

AGENDA

MARINE AND PORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 29, 2014

PURSUANT TO Board of County Commission Resolution No. 110-2013 the Marine and Port Advisory Committee of Monroe County will conduct a meeting on **July 29, 2014** beginning at 6:00 PM on the second floor of the Monroe County Office, located at the Marathon Government Center, 2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon, Florida.

ADA ASSISTANCE: If you are a person with a disability who needs special accommodations in order to participate in this proceeding, please contact the County Administrator's Office, by phoning (305) 292-4441, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., no later than five (5) calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call "711".

MARINE AND PORT ADVISORY MEMBERS

Paul Koisch, Chair
David Makepeace, Vice-Chair
James Fitton
Bill Kelly
Lynda Schuh
Mimi Stafford
Pete Worthington

STAFF

Richard Jones, Sr. Administrator
Celia Hitchins, Marine Biologist

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC MEETING

1. Approval of draft minutes from May 6, 2014 MPAC Meeting*
2. Update on the Pilot Program anchoring ordinance
3. Update on Mooring Field initiative
4. Update on the County Pumpout Program
5. Update on Derelict Vessel Program
6. Update on Boat Ramps
7. Committee discussion
8. Adjournment

* indicates backup documentation:

Item 1. Draft Minutes from 5-6-2014 MPAC meeting

MARINE AND PORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Draft Meeting Minutes

PURSUANT TO Board of County Commission Resolution No. 057-1991 the Marine and Port Advisory Committee of Monroe County conducted a meeting on **May 6, 2014** beginning at 6:03 PM at the Marathon Government Center, 2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon, Florida.

MARINE AND PORT ADVISORY MEMBERS:

Paul Koisch, Chair	Present
David Makepeace, Vice-Chair (pending)	Absent
James Fitton	Present
Bill Kelly	Present
Lynda Schuh	Present
Mimi Stafford	Present
Pete Worthington	Present

STAFF

Richard Jones, Sr. Administrator	Present
Celia Hitchins, Marine Biologist	Present

COMMISSIONERS

Sylvia Murphy	Present
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MOTIONS MADE

Motion 1

To approve minutes of February 4, 2014

Motion/Second	Passed
Bill Kelly/Mimi Stafford	Unanimously

Motion 2

To adjourn

Motion/Second	Passed
Pete Worthington/Bill Kelly	Unanimously

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Koisch called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

Item 1. Approval of minutes from the February 4, 2014 MPAC Meeting

Ms. Schuh noted a correction of the minutes under the Boat Ramp Repair and Upgrade discussion. Ms. Schuh believes it should state the boat ramp in her Sugarloaf community was brought up for discussion rather than stating that Ms. Schuh suggested it be turned over to the County.

Motion: Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction noted. Ms. Stafford seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2. Update on the Pilot Program anchoring ordinance and enforcement activities

Ms. Hitchins presented the update. Ms. Hitchins reported that the Legislature just approved the three-year extension of the Pilot Program, and approved a statute allowing law enforcement to tow vessels without liability which should help in the prevention of derelict vessels. FWC is continuing to provide warnings and citations for the no-anchor zone adjacent to the Key West mooring field. There has been a transition of some of those vessels into the Key West mooring field. A graph shown of the data from the citations illustrated that the number of citations issued was highest in January and February and have tapered off since. She indicated that since January FWC has issued 28 warnings, and since March FWC has issued 6 citations. Ms. Hitchins believes the reason for the decrease in citations is because the vessels are complying with the no-anchor zone. Since January there have been about 50 vessels in that zone, with half of them being repeat offenders. The Sheriff's office is continuing to enforce the regulations at the Key Haven boat ramp facility and have disposed of about a dozen dinghies which were left unattended at the ramp. The Sheriff's office has committed to providing additional law enforcement in the area.

