

SPECIAL CALL MARINE COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, February 26, 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, William Walker, Alternate Member #1, Bill Johnson, and Alternate Member #2 Ben Trautman **Also Present:** Marina Director, Sean Collins and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Snyder called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Snyder stated that the purpose of this meeting is to introduce the Marine Commission to Mr. Sean Collins, Marina Director, and fill him in on things that have taken place over the past few years. He said the Marine Commission is here to help him in any way they can.

Mr. Thomas stated that there is a lot of history amongst the Marine Commission members. Most of them have been boating here for many years, so they can provide him with the history on what has happened in the past.

Mr. Walker suggested that Mr. Collins introduce himself and give them some information on his background.

Mr. Collins stated that he came here from the City of Naples, Florida where he worked at the City dock. Prior to that, he worked for a commercial boat salvage company with both Sea Tow and Tow Boat US. Before that he was the Dock Master for Rybovich Marina in West Palm Beach. Prior to that he worked for Loggerhead Marina, which is now Suntex Marina, and before that he was in New Jersey running high-speed commuter ferries. He was also a member of the Coastguard, so he has years of experience on the water.

A) Registering All Vehicles, Trailers, and Bikes Left on the Marina Property

Mr. Snyder said that an issue they have had for a while is people leaving vehicles, trailers, and bikes on the property. They would like to see these items registered, or have some type of documentation stating where they are located at the Marina and who they belong to.

Mr. Cunningham stated that a lot of these subjects were previously discussed with Mr. Tim Grabenbauer and they have been ongoing discussions. There are vehicles, trailers, and bikes that are being left, so they would like a way to monitor what is on the City Marina property. They would like to know who it belongs to, how long it is going to be there, and when it will be leaving. The kayaks also fall under this same category. Some of them look like they have not moved in a long time, so he wonders if they still have owners.

Mr. Collins explained that he has started drafting a form for the vehicles, trailers, kayaks, etc., which will coincide with new boats coming into the Marina. If they arrive with any accessory items like kayaks and bikes the quantity, make, model, color, etc. will be listed on their reservation information. He will issue plastic tags with serial numbers on them that will be zip tied to their items, which will correlate with their reservation to keep track of each owner's items.

B) Registering Kayaks and Storing them on Assigned Racks

This was discussed along with item 3-A).

C) Do Kayaks Owners Pay Rent

Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Collins if he knows how current the rent is on the kayak spaces. Mr. Collins replied that he does not know right now, but he is starting to go through some files and boxes at the Marina to try to identify that.

D) Can Any Unclaimed Bikes and Kayaks be Trashed or Recycled

Mr. Cunningham asked if someone abandons an old rusty boat trailer or bicycle is there any way to get it off the property. Mr. Collins replied that they will first try to identify who they belong to or ownership, but he has a plan for that going forward to keep it from happening.

E) Tracking Boat Pump Outs by Vessel Number or Owner

Mr. Snyder stated that one issue that bothers him is the number of boats in the River that are lived on and they never move. He would like to know if they are getting pumped out properly. He asked if there is a way they can track the pump outs with the boat and at the dock by the owner or the vessel. Mr. Collins said that currently when boats come to the dock for a pump out they are just marking it down, but not a boat number or anything. When they use the pump out boat they do list the vessel name, other pertinent information, and how much was pumped out.

Mr. Walker stated that Mr. Grabenbauer was supposedly putting a system into place that would track who was getting a pump out when they came in for fuel. Mr. Collins said that he saw some old records on that, but nothing current on the dock pump outs. This is something they will be putting together.

Mr. Cunningham said that they used to have a City Police boat, but now the County patrols the area by a variety of uniformed officers and volunteers. He asked if there was any way they could monitor the boats in the moorings using law enforcement. Mr. Collins said they would have to get with those agencies and the City Attorney to see if that would be possible.

Mr. Thomas stated that there are new organizations in town that are concerned about the water quality in the Lagoon. They have been questioning what the City is doing about the boats that have been sitting there for several months and if pump outs are being tracked. He told Mr. Collins that these groups will probably be in touch with him. He explained that he is the Training Sergeant for the Marine Volunteers with the Sheriff's office. They have approximately 14 men who volunteer and their job is to provide education. The volunteers do not have any law

enforcement duties, but they could be the eyes and ears for things around the Marina since they are on the water every day and go by the Marina and into the dinghy dock. These men are always looking for jobs to do, so if the Marina needs their assistance they are available.

