



Fort Myers Beach Management & Planning Session

**Town Hall Council Chambers
2731 Oak Street
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Minutes

**Wednesday, September
18, 2024**

9:00 AM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

CELCAB Chair Barbara Hill called the meeting to order.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Allers, Vice Mayor Atterholt, Council Member King, Council Member Safford and Council Member Woodson.

CELCAB Members present: CELCAB Chair Hill, CELCAB Member Henderson (virtually), CELCAB Member Simpson, CELCAB Member Smith, CELCAB Member Vaughan and CELCAB Member Werner.

Chair Hill moved to allow CELCAB Member Henderson to participate virtually. (No second.)

The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Mayor Atterholt moved to allow CELCAB Member Henderson to participate virtually, seconded by Council Member Safford.

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

V. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Defining roles and responsibilities of staff, CELCAB, and Town Council
Museum Manager Adam Knight stated that the meeting was to discuss the Mound House's future and ensure everyone was on the same page. Dr. Scott Neil introduced himself and reviewed his background. He described the museum assessment and noted this meeting was focused on the governance portion. After the meeting, he will give recommendations and suggestions to make things work better.

Dr. Neil asked what the mission of the Mound House was. Vice Mayor Atterholt described how the Town Council and CELCAB worked together to govern the Mound House. CELCAB Member Vaughan described the close-knit beach community and stated the mission was to preserve the history of the Mound House and everyone who lived there. CELCAB Member Smith added that they wanted to bring the culture and knowledge of their past heritage to the area.

Dr. Neil asked whether the town considered the museum a town museum or a separate entity within the Mound House. CELCAB Member Vaughan replied that they were a Venn diagram. Mayor Allers commented that it was a town museum. CELCAB Member Smith agreed and indicated that was a part of her speech as a docent of the Mound House.

Dr. Neil questioned the role of governance. Vice Mayor Atterholt explained that CELCAB was respected; they managed the day-to-day operations and oversaw policy dynamics. He noted that the Friends of the Mound House were in charge of fundraising but also kept the community engaged in the Mound House. He added that the town council delegated oversight to CELCAB and the town council approved the budget. The Town Council showed deference and yielded to CELCAB recommendations. Council Member Safford indicated that everyone in the community chipped in to promote the Mound House.

Dr. Neil asked whether there was a relationship with the Historical Society. CELCAB Member Simpson explained that the Historical Society was inactive for a while because its building was damaged, but there was no conflict with the Mound House. They were trying to increase participation and a couple of events were scheduled for the end of the year. She noted there were new people interested in the historical cottage, but they did not mention the Mound House at the meeting.

Chair Hill agreed with Vice Mayor Atterholt's description of the symbiotic relationship between the town council and CELCAB. She pointed out that the town council provided direction for staff to do the actual work.

Dr. Neil asked who had recently visited the Mound House and everyone replied. Vice Mayor Atterholt stated that meetings were held there after the hurricane. The Public Safety Committee and other entities still hold meetings there.

Dr. Neil felt that they needed to look at making the Mound House a wedding destination. He questioned where they thought the Mound House should be in five, ten or fifteen years. He stated that they needed a strategic plan for the Mound House. Council Member Safford described having more events like movie nights and concerts in addition to weddings. Council Member Woodson commented that after the town council had its strategic plan in place, advisory committees could align their strategic plans with the town. CELCAB Member Vaughan noted that CELCAB had been having strategic planning sessions. CELCAB Member Smith described how popular the underground exhibit was and she would like to see resources go to repairing

it. Mayor Allers mentioned incorporating a ferry service to the Mound House as a destination stop and would like to see the fishing tournaments expanded. Vice Mayor Atterholt stated that a private entity was looking at a ferry service and the Mound House was a proposed stop. He suggested that the Mound House could take advantage of a loan exhibit program to drive attendance. Dr. Neil suggested that the collection be in the Mound House so the museum registrar would not have to travel so far to do her work. He felt the flow in the house would have to change in order to display rotating exhibits. Chair Hill asked whether storing the collection on the island at the new town hall would suffice. Dr. Neil replied that it would have to be secure. Chair Hill added that having rotating exhibits was part of CELCAB's mission. Mayor Allers brought up acquiring land close by for parking and a secure facility for the collection. Dr. Neil mentioned public trust foundations that purchased and donated the land to the town.

Chair Hill described how the Sunshine Laws challenged CELCAB, volunteers and the non-profit Friends of the Mound House. Town Attorney Stuparich explained the Sunshine Laws and risk management. Chair Hill questioned whether there was a policy to protect individuals on two boards simultaneously, like CELCAB and the Friends of Mound House board. Town Attorney Stuparich thought one person could serve on both boards, but she would double-check. CELCAB Member Werner commented that if the Friends board were separate from CELCAB, there would be no one left. Dr. Neil described why he felt the Mound House and staff were a gem. He questioned whether there was an educational requirement in Florida to learn Florida's history. He described how they satisfied the requirements in Oklahoma. He was told that fourth graders in Florida must learn Florida's history. He indicated they could teach classes about the Mound House online with the right technology. Dr. Neil noted the limitation was one road in and one out, although a ferry would help.

Mayor Allers asked what they could easily implement to attract visitors. Dr. Neil replied that establishing a temporary exhibit would be easy to do and figure out the flow of the house. He suggested that graduate students, interns and the tribes assist in aspects of the Mound House. Chair Hill stated getting the underground exhibit operational was a core part of the programming. Although funds were not in the budget this year, it was imperative to fix what was there.

Council Member Woodson discussed the lack of resources. Dr. Neil will include grant opportunities in his report. He indicated that the Friends could write and manage grants. CELCAB Member Werner stated they needed more people on the island. Dr. Neil commented they had to grow and not remain static. He suggested that CELCAB step back and trust Museum Manager Knight to do his thing. CELCAB Member Smith addressed the lack of signage. Dr. Neil agreed and shared his experience of driving there yesterday.

Dr. Neil addressed marketing and Museum Manager Knight described

receiving a Bay Oaks brochure at a restaurant. Dr. Neil brought up educational outreach to schools. He described the next steps and noted the report would be sent to Museum Manager Knight. He would follow up in a year.

- B. Mound House's Current Role
See A.
- C. Mound House's Future Role
See A.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

CELCAB moved to adjourn. (No second.)

The motion carried unanimously.

Council Member King moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice Mayor Atterholt.

The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes adopted as presented, September 23, 2024. Motion by Council Member King and seconded by Council Member Woodson. Passed 5-0.



Amy Baker, Town Clerk