Chair Koisch asked Captain David Dipre, present on behalf of FWC, the repercussions of receiving a citation. Captain Dipre explained that this ordinance establishes a civil fine repetitively, but not jail time. The Clerk of the Court is responsible to collect those fines. Mr. Jones explained this is a step system of fines starting at \$50, increasing to \$100, then to \$250, and then after that the occupants of the vessels are asked to leave the zone. Mr. Worthington noted that he has noticed a large influx of boats in the Sugarloaf Lodge area. Captain Dipre related information from his officers that the vessels in that area were declining, but will ask for an update of that area. Captain Dipre stated some vessels are moving into Cow Key Channel. Captain Dipre explained to Ms. Stafford that whoever is responsible for the vessel gets cited, not necessarily the owner of the vessel, although FWC does try to find the owners to make sure they understand the tenants on their vessel are in an illegal area and need to move. Mr. Jones clarified that Cow Key Channel is a managed anchoring zone that is part of the Pilot Program.

Chair Koisch asked for public comment. Dottie Moses asked for an explanation of the difference between a managed anchoring zone as opposed to a pilot program. Mr. Jones explained that the Pilot Program is a state program that provided for the County to develop anchoring related regulations, and through that authority the County adopted an ordinance that includes no-anchoring zones and managed anchoring zones. No-anchoring zones prohibit anchoring within certain areas adjacent to established mooring fields, and managed anchoring zones provide for anchoring but with specific rules which apply including, prohibition of vessels exhibiting pre-

derelict conditions and requiring proof of pump-out. The County has four managed anchoring zones and three no-anchoring zones. Chair Koisch encouraged Ms. Moses to collect more information about the program through Mr. Jones.

Henry Cheli asked how the no-anchor zones outside of a mooring field were determined. Mr. Jones responded that staff drafts regulations in coordination with this Committee, it then goes up the chain to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and then to the FWC Commission for approval. He explained that the no anchoring zones were developed to protect the infrastructure of the mooring fields, and also encourage boaters to utilize the mooring field. Chair Koisch added that this process has been going on for several years and was largely driven by shoreside residents and property owners affected negatively by certain areas of anchored vessels, including residents of Key Largo.

Item 3. Update on mooring fields

Mr. Jones presented the update, concentrating on Buttonwood Sound. Mr. Jones reported that Buttonwood Sound was part of the feasibility study for mooring fields that just got completed a few months ago, and that the consultant was tasked with determining the maximum number of moorings that could go in at the three sites. Penny Cutt, with Coastal Systems International (CSI), came down and presented it before the BOCC. The purpose of that agenda item several months ago was for the BOCC to make a decision if they wanted the County to move ahead with one or more mooring fields and, if so, where the site or sites would be. The three potential sites looked at were Jewish Creek, Buttonwood Sound and Boca Chica basin. The consultants went out to each of these three anchorage sites and performed a cursory survey of physical and biological attributes in those three areas, specifically water depths and seagrass density. Another important factor evaluated was shoreside facilities that might be suitable to provide service and shoreside access to a mooring field at any of these three sites. In Buttonwood Sound, Dream Bay Resort and Point of View Resort were identified as potential shoreside facilities. The management of those two facilities indicated they did have a desire to participate with the County to some degree. Part of the consultant's task in the feasibility study was to show which facilities could potentially be used as a shoreside facility and what the maximum number of moorings that could go in at any of these three sites, based on regulatory criteria, would be. The consultants have indicated that there is the potential for up to 100 moorings at Buttonwood Sound. That number is based on the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) criteria, and a new rule being promulgating to allow a general permit for mooring fields of up to 100. That general permit would have fewer permitting hurdles than permitting 101 or more moorings. The DEP could approve the general permit without having to take it to the Governor and Cabinet. Mr. Jones emphasized how difficult permitting for a big project such as this can be, which can take up to two or three years. A potential expansion area was shown with an outline that has suitable water depths and no dense seagrass. Mr. Jones clarified that there will be further detailed studies performed of water depths and benthic resources, as well as further evaluation of shoreside facilities. The actual number of moorings ultimately recommended would be based on the physical and biological evaluations of the site, current and anticipated use (by both local liveaboards and transients), and shoreside facility availability and capacity. Very detailed surveys of bathymetry and aquatic vegetation must be provided before permit applications are submitted. Mr. Jones explained that in the initial feasibility study the evaluations on the water were not tied in with the evaluations of shoreside facilities, and in the

