

June 7, 2005
Milton, Florida

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Ken Johnson and members Dan Wakley and Jeff Marker. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker), Public Works Director (Avis Whitfield), County Engineer (Roger Blaylock), and Marine Extension Agent (Christina Verlinde). Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Wakley moved approval of the minutes of the May 3, 2005 meeting; Marker seconded, and the vote carried unanimously (3-0).

2005-06 Florida Boating Improvement Grant

Walker said the 2005-06 Florida Boating Improvement grant application is due Friday. Verlinde suggested applying for grant funds to install channel markers at Navarre Beach boat ramp or Archie Glover Bayou. Johnson said channel markers have been a grant consideration of this committee for several years. Walker said typically the grant funds are used for boat ramps. He discussed emergency repairs to boat ramps and piers due to Hurricane Ivan. Walker said at the present time there are no dock or boat ramp issues. He said the only other improvements being discussed are paving projects. Walker said the paving projects are large projects and need engineering services.

Marker said he reviewed the grant application, and he did not see anything that will allow repairs on the access road to Archie Glover boat ramp. Johnson said he thinks the access road is a possible mitigation project. Marker asked if the road has been approved for a mitigation project with the Interstate 10 Bridge reconstruction. Whitfield said he has not heard anything concerning the mitigation. He said the contractor that was awarded the Interstate 10 Bridge reconstruction project will be putting offices on the property next to Archie Glover boat ramp. Whitfield said the construction company will have light vehicle traffic on the road, and they are willing to work with the county on some limited maintenance type repairs. He said the engineering firms asked about using this roadway as a mitigation project, but there has been no further discussion.

Wakley suggested submitting several items at one location in the grant request. He suggested improvements at the Navarre Beach boat ramp. Wakley said the county can request channel markers, a pump out station, signage, trash bins, picnic tables, and benches. He said each of these small items add points to strengthen our position to receive a grant. Wakley said using the county Boating Improvement Funds as a match will also strengthen the request. He said we need to keep the request under \$100,000.00 for additional points. Wakley also discussed the crossover needed from the parking lot to the beach. Blaylock asked if the engineering fees are reimbursable and if they can be used as in-kind service. Wakley said yes.

Marker said the county is receiving funds from the Clean Marine Grant for the pump out station. He asked if there will be any issues crossing the two grants. Walker said requesting additional funds for the pump out station may contaminate the Clean Marine Grant. Marker suggested leaving the pump out station off of the Boating Improvement Grant application. Wakley discussed possible sign verbiage.

Wakley moved approval of applying for the 2005-06 Florida Boating Improvement Grant for improvements at the Navarre Beach boat ramp to include channel markers, signage, trash bins, picnic tables, benches, a cross over to the beach, and boater safety information; Marker seconded, and the vote carried unanimously (3-0).

Land Adjacent to Oriole Beach Boat Ramp

Marker said Oriole Beach boat ramp is a nice boat ramp, but it has no parking area. He said the adjacent property is currently for sale. Marker said we do not have the funds for something like this right now, but how can the county prepare for future land acquisition. Marker said there may be some type of grant available. He said the county needs to prepare for land acquisition near boat ramps without parking areas. Marker said once the property is built upon, it can never be used for parking. He said he wishes to discuss available options, so when property is listed for sale, the county can take advantage of the situation.

Walker said Sharon Marsh, Grants Coordinator, is trying to understand all county needs to be on the look out for grant matches. He said he has discussed land acquisition near boat ramps and possible grants with Marsh. Walker asked the selling price of the property. Marker said it is in the \$400,000.00 range.

Johnson said the Department of Community Affairs has land acquisition grants for parks, but you are required to have the land identified in the application. Walker said public access to water is a high priority with the State of Florida. He said he felt the state will have sources of funding available to the county. Walker said typically these grants will have a 50% local match. He said he will ask Marsh to start looking for land acquisition grants.

Wakley said access to the water is needed to launch boats, but land for parking areas can be inland. He said there are one or two lots across the street from Oriole Beach boat ramp. Marker said currently those lots are not for sale. Wakley said he recalls a Florida program designed for saving boat ramps and giving access to water. Wakley said he will search for this information.

