

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

**Minutes**  
**January 14, 2010**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Capt. Ron Blago, Chair  
Len Harris, Vice Chair  
Gerald Meckenberg, Secretary  
Richard Anderson  
William Bergman  
Capt. Jay Buckley  
Keith Buechel  
Douglas Donovan  
John Homer Fleming  
Richard Johnson  
William Kumm  
Robert Leonard  
Capt. Tim Lynch  
Skip Mansfield  
Fred Mesler  
Capt. Maurice Sabourin  
Raymond Rose  
Scott Schermerhorn

**STAFF**

Commissioner Bob Starr  
Tara Musselman, Public Works  
Andy Stevens, Env. & Ext. Services  
Elizabeth Staugler, Env. & Ext. Services  
Roger DeBruler, Env. & Est. Services  
Jane Starr, Recording Secretary

**GUESTS**

Capt. Steve Samuels  
Mike Conlon, PCYC  
Bill Dixon, PGSC  
Cody Vaughan-Birch  
Jo Mogle, Florida Boating Advisory Council

**MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Tom Hamilton  
Mel Staudmyer  
Anthony Tonz

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**  
**Chair Blago** called the January 14, 2010, **Marine Advisory Committee** meeting to order at 9:30a.m. noting there was a quorum present.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Chair Blago** offered opening remarks and led the members and audience in reciting The Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
A motion was presented by **John Homer Fleming** and seconded by **Capt. Jay Buckley** to accept the December 10, 2009 Marine Advisory Committee minutes as written. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

These minutes were approved by the Marine Advisory Committee on February 11, 2010

*DUE TO MECHANICAL FAILURE OF THE RECORDING EQUIPMENT AND THE INABILITY TO RECORD THE MEETING,  
THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PREPARED SOLEY FROM NOTES.*

**VI. REGULAR BUSINESS**

*MSBU Update*

**Tara Musselman** provided updates and answered questions regarding the following projects: Alligator Creek, Buena Vista Area Waterways, Harbour Heights, Hayward Canals, Manchester Waterway, Northwest Port Charlotte, Southbridge Waterway, South Gulf Cove, Suncoast Waterway, and Stump Pass.

**V. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

**Commissioner Starr** addressed the Committee and offered brief comments.

**Chair Blago** announced there would be a slight change in the order of the agenda to accommodate guests.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

*Jo Mogle – Florida Boating Advisory Council*

**Ms. Mogle** introduced herself and provided members with information on her background as well as her focus on the Committee. She stated she is here to listen to the Committee's concerns and act as a liaison for the Florida Boating Advisory Council. **Chair Blago** commented that he would like to see funding for Derelict Boat Program aspects addressed by the Council and also stated concern regarding mooring situations within the County. **Ms. Mogle** addressed the issue and stated she would bring this up at the next Council meeting.

**Capt. Buckley** provided an update on the City of Punta Gorda. **Vice-Chair Harris** mentioned safety statistics regarding kayaking and made known that this was a safety issue in addition to a funding issue. **Ms. Mogle** added additional comments and said the main concern was due to a lack of non-motorized vessel registration as there is no way to identify ownership when abandoned kayaks are found. Until this is corrected, she added, State Legislation will be tough to pass. **Vice-Chair Harris** commented further and **Ms. Mogle** asked for the Committee to comment on their views regarding non-registered canoes and kayaks. A poll was taken and a show of hands indicated thirteen (13) members for registration and two (2) against.

**Commissioner Starr** remarked that he felt canoes and kayaks would be required to be registered eventually and said it was his hope that the resulting funds would remain within the County. He added that if it becomes a Legislative issue, he would be lobbying in this regard. **Ms. Mogle** explained further how the State makes this type of determination. **Vice-Chair Harris** reiterated **Commissioner Starr's** comments and **Ms. Mogle** said she did not disagree but felt this would most likely be decided at a State level.

**Chair Blago** thanked **Ms. Mogle** for attending today's meeting and Ms. Mogle requested her email, [jomogle@cs.com](mailto:jomogle@cs.com), to be entered into the minutes.

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Next, **Chair Blago** introduced **Elizabeth Staugler** who presented members with a handout and provided an update on upcoming events through the Florida Sea Grant network and other ongoing projects. **Chair Blago** asked **Ms. Staugler** if she had any information regarding fish kills resulting from the recent cold front. **Bob Leonard** provided information regarding Snook and other species and said the kill amount would be worse farther north. **Chair Blago** commented on dead Pompano fish that were collected by Commercial Fishermen.

**Mr. Leonard** asked **Ms. Staugler** about abandoned vessels located in the back of foreclosed homes. **Roger DeBruler** confirmed they have responded to three (3) reported vessels of this nature. **Mr. DeBruler** made known that a webpage is now available for abandoned vessels on the County website which will help provide education to the public, highlight the responsibilities of boat owners, and provide updates of ongoing projects.

*(Commissioner Starr left meeting at 10:11am)*

#### *Budget Update*

**Andy Stevens** provided an update on account reconciliations and stated he has received one (1) CNIF application as of today. **Tara Musselman** provided members with a copy of the application. **Mr. Stevens** spoke further on abandoned vessels and the requirements for funding and advised of a request for removal of debris by Public Works. Responding to a question by **Chair Blago**, **Mr. DeBruler** provided the correct definition of navigational waters and confirmed that more boats were abandoned in navigational waters than in non-navigable waters. **Ms. Musselman** provided additional information regarding the request for CNIF funds to remove debris. **Mr. Stevens** confirmed funding is available for this project.