next phase those would need to be tied together to ensure that the shoreside facility would be able to accommodate the number of moorings recommended, or that there would be the potential for the shoreside facility to expand to meet the capacity of the mooring field. Mr. Jones indicated that the feasibility will soon be finalized, then put on the County's website so it is available to the public.

Mr. Jones explained the next step in the mooring field initiative, explaining that the BOCC has given direction to put out a request for qualifications (RFQ) to hire an engineering/consulting team to provide for design and permitting (construction would occur under a separate RFQ). That RFQ is currently being worked on by Project Management. There was discussion at the BOCC meeting that phasing in a certain numbers of moorings over time would be prudent. The experts to be hired by the County will go out and perform very detailed evaluations on the water and determine how many dinghies the potential shoreside facilities can accommodate. The contract that will come out of the RFQ will define the scope of work to be done and will likely be broken down into steps (i.e. deliverables) which are anticipated to be completed incrementally, then information would be brought back to staff and the Board for further direction before proceeding with additional steps. The public would be involved throughout the process and there will be multiple opportunities for public input.

Mr. Jones explained that there would be a mooring field management plan developed, and that a contract would be developed for shoreside management. Mayor Murphy asked what if the shoreside facility doesn't have the capacity to accommodate an expansion of the mooring field or their contract doesn't allow for mooring expansion. Mr. Jones explained the need for additional mooring buoys would come before the BOCC to determine if that is wanted and then staff would coordinate with that shoreside facility to see if they were willing to do that and if there is the potential to provide additional capacity at the facility if needed. The contract would likely include language for expansion of the mooring field, as well as responsibilities, etc. That discussion of the potential for this to evolve would occur with the shoreside facility up front. There are a lot of what-if questions at the beginning of a large project. When asked why Buttonwood Sound was considered for a mooring field, Mr. Jones mentioned that the feasibility studies were requested at these three potential mooring fields, or unmanaged anchorages, because of the boating impacts that have been documented in those locations over the years. Although there are not as many boats and boating impacts at Buttonwood Sound as at Boca Chica, boating impacts are still recognized there and need to be addressed. Mr. Jones described the stakeholder input meeting held in the Upper Keys that brought to light the negative boating impacts in this area. Mr. Jones added that development of a mooring field would require a lease with the State and a mooring field management plan. Mr. Jones believes a mooring field is a benefit both to the environment and the surrounding property owners. Mr. Jones clarified the BOCC directed staff to pursue an RFQ for a mooring field at Buttonwood Sound and to look into the potential for a mooring field at Boca Chica, recognizing through the feasibility study that it does not look promising for permitting of a mooring field or finding a suitable shoreside facility in the Boca Chica area.

Ms. Stafford asked what shoreside services would be asked for. Mr. Jones explained the general criteria would be dinghy dockage, bathrooms and sewage pumpout. It is also desirable to be close to grocery stores, for example. Mr. Worthington asked about the proximity of Rowell's

Marina that the County purchased in relation to Buttonwood Sound, and if it was considered for a mooring field as well as the Nelson Center. Commissioner Murphy explained it is three to four miles away. Commissioner Murphy added there are no shoreside facilities at the Murray Nelson Government Center nor at Rowell's.

