



Fort Myers Beach Management & Planning Session

**Council Chambers
2525 Estero Blvd.
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931**

Minutes

Thursday, November 4, 2021

9:00 AM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

FINAL

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Mayor Murphy, Vice Mayor Hosafros, Council Member Allers, Council Member Atterholt and Council Member Veach.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Lee County Update

An update of Lee County projects on Fort Myers Beach

Council Member Atterholt questioned Lee County Department of Transportation (LDOT) Rob Phelan about ideas to help direct pedestrians to crosswalks and mitigate traffic issues on Estero Blvd. Mr. Phelan described overpass problems and noted a signalized crosswalk at Crescent and Estero Blvd. would be installed. He explained that underpasses used a lot of property, the water table was very high and there were utilities in the area.

Handrails were difficult due to the number of driveways.

Council Member Veach questioned whether an HOV lane could be added to San Carlos. Mr. Phelan replied that it was evaluated several years ago. He indicated the design plan was at the 60% stage and Town Council should have received a copy. Town Manager Hernstadt understood that the county was going to have another public meeting about the project. He indicated that Council could request that it be prioritized.

Council Member Atterholt questioned how many people used Estero Blvd. as a shortcut. Mr. Phelan replied that a previous study estimated about 10% of the vehicles in both directions were through traffic. Council Member Atterholt brought up a water taxi service and a shuttle service to and from the airport. Mr. Phelan noted that they continued to discuss alternative modes of

transportation. Mayor Murphy added that installing another bridge had been discussed for years, but there were pros and cons to consider. He noted that any solution would take cooperation between all entities involved.

Mr. Phelan stated that they were still on track and the final structural course would be complete in December. He indicated they are still on track to finish by early 2022. He did not know the status of the cantilevered section of the bridge. Town Manager Hernstadt noted that FDOT had to perform additional analysis.

Mr. Phelan did not know the projected start date for the Big Carlos Pass Bridge. He described improvements made to help mitigate traffic and improvements to the drainage system.

Council Member Allers questioned the status of bike lane markings, adding markings where the lane ends by Red Coconut and shelters at trolley stops. Mr. Phelan did not have an update, but he indicated conversations regarding trolley shelters were ongoing. He stated the county intended to add green bike lane markings according to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) green book requirements. He explained the purpose of skip (or dashed) lines in turn lanes. Mr. Phelan addressed divided sidewalks and noted the Council could bring the topic up and the county would evaluate. He explained ADA requirements in driveway locations and how they affected bicyclists. Mr. Phelan described green book requirements concerning colors and configurations in crosswalks and indicated there were levels of enhancements.

B. Discussion of Removal/Installation Tree Requirements for Single Family Homes

Council Discussion: Minimum Tree Requirements for Single Family Homes

Town Manager Hernstadt reviewed the topic and noted an ordinance was in place. He questioned whether they were interested in taking different actions to enforce the ordinance. Council Member Allers questioned whether they could tag trees to be saved. Town Manager Hernstadt described several steps they could implement. Vice Mayor Hosafros indicated they were not enforcing the ordinance and regulations. She questioned whether they needed to attach the tree permit to the demo permit since trees were being torn down during demolition. Town Manager Hernstadt replied that some people had removed the trees before approaching the town.

Council Member Veach stated that the town approved a permit for a property owner to tear down all the trees on an undeveloped lot. A building was built and there were no trees on the lot. Town Manager Hernstadt stated that he would make sure that staff understood the ordinance. Environmental Project Manager Chadd Chustz referred to the green sheet regarding challenges and ideas from other municipalities that could be implemented.

Vice Mayor Hosafros questioned whether Project Manager Chustz would add anything to the code to help. Project Manager Chustz replied affirmatively and offered language. He remarked that trees had to be removed from

undeveloped lots to make room for a building and accessories. Town Attorney Herin, Jr. read the FL statute from their packet of information. He stated that they could be more forceful upfront and could enhance the post-development landscape requirements. Consensus was reached for Town Attorney Herin, Jr. to move forward with enhancements.

