November 2, 2010
Milton, Florida

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Jeff Marker and members Rick Harris, Dan Wakley, Pasco Gibson and Wayne Hawthorne. Also present were the County Administrator, Hunter Walker; Public Works Director, Avis Whitfield; County Engineer, Roger Blaylock and Marine Extension Agent, Chris Verlinde. Chairman Marker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The minutes of the August 3, 2010 meeting were approved.

BOATS DOCKED AT PUBLIC PIERS

Mr. Maker mentioned that there have been a few incidences of unattended boats at public docks or anchored offshore near public docks. He specifically mentioned one that was docked at the Marquis Basin boat dock and another docked off shore near that location. He asked how removal of these apparently abandoned boats should be handled before they sink. Mr. Walker responded that we control our public piers and docks but the state controls the water. Mr. Blaylock said that we can move the boat from our dock if it is declared derelict. Mr. Marker questioned the need to wait until a boat sinks to declare it derelict and noted that we should think about having a procedure for dealing with these issues. Pasco Gibson noted that FWC should not have a problem looking into reports of these issues. Dan Wakley said that the boats that are docked off shore are on state water and the responsibility of FWC and if they are tied to a public dock it is the same as an abandon car left on public property. He noted that there should be some laws that are enforceable by the Sheriff's department about abandoned vehicles on public property. He requested that the County Attorney advise the committee of what the Sheriff's Department can do about abandoned vehicles and if it can be applied to abandoned boats. Discussion continued about the need to have a plan. It was decided that Roger Blaylock or Avis Whitfield should contact FWC and have them take a look at the two specific boats.

ARTIFICIAL REEF FUNDING

Mr. Marker reported that he attended the FWC meeting at Pensacola Beach held in early September and he reminded them that three years ago the county had money that we were not allowed to use for artificial reefs anymore and it caught a couple of them by surprise. He noted that someone had offered material to make a nice artificial reef and it would probably have only cost $12,000 to $14,000 to have it deployed. But we could not use our Boater Registration fees for this purpose. The Chairman of the FWC directed Louie Roberson, Assistant Director out of Panama City, to assist Mr. Marker with trying to get with Legislators to come up with some language allowing use of these funds. Mr. Marker talked with an intermediary to the Legislator with the FWC and he was advised to ask for a percentage of the funding to be used for artificial reefing or matching funds for grants or those type things as opposed to leaving it open ended. Thirty percent was suggested. Mr. Marker said it was also suggested that the Commission reissue a statement supporting County control of how Boater Improvement Funds are spent and adding artificial reefs as an option for these funds. Mr. Walker asked if they mentioned the logic behind excluding reefs from the approved expenditures. Mr. Marker said it was because a legislator from south Florida, who is no longer in office, said some county spent money in a manner he did not like so he had the language changed. Mr. Marker suggested we get support from other counties and contact the Florida Association of Counties for their assistance. Mr. Walker agreed that any changes would be statewide and noted that we had collected about $72,000 this year and we have only spent about $20,000 on the derelict boat removal. He also noted that he had received an inquiry from the FWC regarding our funding reports and questioning why we had not spent that money. He explained that we are looking at acquiring land for additional boat ramps and parking lots and that those are huge expenditures for which we will have to accumulate the money. Mr. Walker requested that Mr. Marker get him the contact information for the people he is working with at FWC. Mr. Marker said that Mr. Roberson will be the liaison between him and the legislators. Mr. Marker asked if our legislators hold meetings in each county to see what we want done by them. Mr. Walker responded that they do have one in November or December and there is a legislative priority session for local legislation. He noted that this item could be added to the list but also noted that requests from the general public seem to have more of an impact with them. Mr. Wakley reminded the committee that boat registration fees were increased last year about 40% and the state at one time split the money evenly with counties but when they increased the registration fees, all of the increase went to the state. He cautioned that if the state noticed that we have a lot of unspent funds they may come back and take more from the county. Mr. Marker said he thinks they should give us a portion of the increase. Mr. Wakley said he should make that a part of his request to the legislators. Mr. Walker recommended that the focus should be on the request to spend the funding to benefit our boaters and fishermen.