Chair Koisch asked for public comment. Dottie Moses, President of the Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowners Association, stated her organization has not taken a position on this proposal yet, but are actively discussing it. Ms. Moses stated in reviewing the MPAC minutes it sounds like the Committee decided to pick Buttonwood Sound before it was ever brought before the BOCC. Ms. Moses asked Captain Dipre if Buttonwood Sound is a trouble spot. He responded yes. Ms. Moses asked Captain Dipre how many derelict vessels are in the Buttonwood Sound area. Captain Dipre responded that although there were no derelict vessels there when he visited the site a few months ago, it is considered a trouble spot by FWC. Ms. Moses asked why a mooring field is being proposed if there are no derelict vessels in the area. Mr. Jones explained the mooring field is being proposed for multiple reasons, such as to prevent anchor and chain damage to the bottom, to prevent vessels from dragging into marine infrastructure during high winds, to prevent derelict vessels and to prevent inappropriate shoreside access. Ms. Moses believes the users of mooring fields are almost exclusively transient cruisers. Chair Koisch stated this proposal addresses the impacts generated by 'squatters' in Buttonwood Sound. Ms. Moses commented that this Committee is made up of members largely from the Lower Keys, where the boating impacts are much larger than the Upper Keys experiences. Ms. Moses stated this is being described as a large project with potential for growth that is located close to a residential shoreline. Mayor Murphy responded that there is representation by the Committee from the upper Keys.

Skip Cobb asked Mr. Jones to speak on the consideration being given to the community impacts this project will have on the residents in the area. Mr. Jones recognized that Mr. Cobb is asking about negative impacts, however the impacts the County anticipates are all positive, including a reduction of derelict vessels, no more boats dragging anchor into docks on the shoreline, no more sewage being dumped in the water, and the elimination of benthic damage from traditional ground tackle. He further explained that there will be criteria that a vessel will have to meet in order to use a mooring. Mr. Jones explained stakeholder meetings were held for the Pilot Program, which was more general, and now the management strategy to address the boating impacts in Buttonwood Sound is becoming more specific. There will be stakeholder workshops as this process evolves. Mr. Jones perceives this proposal as having a positive impact on the Buttonwood Sound shoreside residents.

Brenda Altmeier thanked Commissioner Murphy and the BOCC for considering a mooring field in this area. Ms. Altmeier held up a file containing documents dealing with the negative impacts boaters in this area have had on her neighborhood over the last ten years. Ms. Altmeier compared the negative boating impacts to her neighborhood with a motorhome parking in a neighborhood and dumping their sewage on the public road with no repercussions. Ms. Altmeier asked that a no-anchor zone be implemented, in association with the mooring field, to include the area off of Bayview Drive. Ms. Altmeier offered to share any information she has with Ms. Moses. Commissioner Murphy clarified that this Committee represents the entire Keys. Chair Koisch stated this whole concept has been driven by shoreside residents.

Henry Kelly, representing the Sanctuary at Key Largo Condominium Association, agrees that moorings are better for the bay bottom than anchors dragging. Mr. Henry Kelly is concerned that this mooring field would be used as affordable housing and is concerned the location of this mooring field would cause some vessels to migrate in front of the Sanctuary. Mr. Jones explained that there are management strategies available to control that, such as getting a submerged bay bottom lease for an area larger than the mooring field which would allow that whole area to be regulated. The Pilot Program could also be used to create restrictions on anchoring in an even larger area. Mr. Jones explained that there have been numerous complaints from residents in the area about impacts created by the liveaboard boaters in the area and the County took a short-term measure of fencing off the end of Bayview Drive to prevent dinghy access. He further discussed the numerous problems occurring in the area, including crime and noise.

Mr. Worthington reiterated that the Pilot Program provides a legislative tool to address no-anchor zones and designating where transient boaters can anchor. Without a mooring field, the County cannot legislatively address some of the issues. Mr. Worthington urged the public to look at all of the positive aspects this mooring field would bring. Ms. Hitchins provided a sign-up sheet to get names and e-mail addresses to be able to notify the members of the public of a scheduled workshop.