Mr. Walker asked if they have a mooring field at the Naples Marina. Mr. Collins replied yes. They have 12 mooring balls that are divided into two areas. One (1) field is north of the Naples Yacht Club docks and the other one (1) is on the south side. It is strictly transient docking with a maximum of four (4) days. All vessels wanting to stay had to come to the fuel dock first to be pumped out. If they had a Y valve then a tag with a serial number was attached to it and that number was listed on their registration form.

Mr. Walker stated that there are areas outside of the City mooring field where people anchor, but he is not sure if they have any control over them. He asked if Naples had this same issue.

Mr. Collins stated that in Naples there is a small mooring area near the City boat ramp that attracts some less than desirable boats, because it was free anchorage. When he left there were a couple of boats that had people staying on them, but it was not part of the Marinas scope of work to watch after them. Even when the local Police were notified they would push it off onto the Sheriff and the Sheriff would turn it over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation, so it was always a revolving circle and no one wanted to be responsible for them.

Mr. Thomas explained that the other organization he is involved with is the Power Squadron and one (1) thing they do is offer free vessel safety checks. He said he would like Mr. Collins to push or promote that service. They check the Y valves to make sure they are fastened correctly.

F) Dry Stack Building and Hurricanes

Mr. Thomas stated that a while back they talked about refurbishing the dry stack building and how much it would cost. Mr. Collins replied that it would not be feasible to refurbish the current building. The doors have been missing for years and the doorframes are rusting and rotting away. He said that building is about 50 years old.

G) Plans to Ensure Sea Worthiness of the Vessels at the Moorings, the Dry Storage, in Slips, and on the Kayak Storage Racks

Mr. Trautman said that there have been some concerns about the long-term tenants and the sea worthiness of their vessels. He asked Mr. Collins if the City had to move any of these boats would that be possible. Mr. Collins replied that there are a couple of boats at the Marina that are questionable, so he will be contacting the owners. Some boats have some loose gear on top that needs to be secured, because they do not want the lagoon littered with items if we get some strong winds.

Mr. Trautman said that he knows that different Marinas have different strategies to try to prevent boats from staying idle for too long. Some have rules stipulating that a vessel must leave the dock for a minimum of 24 hours at least once a year. Mr. Collins said that after working in both private and public Marinas he suggests they get with the City Attorney to see where their boundaries are.

H) What Plans are in Place to Upgrade the Facilities and Grounds

Mr. Collins stated that there is a lot of work to be done and they have started that process by having Coastal Tech do an Engineering Survey with ultimately a Master Plan in mind. They will do a walkthrough of the whole facility to determine what upgrades they need, what are considered emergency repairs, and weigh their options within the budget. They will need to decide if they should make repairs or shut down sections and rebuild certain docks or the entire place as a whole.

Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Collins if he has met with the Engineering firm yet. Mr. Collins replied yes. They had a meeting with them last week.

Mr. Trautman said as they select their contractor and the jobs are progressing he would like to see the contractor provide them with a report or spreadsheet showing the anticipated deadlines and where they are on the progress of the projects. He finds this information very helpful.

Mr. Walker asked Mr. Collins if Mr. Grabenbauer went over the weekly report he used to put out listing any major happenings, the progress of work being done, etc. Mr. Collins replied that he did not see it, but they discussed it.

Mr. Cunningham said that perhaps the Power Squadron could check on the sea worthiness of vessels in the moorings as part of their inspections. It would be a good opportunity to see if their valves are properly close, if there are barnacles growing on the boat, or the bilge pump is running. Mr. Thomas said the only problem is that an inspection needs to be requested by the owner. Mr. Collins replied that he could send out notices and have a signup sheet at the Marina for those who are interested in participating. The Power Squadron could come out on a certain day or days and they can do the safety checks for everyone who signed up.

I) Expansion of the Dinghy Dock and additional Slips in the Adjacent Lagoon

Mr. Snyder said the Marine Commission previously discussed upgrades on the dinghy docks and the little dock in the Lagoon that is in pretty bad shape. Mr. Trautman mentioned that the E dock in the Lagoon is half under water. Mr. Collins reported that Wilco Marine Construction has been at the Marina for the past several days and has completed most of the work on those docks.

J) Expansion and/or Renovation of the Captain's Lounge and Building

This item was not discussed.

K) Introduction to the Vero Beach Power Squadron

Mr. Thomas reported that the Power Squadron has been here for about 55 years and they thrive on doing community service. Vessel safety checks and education are only a couple things they do, but during their history they have accomplished some very nice projects. They have about 250 members and they are always looking for ways to improve the community, which can involve manual labor.

