

**MARINE COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Monday, February 4, 2019 – 9:30 a.m.**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Robert Snyder, Vice Chairman, Daniel Thomas Members: Brian Cunningham, Clinton Lanier, Alternate Member #1, Bill Johnson, and Alternate Member #2 Ben Trautman **Also Present:** Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Excused Absence:** William Walker

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Snyder called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) November 5, 2018**

**Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the November 5, 2018 Marine Commission minutes. Mr. Lanier seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Update on the Vero Beach Rowing Club**

Mr. Snyder reported that the Vero Beach Rowing Club received approval from the City Council to start with the construction of their building. They are still a little underfunded, but they believe they will be able to raise the money.

Mr. Thomas asked if the Rowing Club is waiting for the rest of the funding before they break ground on their building. Mr. Snyder said from what he understands is that they are about \$200,000 short, but they don't anticipate any problems raising the money. They are currently waiting on the permits to clear.

**B) Update on the Status of the Marina**

This item was discussed under 5-A).

**C) Update on the Unidentified Objects in the Water near the Marina**

Mr. Snyder stated that he was out there yesterday and the posts are still there along with the boat across the river.

Mr. Cunningham reported that there is another boat located south of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, which went aground on an island a few weeks ago and it is now floating back. It has one (1) or two (2) dinghies tendered to it, so someone is definitely living aboard the boat. He imagines they probably have a pump out issue there.

Mr. Johnson stated that he has been over near the boat a couple of times, but he has never seen anyone on board. There used to be just one (1) dinghy tendered to it, but now there are two (2).

Mr. Thomas said he is curious about the pump out issue. A couple of months ago Mr. Grabenbauer said that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and other people periodically check on these boats, so he hopes they are still doing that. He sometimes goes out on the Sheriff's boat and they continue to see the same boats all the time.

Mr. Cunningham stated that they now have working pump out facilities on both the dock and on the boat, so there should be no excuses for not having a pump out.

Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, asked the Commission members if they get the weekly reports on the number of pump outs. The Commission members replied yes.

Mr. Snyder commented that he might reach out to the Coast Guard about these boats to see if there is anything they can do, or put some pressure on them.

Mr. Lanier asked if the City, County, Sheriff, or the Police have a boat and the authority to inspect these vessels. Mr. O'Connor replied that the City has a Police boat, but not the authority to enforce the maritime laws. He believes that falls under the State.

Mr. Keith Drewett, Vero Beach resident, said based on the reading he has done he believes there is an issue of probable cause. The Coast Guard can board a boat without probable cause to do an inspection, but some of the State and local agencies need probable cause. Someone needs to be keeping records of the pump outs. He said if there are no records of pump outs over a three (3) month time and people are living aboard a vessel in the back cove or the south anchorage that would be their probable cause.

Mr. Cunningham said he wonders if records are kept of the boat name or the boat owner's name at every pump out. Mr. Drewett replied that he does not know. Mr. Cunningham said he doubts it, so that would negate them from enforcing it.

Mr. Drewett said that a new Lagoon group is forming and they will have an Enforcement Subcommittee that he applied to join, so maybe that will be an avenue for information.

Mr. Trautman stated that he was a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Officer and it is correct that the Coast Guard can board these vessels if they are on a navigable channel. They can go on board and do a safety check, make sure their overflow valves are turned off, etc.

Mr. Drewett asked if anyone has enlisted the Coast Guard north of the inlet. Mr. Johnson said not the patrol boat. They usually just pass by doing about 50 mph. Mr. Trautman said that it is worth reporting to the Coast Guard.

## **D) Recap of the Christmas Boat Parade**

Mr. Cunningham reported that Mother Nature was on their side and they had 26 boats participate. They had a great turn out, good press coverage, and it was certainly a success. He has never seen Young Park so packed and the new Cole Coppola dock gave them another viewing point. The newly repaired dock at Royal Palm Pointe was filled and Anna Valencia with The Vero Insider did a live radio show from there. He has been at other events recently and people are still making comments about the parade.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A) Annual Report**

Mr. Snyder stated that each member received a copy of the Annual Report. He asked if anyone had any comments on it.

Mr. Trautman said that he was looking at the number of years that the members have been on the Commission and it shows their commitment. He asked what is the process for moving people through the Commission. When a Commission members term ends can the member indicate they want to continue, or is the position advertised to the public. Mr. O'Connor replied that any vacant positions are advertised and the City Council will appoint applicants to fill those openings. However, if a member's term is up and the individual wants to continue to stay on the Board then the City Council will typically grant their request. Sometimes people move away and positions become available, so the City Council will typically move alternate members up into permanent positions when they become available.

The Senior Administrative Assistant asked the Marine Commission if they would like to make a motion to accept the annual report if there are no changes being made.

Mr. Cunningham commented that the annual report was a nice basic report, but hopefully with the new Marina Director the report for next year will be more detailed.

**Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the annual report and submit it to the City Council. Mr. Lanier seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. O'Connor stated that he would like to bring the Commission up to date on the hiring of a new Marina Manager. He reported that they have offered the position to Mr. Sean Collins, who has over 20 years experience in maritime and marine work. Mr. Collins is presently employed with the City of Naples, Florida at their docks until February 11, 2019. A couple of things that stood out and they liked was that Naples redid their facilities in 2017 and Mr. Collins was part of the entire restoration of their docks and maintaining the work afterwards. Another positive point is that Mr. Collins is working for a City, so he will come to Vero Beach knowing some of the processes that a local Government has to follow. His background is strong and they think his personality and "can do" attitude will carry through with some of the issues the City will have in the redevelopment of the Marina. They will be going to the City Council tomorrow recommending that they pay off the Marina debt. The Finance Commission already approved it and if the City Council agrees with their recommendation they will have some capital to start reinvesting in the Marina. Mr. Collins seems to be able to get the job done, so hopefully that is

what he will bring to the City. Mr. Collins will start on February 11, 2019, but his first day at the Marina will be on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Snyder asked if Mr. Collins stated why he is leaving Naples. Mr. O'Connor explained that Mr. Collins and his wife have visited Vero Beach before, they really like the atmosphere of this area, and they are ready to leave the hassle of living in South Florida. They interviewed three (3) very good applicants and two (2) of them were very close candidates. He said Mr. Collins did a lot research on the Vero Beach Marina and he came prepared for the interview, which was outstanding. An overriding aspect of Mr. Collins was his attitude, which was positive and upbeat. He was the Dock Master and not the Harbor Master in Naples, so this will be a step up for him.

Mr. Cunningham asked if Mr. Grabenbauer's last day will be February 23, 2019. Mr. O'Connor said he believes that is correct, so he and the new Marina Director will have about 10 days to work together.

Mr. Thomas asked if there is anything planned to thank Mr. Grabenbauer for his years of service.

Mr. O'Connor replied that he was not aware of anything being planned. Typically they would have something, so if the Marine Commission would like to use the Council Chambers for a couple of hours to allow people to stop in to visit with Mr. Grabenbauer that would be fine by him.

Mr. Thomas suggested that they might be able to do it at the Marina. Mr. O'Connor replied that might not be a bad idea, since Mr. Collins will be there it would give Mr. Grabenbauer the opportunity to introduce him.

Mr. Snyder asked if the Marine Commission should do something for Mr. Grabenbauer. Mr. Trautman asked if there would be a budget for what they are talking about. Mr. O'Connor stated they could put something together and someone can give him a budget or figure. Mr. Snyder asked if there is a good time to do this. Mr. O'Connor replied that Friday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> might be a good day.

Mr. Johnson suggested having a plaque made with a retirement message and it could also include the signatures of all the Commission members. A nice plaque shouldn't cost more than about \$50.00. Mr. Thomas suggested they have the Vero Beach Marina logo etched on it as well. Mr. Cunningham said that Mr. Grabenbauer will really appreciate it. Mr. Snyder said he will get with the City Clerk's office to get the wording for the plaque and he will check on the price. He said once the paper is prepared with the wording the Commission members can stop by the City Clerk's office and sign it. He will pick it up and take it to have it made.

Mr. Drewett explained that he made a couple of Power Point presentations to the City Council, which is the beginning of a strategic and operating plan for the Marina. It is the only plan on the table right now and it is a map of how to move forward. If the Marine Commission members have any questions they can contact him. He stated that there will be a motion before the City Council tomorrow to retire the debt with the Marina for the south complex and the dry stack building. The Finance Commission unanimously passed a motion in favor of that. He is not sure

if the Marine Commission would be interested in entertaining a motion, but it would show their support and he believes it would be helpful.

**Mr. Cunningham made a motion to retire the Marina debt. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. O'Connor reported that the City has also been interviewing some engineering firms that will help them set out a master plan for the capital projects that will be needed for the Marina in anticipation of the debt being paid off. Mr. Monte Falls, Engineering Director, is heading it up and they have done some preliminary work and narrowed down what the focus will be if they bring a proposal to the City Council to award a contract. He is hoping that when Mr. Collins comes on board he will provide the support to move it forward.

Mr. Trautman stated that the weekly updates they receive are great and they provide a lot of information. He asked if there is a project management calendar where they can see what the deadlines or expectations are for some of the smaller projects. Mr. O'Connor replied that they do not have that right now, but that is an area they would hope to shore up as they move forward.

Mr. Cunningham stated that with a new Harbor Master coming in this would be the time to implement it, so it is done right from the start. There should be a timeline that is reported on at the Marine Commission meetings on a quarterly basis, or forwarded to the City Council so it can be commented on.

Mr. Trautman said he believes it would be the project manager that would list the projects, post what is taking place, and when items have been completed.

Mr. Cunningham asked who would put this tracking in to play and keep them updated. Mr. O'Connor replied that the Marina Manager will be the one to set out the timetable and the schedule for what projects are taking place. He is hoping that the Marine Commission will hold a Special Call meeting with Mr. Collins after he has been here for a couple of weeks, so they can discuss their expectations.