Santa Rosa Shores Dredging Project

Marker said he met with Santa Rosa Shores Homeowners Association, the Corp of Engineers, and the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection). He said the county applied for the dredging permit on behalf of the Santa Rosa Shores Homeowners Association. Marker said the Corp of Engineers' recommendation is to withdraw the permit request because they feel they do not need to devote anymore resources to the project at this point in time. He said according to the Corp of Engineers, if the permit is denied without prejudice, any future request will also be denied. Marker said if the application is withdrawn, it will not stop a future application from being approved. Marker discussed the mitigation efforts, and said it is his view point, the citizens are being penalized for cooperating with DEP's past request to install channel markers. He said the channel markers have reduced the prop scarring to sea grass beds. Marker said the Corp of Engineers is now questioning dredging the channel to protect the sea grass, because the sea grass beds are recovering. He said the county has to make a decision on how to proceed. Marker said he promised the Corp of Engineers the county will give a response by June 30, 2005.

Blaylock said the county is the applicant on the permit because the canals are deemed public canals. He said it will be up to the Homeowners Association to make any decisions. Blaylock said the Homeowners Association established the MSBU ten years ago, and they are pursuing the dredging project.

Ken Garner said he thought the Vice President of the Homeowners Association appeared before the Board of County Commissioners and asked the county to withdraw the application. He said this discussion occurred about six weeks ago. Marker said no decision was made. He said the Homeowners Association will have a meeting in early June to make a decision. Marker

said the Homeowners Association will then make their request to the Board, and the county will actually withdraw the permit application.

Oyster Restoration Update

Verlinde said there was a teacher workshop at her office on Saturday. She said twelve teachers signed up for a workshop to develop an oyster curriculum for students. Verlinde said Mary Johnson, employee of the Santa Rosa County School Board, is great to work with.

Public Meeting Issues

Marker said when rivers approach flood stage water is underneath houses that are on pilings. He said the wakes created by larger boats are undermining the homes. Marker said during flood stage the county may want to consider shutting down boat ramps until the water recedes.

Johnson said he felt the main problem is with policing the waterways. He said closing the public ramps may be helpful. Johnson noted the Marquis Basin property is for sale. He said the house can be turned into a training station.

Walker said closing the public ramps is a contradiction of public policy. Marker suggested signage to inform boaters they are responsible for their wake. He asked the committee members to think about a type of educational signage to use universally. Wakley said the only reason to establish minimum wake zones is for safety. Marker said he is considering a comprehensive short list of common courtesy boater safety and etiquette issues for signage.

Verlinde said in the past signs were installed at boat ramps. She suggested several short bullet informational items to be printed on the signs. Johnson said the Public Information Officer can put boater information on the county website. He said the committee can also provide informational items to local publications.

Wakley said he checked into the potential of getting the sound side boat ramp at Navarre Bridge opened for public use. He said the new property owners were not agreeable, so that ramp will not be available.

Wakley said at last month's public meeting a citizen discussed having difficulties with the adjacent property owners at West Navarre Park. He said the discussion concerned access to the water from the park area for kayaking. Wakley said he spoke with one of the adjacent property owner's, and the property owner is having difficulty with people using the access road. He said the property owner said people park on the access road and use a picnic table in his yard to drink beer at all hours of the night. Wakley said also there are major power lines going into the ground in this area.

Wakley discussed an additional area about three lots down and across the street from West Navarre Park. Wakley said the water in this area is very shallow with sea grass beds. He said for this reason, the county would not be able to develop the area.

Whitfield said West Navarre Park is platted as a park. He said the county installed a sign prohibiting loitering and allows use of the park only for fishing. There was discussion regarding citizens using the private ramps. Wakley said there is room for the county to install fencing to keep citizens off of the private property. Whitfield said a fence would be the responsibility of the private property owners. He said the sign was posted to give the Sheriff's Department an opportunity for enforcement.

Wakley asked if the International Paper boat ramps are closed. Whitfield said the boat ramps are currently closed, but the county has met with Water Management and International Paper. He said the plan is to make the roadway a management area. Whitfield said an agreement is being worked out that will go before the Board of County Commissioners in the next month or two. He said the county will upgrade and maintain the roads. Whitfield said International Paper is extremely concerned about law enforcement to keep the mudders from destroying the roads. He said the agreement should be in place by September and the road improvements should start in October. Whitfield said the ramps affected are Keyser Landing and Webb Landing boat ramps.

There being no further business to come before the committee at this time, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.