes as amended; second by AAC Member Schoonover.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comment – no public comment.

VII. Presentation: Grant Opportunities by Coastal Engineering Consultants

Mark Kincaid from Coastal Engineering reviewed their history with the town. He stated that grant money was available through state programs and they needed a solid project to move forward with the application.

Grady from Coastal Engineering utilized PowerPoint for his presentation. Slides included Diagram of Existing Mooring Fields; Post-Ian Mooring Field Project Updates; Mooring Field Needs, Grant Opportunities; FWC FBIP Grant; FWC BIGP Grant; WCIND WDP, Prior Successful Grant Requests, Potential Project, and Next Steps.

Harbormaster Gilchrist commented that the Town received negative input from residents last year regarding constructing an upland service facility on the property behind the old town hall. Coastal

Engineering was side-scanning the canals to identify and remove debris. Liaison Atterholt noted that the Town might end up selling the property because they were negotiating the purchase of a new location for the town hall. He indicated that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would reimburse the Town to rebuild what they had. Mr. Kincaid noted that they had to put in a temporary dinghy dock under the bridge now because the timeframe for a permanent dock would take too long.

Mr. Kincaid stated that the Bay Oaks property was not an ideal spot for a facility because someone laid claim to submerged lands, there were a lot of mangroves and the canal was shallow. The property behind the town hall property did not have those same issues.

Harbormaster Gilchrist encouraged AAC members to visit the Fish & Wildlife Conservation (FWC) website for more detailed grant information. He noted the Town had opportunities all over the island for a central facilities location. Chair Eckmann stated that a grant for a feasibility study of the sites was needed. Grant timelines and potential facility locations were discussed.

Mr. Kincaid described the need for a yearly maintenance plan for the new systems. Harbormaster Gilchrist explained his maintenance program and noted he had developed a three-month process to inspect the systems, and the balls were cleaned every month.

AAC Member Hockett questioned the cost of pulling out the systems yearly and Mr. Kincaid replied that it was approximately \$40,000.00 and described what was included. AAC Member Schoonover questioned who paid for the yearly maintenance. Liaison Atterholt responded that the Mooring Field was supposed to be self-sustaining. Although AAC Member Lawwill requested the numbers from the finance department several times, he never received them. Mr. Kincaid explained that the submerged land lease prohibited the Mooring Field from making a profit. AAC Member Lurie stated that their number one priority was to make sure that they complied with the lease requirements. Mr. Kincaid suggested that members familiarize themselves with the submerged land lease.

Mr. Kincaid described the design of the 10 new systems for larger boats in the new Mooring Field and explained why stainless steel was not used.

AAC Member King noted they needed to determine the options for the upland facilities, the scope of their project, when they needed to have a plan in place for a grant proposal, who was going to write the grant proposal and the timelines and responsibilities.

MOTION: AAC Member Lawwill moved to recommend that the council or town manager, in cooperation with Harbormaster Gilchrist, communicate with Coastal Engineering to develop a proposal for a feasibility study or shore facility consistent with the lease; second by AAC Member Hockett.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Current Items – Staff Report

A. Anchored Vessels

Harbormaster Gilchrist reported that the field was full, and seven vessels were on the waiting list. He indicated they operated on a first-serve basis and were working on the reservation terminology with Dockwa. He used the side-scan technology to remove debris and install more systems in the field. The pump-out boat was running on Mondays and seemed to be the only pump-out service in the area. He contacted CVA Grant to see if they could help provide guidance on pumping out government vessels since the pump-out boat was a government vessel. He stated they pumped out about 900 gallons per week. He

noted that about 30% of the anchored vessels were pumped out. He indicated that Snook Brite Marina provided a temporary dockage and should be installed by the end of the day. He asked for guidance regarding the public utilizing the water supply for the Mooring Field. The pump-out boat was running well, and they were trying to find a place to discharge the holdings. They were still removing debris and asked the community to notify them when they saw items to be removed. He described ongoing debris removal.

Harbormaster Gilchrist said they attended a training seminar with the Florida Bar Environmental and Land Use Law webinar. He recommended that the AAC read the 327 Florida Statutes laws and provided an example of what it was. He suggested they start pursuing the Anchor Limitation Area (ALA) law and go to the county to see how they can get their area designated. The designation would give them total control of the anchorage area.

Chris Nice, the Marine Operations Lieutenant from the Lee County Sheriff's Office, will attend the next meeting to answer questions.

Harbormaster Gilchrist stated that the boat ramps were still being assessed, FEMA was taking pictures for grant applications to remove debris and they were figuring out how to remove two boats in the Mooring Field. He explained how boaters can request pump-outs.

B. Strategic Action Plan – not addressed.

C. Marketing the MMF

AAC Member Nash distributed and described information concerning marketing the Mooring Field. The information included domain websites and sample Facebook names. AAC Member Lurie noted that the AAC discussed marketing a few years ago and decided to keep everything under the Town's website. He indicated that they could provide links to other sources. Harbormaster Gilchrist explained how the staff was working on marketing, which included talking to local businesses for offers or promotions to boaters. Discussion was held regarding how to get the information to boaters who were traveling. AAC Member Hockett suggested having a separate meeting or subcommittee for marketing ideas. Harbormaster Gilchrist brought up having a workshop with the chamber and the Town's communications coordinator. AAC Member King commented on having a high-level workshop to understand what the Town was doing. Liaison Atterholt stated that Communications Coordinator Jenny Dexter no longer worked for the Town. He supported inviting the new person to an AAC meeting to understand what the AAC did. AAC Members Nash, King and Hockett agreed to be part of the proposed subcommittee.

AAC Member Nash referred to his handout and discussed how independent water taxi services were provided in Annapolis. He clarified that the water taxi would be a point-to-point service and explained how it could work in the Mooring Field. Liaison Atterholt offered to invite the water ferry people to speak at an AAC meeting. AAC Member Nash volunteered to participate in a subcommittee on water taxis.

IX. Member Items and Staff Report

AAC Member Hockett questioned financing maintenance in the Mooring Field and Liaison Atterholt suggested that Finance Director Joe Onzick attend the next meeting.

AAC Member Lawwill felt that the finance department did not have the correct software to isolate the costs for the Mooring Field.

AAC Member King brought up discussing canal dredging and Liaison Atterholt replied that the Town council would discuss it at an M&P.

No items from other members.

X. Public Comment – no public comment.

XI. Set Next Meeting Agenda – January 17, 2024

XII. Adjournment

MOTION: AAC Member Lurie moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by AAC Member Lawwill.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Adopted January 17, 2024 with/without changes. Motion by Lurie
(DATE)

Vote: 7-0 Signature: D.H. Eukmann

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