

**MARINE COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, May 1, 2018 – 9:30 a.m.**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairman, Daniel Thomas Members: Brian Cunningham, Robert Snyder, Clinton Lanier, and Alternate Member #1 William Walker **Also Present:** Marina Director, Tim Grabenbauer, Assistant City Attorney, Stefanie Beskovoyne, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Excused absence:** Bill Johnson

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) February 5, 2018**

**Mr. Cunningham made a motion to approve the February 5, 2018 Marine Commission minutes. Mr. Walker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**A) Chairman**

Vice Chairman Thomas asked if any of the members wanted to step up and volunteer for the Chairman position. He said he felt that any of the Marine Commission members would be an excellent Chairman.

Mr. Walker asked if an alternate member could be considered. The Senior Administrative Assistant replied that alternate members cannot be nominated.

Mr. Cunningham asked if they are required to select a Chairman. The Senior Administrative Assistant stated they don't have to and the Vice Chairman could conduct their meetings until their next election of officers. Mr. Thomas stated that he is getting ready to head up North for five (5) months, so he will not be available.

**Mr. Cunningham made a motion to nominate Mr. Robert Snyder as the temporary Chairman of the Marine Commission. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and with no other nominations Mr. Snyder was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Marine Commission.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

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

Mr. Snyder stated that Mr. Chris Ryan, Vero Beach Rowing Club, provided the Marine Commission with an updated report on their progress and activities (on file in the City Clerk's office). Mr. Snyder explained that the Vero Beach Rowing Club was in the running for the Impact 100 Grant, but they came in as a runner up and received about \$20,000.

Mr. Snyder said at the last Marine Commission meeting he was asked some questions about the floating dock that the Vero Beach Rowing Club installed, so he talked with the Vero Beach Rowing Club Board and they reported that they have liability coverage if anyone falls off or is hurt on the dock. He stated that part of their agreement when building the dock was that they would share it with the public. He showed the Commission members a bag of sinkers, hooks, fishing line, etc. that has been picked up off the dock. He reported that a rower found some type of fish or crab trap attached to the end of the dock that was about four (4) inches down in the water. The trap was removed and set out by the road. Someone came by and picked it up and when the owner came back to retrieve it he was pretty irate. He explained that there is one (1) sign posted stating that the priority use is for the rowing shells.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there should be signs stating no fishing and no netting on the dock.

Mr. Snyder replied that the City Council made it clear that it is also for public use. The Rowing Club took away a piece of water front property that was probably used by cast netters before they built the dock. If they restrict the public now they might be opening up a can of worms.

Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, explained that when they negotiated the lease with the Vero Beach Rowing Club it was stipulated that the dock would not interfere with the public using that area.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Cunningham asked what is the status of the fishing pier at Riverside Park. Mr. O'Connor replied that a contract was awarded, but they have not started construction yet. The Live Like Cole Foundation is selling planks with names on them as a fundraiser, but even if they do not sell all of the planks they will proceed. He explained that the bid came in lower than anticipated, so they have the funds to move forward. The same contractor was also awarded the contract for the restoration of the dock at the end of Royal Palm Pointe. The Live Like Cole foundation has agreed to pay fifty percent of the restoration costs of the Royal Palm Pointe dock if they can put their naming rights on it, so the City is working that out with them.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there is a timetable for starting the construction of either dock. Mr. O'Connor stated that there is not a timetable, but he presumes the contractor will not hold his price very long. They awarded the bid from the City's standpoint and they can proceed any time.

Mr. Cunningham asked for an update on the sailboat that is half under water south of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.

Mr. Tim Grabenbauer, Marina Director, explained that they had to hire a contractor to move the boat in order to reenergize the power line that it hit. The owner or caretaker of the boat walked away from it. The fuel was pumped out and it is boomed off. He is trying to get some information from Sea Tow to try to recover some money from the owners of the boat. When and how the vessel is going to be moved is still unforeseen.

Mr. Cunningham asked for an update on the other sailboat that has run aground.

Mr. Grabenbauer said that sailboat was anchored in the Marina's mooring field last year and he had to inform them they could not anchor there. The sailboat moved and it was anchored off of Royal Palm Pointe, but it ended up aground there. The vessel disappeared for a while, but then reappeared anchored off of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Evidently it drifted and it is grounded again. Mr. Cunningham stated that it appears to be abandoned and pretty stripped.

Mr. Grabenbauer explained that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation (FWC) will come around and put a bright red or orange sticker on the vessels, which are notifications to the owners.

Mr. O'Connor commented that it is his understanding that confiscating these abandoned boats is a very challenging legal process.

Mr. O'Connor reported that there will be a presentation at tonight's City Council meeting by the Youth Sailing Foundation (YSF) about the possibility of moving their operation over to Riverside Park near the new fishing pier.

Mr. Thomas commented that the YSF might be looking at a couple different sites.

Mr. O'Connor explained that Riverside Park has become very busy. They have clashes between the City events, the Art Museum, and Riverside Theater. The July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration is the largest function and it takes up the entire Park.