The Commission members set a Special Call meeting for Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers to meet with Mr. Collins.

## **6. MARINA DIRECTOR'S MATTERS**

### **A) Update on the Marina Repairs**

Mr. Lanier reported that Mr. Grabenbauer sent him a text message to let the Commission know that he is running the office this morning, so he cannot make it to the meeting. He stated that the restroom project is almost finished and he will be sending out an update.

Mr. Trautman reported that he has been in touch with Mr. Arthur Economy, Vero Beach resident. He said that Mr. Economy wants to start some sort of a file for the Commission and the public on what projects have been done at the Marina. He visited the Planning office and they have a huge file of projects dating back to the 1970's. He was hoping the Mr. Economy would be at the meeting today, so they could find out what exactly he is looking for. Based on Mr.

Economy's e-mail it sounds like he wants some sort of timeline on how the Marina has grown over the years. He thought he could put something together and present it to the Marine Commission at the next regular meeting.

Mr. Cunningham said Mr. Grabenbauer would be the best person to put something like that together. Mr. Trautman replied that he reached out to Mr. Grabenbauer and he gave him a bullet list of items, but no details.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there has been any more discussion about the parking issues in the east parking lot. How are they going to police people leaving their trailers and campers there.

Mr. O'Connor said the Police Department can issue citations, but they need to be made aware of what vehicles or trailers are authorized to be there.

Mr. Cunningham said he does not believe there has ever been any type of check in procedures for people who want to leave their vehicle or trailer there while they go out on their boat. Mr. O'Connor stated this is something that will create structure. There will be some pushback by the public, because people who use the Marina on a regular basis have been used to that flexibility. He said that when Naples redid their facilities they set up new rules and regulations and they are well enforced. Mr. Cunningham agrees that there might be some push back, but other people will feel like there is finally some sort of structure, which is a good thing.

Mr. Snyder said the community should understand that there will be some changes with a new Maria Director. Everything being done by the City Council and the Marine Commission is so that they can improve the Marina.

Mr. Thomas said Mr. Collins needs to be informed that the Marina parking lot is shared with the Yacht Club. Mr. O'Connor replied that Mr. Collins has been informed about that parking relationship. He said Mr. Grabenbauer always had an open line of communication with the Yacht Club and he hopes that will continue with Mr. Collins. Mr. Drewett said that the Yacht Club will extend the same privileges to the new Marina Director as they had with Mr. Grabenbauer.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that they create a collective list of questions or recommendations to discuss with Mr. Collins at the Special Call meeting. They can submit them to the City Clerk's office to be placed on the agenda. Mr. O'Connor said that is an excellent suggestion. Mr. Collins will be going through a transition with a new City Manager, so the Marine Commission might be his sounding board for a while.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

None

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Thomas stated that he visited the Royal Palm Pointe docks and they look really good. He asked if they plan on installing rails along the final part. Mr. O'Connor reported that new

railings were put up and there is a gate you have to go through to get to the end, but they left the final part open so boats can pull up to the dock.

Mr. Cunningham reported that areas of the St. Lucie River in Saint Lucie County have been shut down due to algae blooms and bacteria. They feel like the bacteria is from raw sewage or excessive pump outs.

Mr. O'Connor said he will give them the latest report on the beaches. He informed the Commission that there is only one (1) beach with a storm water discharge and that is at Sexton Plaza. Humiston Beach has an overflow discharge, but that would require them getting more than 11 inches of rain. South Beach does not have a discharge. He spoke with the Health Department a couple of times about the bacteria levels. He was informed that from time to time there will be bacteria in the Ocean and sometimes it will be high. Over the last seven (7) years since he has been here, this is the first time they had to close the beaches. There was a discharge at Sexton Plaza that day when they took the samples, but the levels were lower at Sexton than at South Beach, which does not have a discharge. They don't know where the bacteria comes from, but they just need to be aware of it.

Mr. Lanier asked if there are any recent reports on the water quality of the river. Mr. O'Connor replied that he has not seen any recently. He said a water quality test was done after the sewage leak and the report showed that the water was better now than before the spill. Mr. Lanier asked if any water testing has been done where the Youth Sailing Foundation sails. Mr. O'Connor replied no, because they do not have any discharge coming from that facility.

Mr. Johnson explained that he introduced a young man to Mr. Grabenbauer who completed his Eagle Scout project. The project he chose was to rebuild some of the Kayak racks at the Marina. He raised the money to purchase the supplies and he completed the work. Mr. Snyder asked which racks were they, because there are racks on the north and south ends of the property. Mr. Johnson replied that he did the ones on the north side. There were eight (8) to 10 racks and they are all full. He spent 150 man-hours getting them done and they turned out great. There are many other projects that can be accomplished by these young men and there is no cost to the City.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) Set Date for Next Marine Commission Meeting**

The next tentative regular Marine Commission meeting was scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The Marine Commission meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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