Mr. Marker asked if the Interlocal Agreement with Escambia County regarding the artificial reefs had been finalized. Mr. Walker responded that it is being executed and noted that it had been approved about a year ago. He noted that Chris Verlinde checked with the FWC and the artificial reef project that was included in last year's grant cycle made the cut but none of the projects were funded. Ms. Verlinde said that if they get their funding back there will be a special time frame that will be opened and it could get funded depending on what happens in this Legislative session.

Mr. Marker advised the committee that after the incident in Gulf Breeze where some men from Alabama were bumping their boat against a man made reef and shooting stingrays as they came out from under the reef, the City of Gulf Breeze is considering an ordinance around that area as a no motor zone and requiring boats to keep a certain distance away from the reef. That would make the benefit to fishermen nonexistent. He requested that the County contact the City of Gulf Breeze. After further discussion, Mr. Marker requested that Mr. Walker contact Mr. Eddy with Gulf Breeze and find out if the City plans to take any action and advise Mr. Eddy of the position of the Marine Advisory Committee and report his findings at the next MAC meeting.

LIVE OAK BOAT RAMP REPORT

Mr. Walker reported that the MAC had recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that they use Boater Improvement Funds to purchase property on Live Oak Lane for boat ramp parking. The Board discussed that and advised Mr. Walker to contact the property owners in that area to give them the specific date of October 11, 2010 for Board review of that item. The property owners seemed opposed to the parking on the interior lot. He advised the committee that Mr. Orr has offered to sell

the property adjacent to the boat ramp for $130,000. Mr. Whitfield said that a retaining wall may be needed in order to use the entire lot but also noted that a portion could be left natural in order to avoid a retaining wall and the permitting process. Mr. Walker noted that there is an unimproved right of way to the north of that parcel which could be utilized to make a circular entrance and exit for parking. Mr. Marker reminded the committee that their recommendation was for half of the money to come from BIF and half from Recreation funds. Mr. Wakley remarked that the Live Oak Boat Ramp is one of the best in the county and possibly the only ramp that offers deep water access on East Bay. He also noted that parking is what is needed to make it functional to all boaters who want to access East Bay and this is the best property for the purpose. Mr. Walker noted that it is less intrusive for the neighborhood. After further discussion it was determined that Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Blaylock would determine the preliminary design and a cost estimate for review at the next MAC meeting.

PROJECTS / ISSUES UPDATES

Mr. Whitfield updated the Committee regarding the Sandy Landing Boat ramp. He noted that the County does not own this property but has a license agreement with RMS. He
said that flooding and river currents have caused undermining and sever bank erosion to that ramp. He also noted that a requirement in the license agreement closes that ramp for six weeks out of the year, from January 1st until February 15th, and residents find that undesirable. As a result of these problems he has been looking for another location for a
boat ramp and there is a site to the north of that ramp in the Mineral Springs area in a lake off of the river which is an ideal location because you would not have to deal with the
currents during flood stage. An archeological survey has been completed and there are no problems there. Engineering is working with DEP on the permitting process and he is negotiating with the property owner on the purchase price and has done some preliminary design work and it appears we will need about 21 acres to provide an access road as well as adequate room for the ramp and parking. There are some wetlands but it looks like only about 2 acres are involved. There are plenty of uplands to work with and he hopes
to have a recommendation soon but a ballpark amount would be about $200,000.

Mr. Blaylock reported that there in no significant change for the Archie Glover Dredging project but is near the end possibly within 50 to 60 feet. He noted that the contractor has
been sick with the flu and this has been a challenging project but it should be completed by the end of the month.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Blaylock reported that repairs to the floating docks in Navarre have been completed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for December 7th at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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