Mr. Walker said he thought the YSF preferred to be on the west side because of the prevailing winds. Mr. O'Connor replied yes, that was his understanding too. However, there have been a couple of dynamic changes. One (1) being that there have been talks about freeing up the Power Plant property and the second one (1) is that the YSF knows it will be a few years before they could have use of the Power Plant land or the Water and Sewer Plant property on a full time basis.

Mr. Thomas said that they will probably find out tonight that the YSF has been growing at an expedient rate and people have dedicated a fair amount of money to them for a building. They are looking at future growth and where they are now is limited. Waterfront property in Vero Beach is very valuable and almost nonexistent. He hopes the City takes a good hard look at the Power Plant land and the Waste Water Treatment Plant properties before they make any decisions.

Mr. O'Connor said once the electric sale is completed and they move the substation across the street, then they will see the demolition of the Power Plant. At that point there will be a big push to do something with the property.

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

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

Mr. Grabenbauer reported that they recently finished up some repairs on the center dock and there are two (2) finger piers still under contract for repairs from Hurricane Irma. He said the target date for the repairs to the northern restrooms is set for May 15, 2018. The architect

received the plans back from the Building Department with some notations that they needed to address. They will make the changes, resubmit the plans, and the work will start once they have an issued permit.

### **B) Update on the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Grants**

Mr. Grabenbauer said that unfortunately he had to let the FIND grants pass, because they did not have enough matching funds. He reported that they are reviewing the possibility of leasing or hiring a management company for the Marina, so that puts a different twist on things.

### **C) Marina Reviews and Comments**

Mr. Grabenbauer said the majority of the comments and reviews of the Marina are still positive other than feedback that the Marina is kind of tired looking. The Vero Beach Marina is still one (1) of the most popular facilities and revenues are up over last year.

Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. Grabenbauer for everything he has been doing for the boats that are anchored in the mooring field. He saw in a couple of his reports that more boats are coming in for pump outs and there is increased revenue.

Mr. Grabenbauer reported that they started changing the codes on the restroom locks monthly and issuing dingy sticker. They locked up about 15 dingy boats in the first five (5) days of issuing the required stickers, so that generated some revenue. He said the FWC paid a visit and they did some head inspections on boats that had people staying on board.

## **8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

None

## **9. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Cunningham asked what do they think the chances are of leasing the Marina or hiring a Management Company. Mr. O'Connor explained that a Management Company is not in question anymore, but they are looking more at a leasing option. He explained that a few months ago he was asked to see if there were companies that would lease the Marina and find what companies were available to manage the facilities. There was a company that did a report and from a management standpoint it appeared there would be additional costs incurred by the City, which would take away from capital projects. As far as the leasing concept, there are about seven (7) companies, but he has only talked with a couple of them so far. They will have to figure out how to structure the lease so they can still complete capital projects at the Marina as quickly as possible without the City spending depths of money. The process he envisions is sending out letters to those who are interested in leasing the Marina and asking them to respond by giving some background on their experience with leasing a Marina property, the type of lease agreements they have experience with, etc. The letters of interest will be reviewed to see who is qualified, based on experience, recommendations, etc. A presentation of possible companies will be made to the City Council for them to consider for negotiations if they want to proceed in the leasing business.

Mr. Walker asked if the terms will be the same for all of the prospects. Mr. O'Connor replied that he has not talked about the terms or length of time, but it would be based on what the

company will be investing in the Marina. He will explain to the companies that the City will want to see capital investments in the near future as opposed to projected projects 10 years down the road. The City will request the companies to provide their concept of what capital investments they would make. After he sends out the letters to the interested companies he will probably give them thirty to forty five days to reply. He would like anyone who submits a letter back to the City to be able to visit the Marina and talk with Mr. Grabenbauer, so they will have a concept of what they will be leasing when they sit down to talk. He said that in the City leases it stipulates all investments made will immediately become an asset to the City.

Mr. Snyder asked if these companies can lease sections of the Marina, such as leasing the dry storage building, but not other areas like the docks.

Mr. O'Connor stated that they are open to anything right now, but his concept would be to have the entire Marina leased by one (1) responsible party. The dry storage building needs to be upgraded, whether the City does it or they lease it and it is done by the company leasing the Marina. It has potential for revenue stream. Another potential area for revenue would be to have some kind of restaurant to go along with the Marina, but there is an issue with parking. He explained that the Marina represents a \$100,000 a year of revenue stream to the General Fund. The last couple of years they have had a little bit of a challenge with that, because the City reinvested some money back into the Marina. The revenue stream is something they will still count on even with a lease.

Mr. Thomas asked how many more years do they have on the mortgage for the dry stack building. Mr. Grabenbauer replied that they have nine (9) years left on it.

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Marina is having a great year and they are up over \$100,000 from where they were last year. It has been a great year all over the waterways, so it makes him wonder if they need to lease it. Mr. O'Connor replied that some of it is philosophical and if the City should be in the Marina business. All in all it is a nice facility and it is not so dilapidated that people are avoiding it. The Vero Beach Marina has more amenities than most of the Marinas in the vicinity.

## **10. NEXT MEETING DATE**

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

The next tentative Marine Commission meeting was scheduled for August 7, 2018 at 9:30 a.m. in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

Mr. Thomas asked to be excused from the August 7, 2018 Marine Commission meeting.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The Marine Commission meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

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