

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Charlotte County Administration Center, Room 119

**Minutes**  
**September 11, 2008**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Capt. Ron Blago, Chair  
Len Harris, Vice Chair  
Gerald Meckenberg, Secretary  
Richard Anderson  
Capt. Jay Buckley  
John Homer Fleming  
Tom Hamilton  
Richard Johnson  
William Kumm  
Robert Leonard  
Skip Mansfield  
Fred Mesler  
Raymond Rose  
David Rubin  
Scott Schermerhorn  
Mel Staudmyer

**MEMBERS EXCUSED**

William Bergman  
Capt. Tim Lynch  
Paul Marcuzzo  
Maurice Sabourin  
Anthony Tonz

**STAFF**

Commissioner Tom Moore  
Bob Hebert, Administration  
Tara Musselman, Public Works  
Derek Rooney, County Attorney  
Elizabeth Staugler, Sea Grant Agent  
Jane Starr, Recording Secretary

**GUESTS**

Grace Amodeo, MWWAC  
Richard Benson, City of Punta Gorda  
Randy Brodersen, City of Punta Gorda  
Mary McMurray, DEP/CHAP  
Robert Burney

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

**Chair Blago** called the September 11, 2008, **Marine Advisory Committee** to order at 9:30a.m., noting there was a quorum present. A Moment of Silence was observed to honor the anniversary of September 11, 2001.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Chair Blago** led the members and audience in reciting The Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by **Richard Anderson** and seconded by **David Rubin** to accept the June 12, 2008, Marine Advisory Committee minutes as written. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

**IV. REGULAR BUSINESS**

**Tara Musselman** provided updates and answered questions regarding the following projects: Ackerman Waterway, Alligator Creek, Buena Vista Area Waterways, Edgewater North, Gulf Cove Waterways, Harbour Heights, Hayward Canals, Manchester Waterway, Northwest Port Charlotte, Peace River Shores, Pirate Harbor, Southbridge Waterway, South Gulf Cove, and Suncoast Waterway.

**Chair Blago** inquired about concerns of overgrowth in the Buck Creek and Manchester Waterways. **Bob Hebert** advised of two issues presently being reviewed by the County Attorney's office and stated more information will be forthcoming.

**V. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**Commissioner Moore** announced he is attending for Commissioner D'Aprile and will be providing him with a summary of today's meeting.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

*Vacancies/Members-at-Large*

**Chair Blago** stated that all vacant positions on the Committee have been filled. **Scott Schermerhorn** was introduced as the newest member and was invited to address the Committee. **Gerald Meckenberg** introduced Homer Fleming and advised his position was approved by the Commission during the summer hiatus.

*Budget Discussion*

**Bob Hebert** provided an update on recommendations from the Marine Advisory Committee and stated WCIND has accepted the wording and intent of the projects and is scheduled to be heard before the Board on September 23, 2008, as submitted. It is his feeling that further funds will not be available after allocations; however this will be identified following the Budget Adoption. **Mr. Hebert** further advised of two projects that could be brought back to the Committee and added that WCIND has stated that, starting next year, they do not anticipate authorizing vessel purchases of any type.

*Joint Advisory Board Meeting - Update*

**Chair Blago** provided an overview of the Joint Advisory Board Meeting held on June 17, 2008, at the Port Charlotte Beach Recreation Center. **Bob Leonard** stated Laura Kleiss Hoelt presented MAC's recommendation to the Commissioners accurately and the Wisteria Boat Ramp has been closed. **Chair Blago** provided additional information on the boat ramp and the reasons behind the decision to close it. He felt the meeting was very beneficial and feels similar meetings will be held in the future. **Bob Leonard** answered questions concerning issues in Pirate Harbor and confirmed there will be no change to the park hours at the Beach Complex.

*Fishermen's Village Support Letter*

**Chair Blago** led a discussion regarding the request for a letter of recommendation to Fishermen's Village supporting the continuation of their Clean Marina Program and the issue of allocating public funds to private enterprises. Additional information was provided by a representative of the City of Punta Gorda. **Bob Hebert** added comments regarding funding and stated he did not see the County providing tax-based money to a private enterprise unless it was for the general public good.

**ACTION: Dave Rubin made a motion that the Committee offer a letter of support for the Fishermen's Village organization to support this green endeavor of replacing their pilot program of 29 CCA pilings with fiberglass and to keep the Marine Advisory Committee informed of the results of the replacement. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous. Chair Blago confirmed he will write a letter in this regard.**

*Laishley Park City/County Parking Permits*

In Mr. Bergman's absence, **Chair Blago** provided an overview of the issue. **Randy Broderson** stated the original motion to charge parking at boat ramps passed, however it failed at the second hearing and is now a moot issue. There will not be any charge for parking.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

*Update on Abandoned Vessels*

**Bob Hebert** advised the program has depleted their funds for this fiscal year and will continue next year when more funding is available.

*Pole and Troll*

**Chair Blago** stated that, due to the recent elections and the expected change in leadership, he has decided to wait until the seat has reorganized before writing a letter to the Commission addressing the work that has been done on Pole and Troll. **Bob Leonard** provided an update on the background of the issue and the progress made to date. He stated, at this time, he does not feel it is in Committee's best interest to continue this pursuit and recommended the Pole and Troll issue be tabled for a future meeting. **Chair Blago** agreed and stated he will write a letter to members reminding them of the work that has been done.

**ACTION: A motion was presented by Dick Anderson and seconded by Dave Rubin to withdraw the original motion to write a letter to the BCC outlining the Pole and Troll. Following a discussion, the vote passed unanimously.**

*Code Compliance Issue*

**Bob Leonard** gave an update on the dock in Pirate Harbor and stated the owner was able to renew his permit despite what was stated by BCS. He would like to see the dock removed as hazardous navigation and will be revisiting this issue with Vince LaPorta. The current permit is good until the first of the year.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Elizabeth Staugler** gave an update on the artificial reef project located west of Stump Pass and advised it was a very successful endeavor. The exact location of the reef can be found online and directions to the site were provided. She further stated that FWC has agreed to fund this entire project with no expense to WCIND.

**Ms. Staugler** provided information on upcoming Master Naturalist classes and stated there will be sponsorships available for two deserving students. **Chair Blago** said he supports the Artificial Reef Program and thanked Ms. Staugler for obtaining additional funding from FWC. He spoke briefly on the Master Naturalist Program stating he has completed the program and feels it is a very worthwhile venture.

**IX. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**Homer Fleming** asked if there was any follow-up information to the upcoming Parks and Recreation Field Trip. **Chair Blago** provided additional information and stated all members are invited to participate.

**Chair Blago** advised members of his fulltime employment with Sarasota County.

**Scott Schermerhorn** called attention to an article in the current edition of Water Life Magazine saying he works with several of the key individuals involved with the Gulf of Mexico project and would be happy to answer any additional questions members may have. **Chair Blago** commented that Mr. Schermerhorn is a member of the Health Department and will be an asset to the Committee regarding Red Tide and other health related issues.

**Bob Leonard** inquired how citizens are made aware of the procedures for submitting applications for funding. **Bob Hebert** responded that applications can be accessed directly from the County website and can also be provided upon request. He confirmed the deadline has already passed to submit requests for the next fiscal year, but stated the cycle will begin again in January for the following year. **Chair Blago** reminded members they are a source of reference and information to the clubs and organizations they represent.

**X. NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2008, at 9:30a.m., in room 119.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting **ADJOURNED** at 10:40a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jane Starr*

Jane Starr, Recording Secretary