L) Introduction to the Indian River County Sheriff's Marine Unit

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

M) Possibility of adding Electricity to the Picnic Shelters

Mr. Thomas stated that once a year the Marine Commission holds a meeting at a picnic pavilion at the Marina, so they can tour the property. The meetings need to be recorded using a tape recorder, but there is no power at the pavilion and they have to run a very long extension cord to the pavilion. He thinks by adding electric to the pavilions they could be put to better use by the community.

N) Is there an Adequate Number of City Marina Employees

Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Collins how he felt about the number of Marina employees. Mr. Collins replied that the staff is a little light. There is currently one (1) vacant part time position that he received some applications for, so he will be doing some interviews soon. In the future he will need a couple more employees. He does not know yet if he will need temporary employees just to get things cleaned up, or if he will need to create permanent positions.

Mr. Johnson reported that a member of the Boy Scouts recently finished a project of refurbishing and rebuilding the kayak racks at the Marina. The scout came up with the project, raised the money, and the scouts provided all the labor. This young man just achieved the rank of Eagle Scout by completing this project. The Boy Scouts are a good group to turn to for help with projects.

Mr. Walker asked Mr. Collins if he met the tenant that lives in the apartment above the boaters lounge. Mr. Collins replied not yet.

Mr. Cunningham asked if everyone at the Marina is trained to work the forklift. Mr. Collins replied that there are three (3) people, including himself that can operate it. It is a very old lift and the parts are hard to come by. He was told that the last time the brakes were replaced they had to have parts made. Replacing the forklift is high on his list.

Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Collins if he thinks he will get the money he needs to make it a really nice Marina. Mr. Collins stated that having the debt paid off on the dry storage building makes a big difference. There will be a little money this year to get a new forklift and some other housekeeping items.

O) What can the Marine Commission do to help with the Transition and Future Projects

Mr. Snyder told Mr. Collins that the Marine Commission is here to help him and to let them know if he needs anything. Mr. Collins said that he appreciates that.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Greg Page, Vero Beach resident, said that he has been here less than a year and he knows Mr. Collins from the Naples Marina. He is happy that items he has been discussing with people are finally being addressed. He came here and lived on his boat at the Marina for about five (5) years until he bought a home. He knows that some of the boaters have pets and sometimes they can be noisy. Another issue is the private dinghies and sea-doo watercrafts that go flying

through. He understands that there is a Police or Sheriffs boat at Riverside, but he is not sure if it is being used. Mr. Thomas replied that there is a patrol boat that can be dispatched at a moments notice, but it is very rarely used. One boat is the Sheriffs boat and the other one (1) is the fire rescue boat. The firefighters are in the building and are ready to go when called. The Sheriffs boat will take a little longer to dispatch, but they do have several well-trained deputies that can be there rather quickly.

Mr. Page asked how can people contact the Sheriff to report issues. Mr. Thomas stated that there is a non-emergency number for the Sheriff's office, but the Sheriff's office prefers people to call 911, because their dispatchers are trained to handle all the calls and they can get them in touch with the correct people.

Mr. Page asked if the Sheriff patrols up and down the intercostal area. Mr. Snyder replied yes. He has seen the Sheriff's boat in the Lagoon and around the boat ramps.

Mr. Snyder suggested that if anyone sees a boat speeding, try to get a number off the vessel or a description, so the Sheriff can track down the right boat. Mr. Collins said he has caught a couple of boats speeding through and he met up with them at the dingy docks and he asked them to slow down.

Mr. Page asked if there is a newsletter that can be sent out informing the Public that Mr. Collins is the new Marina Director, what work is being done, etc. With this transition going on people would like to know what changes are being made. He asked Mr. Collins if he ever published anything like that with his past jobs. Mr. Collins said he has never published anything, but he has a draft copy of what Mr. Grabenbauer was sending out.

Mr. Page said he has done a lot of research on the planning and the financials of what is taking place at the Marina. He is comparing this information with the wonderful transformation of the Naples Marina. It took about a year of planning and about eight (8) months of construction. Naples took out a note of about \$7,000,000 to reconstruct all the docks, the buildings, etc. and their note payment is about \$320,000 a year. As the Vero Beach Marina is looked at he would like to see a broader scope of what the Marina could look like in seven (7) or eight (8) years instead of just doing incidental repairs. Naples is a great example of a long-term project and it was a big success. He said the Vero Beach Regional Airport also has a long-term plan and it is on the City website. It includes a long-term plan for future development. As a resident he would like to see a long-term Vision Plan for the Marina, so they have a target. He already researched some consultants who can do this type of planning and he provided those names to the City Manager.