Vice Mayor Hosafros suggested that pictures be taken of lots when they receive a demo permit. Town Manager Hernstadt agreed. Town Manager Hernstadt noted they could also conduct a town tree survey and he will investigate the cost involved. Council Member Allers reiterated his idea of marking trees.

Council Member Veach questioned whether their vision would apply to new construction only. Town Manager Hernstadt mentioned a minimum landscaping requirement and indicated he would consult with the Project Manager and Town Attorney. Council Member Allers preferred to maintain or increase the tree canopy. Town Manager Hernstadt stated he would present opportunities for further enhancements to be consistent with that objective.

C. Traffic and Parking

Council discussion: Traffic and Parking in Fort Myers Beach

Council Member Veach described the 2001 CRSPE Study and noted they came up with similar ideas regarding traffic. He indicated that installing barriers on Estero Blvd. to direct pedestrians to crosswalks might impede emergency vehicles. He was not sure how to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road wherever they wanted. Council Member Allers remarked that using deputies in the past to direct pedestrians kept the traffic moving. Council Member Veach agreed that it was effective at the base of the bridge but questioned how it would work on a long stretch of Estero Blvd. Council Member Allers suggested that coordinating traffic lights should keep the traffic flowing better. Mayor Murphy commented that Sanibel hired people to keep pedestrians on the sidewalks during season. Vice Mayor Hosafros stated the difference was that Sanibel had its own police department. Town Attorney Herin, Jr. agreed and noted that the people directing traffic worked under the police department and met minimum training requirements. Mayor Murphy suggested spreading VOICE (Volunteer Observer Impacting Community Effort) members up and down Estero Blvd. Council Member Atterholt supported considering the idea and noted that combining several steps in specific areas could help the traffic and pedestrian flow. He felt water taxis and airport shuttles could work and he was open to exploring all the options. Council Member Veach stated that water taxis were discussed in the past, but they did not have a public dock. Council Member Atterholt indicated that the Weston in Cape Coral did have a shuttle service to the beach. Council Member Veach described an educational campaign to encourage pedestrians to use crosswalks.

Council Member Atterholt mentioned a parking opportunity on the north side of the bridge or across the street from Lover's Key. Council Member Veach noted that residents on San Carlos Island did not want to be the parking lot for the beach. He commented that a parking garage would take up a lot of real estate.

D. Street Renaming

Discussion: Changing the name of a street

Mayor Murphy brought the topic up as a result of an inquiry from a resident. Town Attorney Herin, Jr. stated that it was relatively simple to change the name and a matter of coordinating with other agencies. Vice Mayor Hosafros did not think the Council should be involved. Council Member Veach and Mayor Murphy felt they should be involved.

Town Attorney Herin, Jr. stated that the Lee County Property Appraiser's Office and the fire department would be involved with the name change. Town Manager Hernstadt noted that they could give the neighborhood instructions on moving forward, forward their request, or facilitate and implement the change for the neighborhood. Town Attorney Herin, Jr. provided examples from other municipalities. Vice Mayor Hosafros stated they did not have anything on the books to stop them from changing the name now, but she would support a resolution. Council Member Allers supported Vice Mayor Hosafros. Town Attorney Herin, Jr. reminded the Council that there was a cost involved. Town Manager Hernstadt received support to draft a resolution.

E. American Rescue Plan

Council discussion: American Rescue Plan

Town Manager Hernstadt recommended that Council submit their ideas to Town Clerk Baker. He stated that he would share future information with Council Members. He explained that there were guidelines for spending the money, but they were not all clear.

IV. AGENDA MANAGEMENT

- A. November 2021 Add tree ordinance.
Add VOICE volunteers for traffic control.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Murphy adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.
Minutes adopted, November 15, 2021; Motion by Vice Mayor Hosafros and seconded by Council Member Veach. Adopted 5-0.



Amy Baker, Town Clerk