***ACTION: A motion was presented by Bob Leonard to approve a \$50,000.00 expenditure to Public Works for the removal of debris impeding navigation. The motion was seconded by Maurice Sabourin. Following a discussion, Bob Leonard amended the motion to approve \$50,000.00 to Public Works for removal of debris and to have a specific time limit until September 30, 2010 until which time it would cease and need to be reapplied. A vote was taken and the motion carried 14 to 1.***

#### *Jim Kipp – DEP*

**Chair Blago** announced that Mr. Kipp would be presenting at the next meeting.

**Chair Blago** advised Pre-agenda meetings take place one (1) week prior to the regular advisory meetings and agenda items are discussed at that time.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### *Palm Island Speed Zone Update*

**Chair Blago** suggested this be removed from future agendas and be re-addressed only if needed. **Vice-Chair Harris** voiced his concerns regarding safety issues. **Capt. Tim Lynch** added additional comments and felt further study needs to take place. **Chair Blago** said he would like to see ferry officers or anyone else wishing for a no wake zone to address the Committee. **Capt. Lynch** confirmed he would speak further with the Palm Island Transit to see if they are interested in pursuing the issue. **Mr. Leonard** requested they be asked to put together a list of close calls and that they keep a log of any future incidents to provide physical documentation as to how severe the problem is. **Vice-Chair Harris** commented that the Corps of Engineers was not able to do a survey in the past due to the heavy flow traffic.

### *Stump Pass Delay*

Nothing further was discussed.

## **VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### *Membership Appointments*

**Gerald Meckenberg** advised of three membership vacancies and the candidates who have applied for the positions. He asked delegates to individually come forward and introduce themselves before a vote is taken.

**Mike Conlon**, representing the Port Charlotte Yacht Club as a replacement for Keith Buechel, introduced himself and provided information on his background and experience.

**Chair Blago** provided additional information on the vacancies and the requirements for MAC memberships.

**Bill Dixon**, representing the Punta Gorda Sailing Club as a replacement for Skip Mansfield, introduced himself and provided information on his background and experience.

**Chair Blago** pointed out that **Mr. Dixon** was previously a member of MAC in the past and **Mr. Dixon** addressed members' questions and comments.

**Mr. Meckenberg** requested that the candidates leave the room while members vote.

***ACTION: Bob Leonard made a motion to accept the candidates as put forth by their organizations and recommend Mike Conlon and Bill Dixon as members of the Marine Advisory Committee replacing Keith Buechel and Skip Mansfield. Capt. Jay Buckley seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.***

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**Mr. Conlon** and **Mr. Dixon** returned and were welcomed by the Committee. **Mr. Meckenberg** reminded candidates that appointments are not official until approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

**Mr. Meckenberg** advised the next part of the meeting would address the Member-at-Large vacancy. He confirmed two of the three candidates were present to address the Committee.

**Capt. Steve Samuels** introduced himself and provided information on his background and experience. **Bill Bergman** explained the guidelines for MAC membership and **Capt. Samuels** addressed additional questions.

**Cody Vaughan-Birch** introduced himself and provided information on his background and experience.

**Chair Blago** made known that both candidates are well qualified and expressed his regret that there was only one vacancy. He reiterated that the Committee would only be making a recommendation and the final decision will be made by the Board of County Commissioners. **Mr. Meckenberg** agreed with **Chair Blago** and said he hopes that whoever is not selected today would continue to stay current on MAC issues. **Mr. Meckenberg** also provided information on the third candidate, Larry Todd.

**Mr. Meckenberg** announced the vote would take place by secret ballot and distributed ballot forms to members. The candidates were asked to leave the room for the duration of the vote.

**Chair Blago** opened the floor for discussion and was reminded discussion can be heard throughout the building via the audio system. **Chair Blago** made know that, as Chairman, he would only vote in case of a tie. Following discussion, ballots were submitted and **Chair Blago** announced that **Mr. Vaughan-Birch** received the majority of the votes. The candidates were asked to return to the meeting and were told the results of the vote. **Mr. Meckenberg** congratulated **Mr. Vaughn-Birch** and advised **Mr. Samuels** that his application would be kept on file for future vacancies.

#### **X. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**Jay Buckley** provided an update on the Day Docks and Mooring Field approval and addressed members' questions and comments.

**Bob Leonard** provided comments and views regarding the Parks and Recreation meeting he recently attended. **Chair Blago** said he felt it important that a member from the Committee attend their meetings and provide regular updates. **Chair Blago** asked for a volunteer to consider attending the next meeting and asked that the Recording Secretary be contacted to provide additional information.

**Ms. Mogle** asked the Committee about the ethanol issue mentioned in the Letters to the

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Editor section of today's Sun-Herald newspaper. **Len Harris** and **Chair Blago** responded. **Ms. Mogle** advised she would keep the Committee informed if she obtains additional information.

**XI. NEXT MEETING**

The next Pre-Agenda Meeting will be held on February 4, 2010, at 9:30a.m., Room B-207. The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2010, at 9:30a.m., in Room B-106.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting **ADJOURNED** at 11:34a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jane Starr*

Jane Starr, Recording Secretary

/jms