Mr. Collins said in the long term he envisions floating docks all around, expanding the existing docks, and maybe expanding their submerged land lease. so they can accommodate larger boats. Over the years boats have gotten bigger and even in the dry storage building the maximum length is 22 feet.

Mrs. Phyllis Frey, Vero Beach Resident, welcomed Mr. Collins and thanked the Marine Commission members for their long-term dedication. She has been involved with many City issues since 2012. She and her husband have had three (3) boats at the Marina over the years, so she has a vested interest. She is happy how the financials have worked out and she thanked Mr. Keith Drewett for all of the work he did on the financial plan. She knows that the Marina needs

help and that it will get it. She believes they can strike a balance here because we live in a Park setting and that is what makes Vero Beach unique. She hopes they can make it a state of the art Marina with good marketing.

Mr. Arthur Economy, Vero Beach resident, stated that he is part of an Ad Hoc Committee that was formed to consult with the Marine Commission and they are here to help answer any questions. There are a lot of projects and ideas for the Marina, so they need to start now to work on a long-term plan and vision to allow for the projects to come together more cohesively. A Vision Plan will help identify the problems that the Marina faces right now. He believes this is the most important phase and it will develop a foundation for moving forward. A Vision Plan should address the maximum dock capacity, location of future structures, infrastructure, supported parking, traffic issues, the existing parking agreement with the Yacht Club, ecological needs of the lagoon, etc. The Marina should not only flourish, but it should go beyond their expectations. He has started contacting Florida Power & Light, Ocean Research & Conservation Association, Inc. (ORCA), the Dog Park, and the community. By reaching out to these groups they will get the best ideas to achieve a beautiful Marina that is boater and environmentally friendly.

5. MARINA DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Collins stated that he is really happy to be here and is looking forward to getting to know the Commission members.

Mr. Monte Falls, Public Works and Engineering Director, said that he is glad that Mr. Collins is here. He explained that the Coastal Tech proposal will be brought to the Marine Commission for their review before it is taken to the City Council. He believes the next couple of years are going to be very exciting. With the debt being paid off for the Marina it should allow them to be on the path that the Marine Commission and public wants.

6. MARINE COMMISSION MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mr. Walker stated that each of the Marine Commission members received a copy of a booklet he put together from all of his information since 2015 (on file in the City Clerk's office). The history and details go way back. Each member can review the booklet and it will be discussed at the next regular Marine Commission meeting. He will sit down with Mr. Collins when it is convenient for him to give him some the history of what they have done.

Mr. Walker gave a brief outline of what the Marine Commission has done and discussed on the three (3) City owned properties. There is a request for proposals pertaining to these properties, but he is not sure what the deadline is. Mr. Falls stated that he did not know that date either, but part of the proposal process will involve getting input from the public.

Mr. Walker said that the City will hire a Professional Planning Company and they will be able embellish on what input the public has already given.

Mrs. Frey asked if the booklet Mr. Walker is referring to is on line. Mr. Walker replied no. He said the Commission members just received it and have not had the chance to review it yet. They will discuss it at their May meeting.

Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. Walker for the information he put together. He said he remains frustrated, because over the past five (5) years they have been involved with extensive meetings with a huge number of people from the community giving their input on what they would like to see done with the property. All that information has kind of gone underground and now it is resurfacing again. He would like to request that they go back and look at all the information from before, because they had a lot of good suggestions from the public.

Mr. Falls said that he will make sure that the Planning Director gets the past information, so he can give those documents to the selected consultant to be reviewed prior to the public input portion.

Mr. Walker stated that he gave a copy of his booklet to Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, so maybe he will hand it over to him.

Mr. Economy asked if Coastal Tech is currently conducting a study for the City. Mr. Falls replied that the City Council asked them to get a proposal from a Coastal Engineer and Coastal Tech was already selected and preapproved, so that they would have professionals on standby. Coastal Tech is in the process of putting a proposal together. They met with Coast Tech again after Mr. Collins arrived, so he could give his input. Coastal Tech is making the final revisions before they bring it back to the City. It will be presented to the Marine Commission for review before it goes to the City Council. He explained that it is an overall look at the Marina and an evaluation of what capital improvements should be done and in what order.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Call Marine Commission meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

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