Ms. Moses replied that nobody is objecting to putting the vessels in the anchorages on mooring balls, but the residents are worried about how large this will become. Ms. Moses pointed out that Point of View RV Resort is only a year old and has caused an increase in boating activity on the bay. Ms. Stafford reemphasized this is not a new process, but this has been going on for years. Ms. Stafford encouraged the public to remain involved in the process to fine-tune this project. Ms. Altmeier has also seen some negative impacts associated with the new Point of View Resort, but believes the mooring field brings education and management on the water. Mr. Cobb added that he is concerned the allowable area outlined on the map will allow the mooring field to become very large. Mr. Jones clarified that the outlined area only represents an area of suitable water depths and suitable benthic resources for a mooring field.

Dottie Moses made a number of comments questioning the need for the mooring field, why in that location, and what it would accomplish. Paul Koisch said he was dumbounded by the lack of support and indicated that Ms. Moses needs to be aware of the problems and that a mooring field is a proven management strategy to address those problems. He said that this is being done for the public, and that previous stakeholder meetings for the Pilot Program found that the public was in support of better waterway management, including mooring fields.

Tim Hinkin, with the Sanctuary as well, asked if the whole project is predicated on the potential shoreside facility agreeing to be a part of this. Mr. Jones explained that any potential mooring field project anywhere in the Keys that needs a private shoreside facility is vulnerable to a private shoreside facility backing out. Mr. Jones then explained the issue of the need for mooring fields has evolved over many years. Mr. Jones thanked the members of the public for their input and recommended they stay involved in the process.

Captain Dipre spoke about the Pilot Program in general and explained that statewide FWC had problems with derelict vessels, boating safety, pump-outs, and other issues. The Pilot Program was put in place with the initial idea of having five diverse areas in the state develop solutions for their particular areas and problems. Captain Dipre stressed that this is a pilot program and it is possible it may not work, but progress has been seen by the shoreline residents and the boaters. Mr. Jones stated he and his director will attend the July 9th meeting of the Federation to provide this same information in an update to a larger group in that community.

Item 4. Update on the County pumpout program

Ms. Hitchins discussed the pumpout program and displayed a graph illustrating that the pumpout vendor has continued to exceed their quota of 1300 vessels a month. Mr. Jones mentioned that the BOCC did receive an audit from the Clerk's office several months ago on what Pump Out USA's results have been. Pump Out USA will also be providing their own audit that Growth Management staff will be analyzing and then taking the results of that analysis before the BOCC. The BOCC wanted to know how much money the contractor is bringing in from the County and from DEP grants compared to how much they are spending on the operation. Mr. Jones indicated that the Pumpout USA contract can be amended by the Board and that it currently expires in January 2015.

Mr. Worthington asked whether the quota would be adjusted depending on the tourist season, explaining the seasonality of mooring use. Mr. Jones replied that the BOCC always has the ability to revise any of the terms of the contract. Mr. Jones believes the quota will be discussed in upcoming BOCC meetings. Mr. Worthington pointed out that the number of boats in the mooring field in Marathon drops off to 35 percent of capacity in the summer months. Mr. Fitton asked what the percentage of total boats is being pumped out. Mr. Jones replied that it is 300-500 individual boats being regularly pumped out. Captain Dipre emphasized this is a free program. Captain Dipre explained that some boaters were at first suspicious of this program. Mayor Murphy asked how the vendor's quota was established. Mr. Jones explained the quota was arrived at by extrapolating from the historic Key Largo pumpout data the number of vessels that would need pumpouts throughout the Keys (based on estimates of the number of anchored vessels keys-wide). He explained that Pumpout USA initially anticipated far more than 1300 pumpouts per month being performed. Mr. Fitton asked about County pumpout service in the Key West mooring field. Mr. Jones stated Key West only pumps out their mooring field at this time and Monroe County pumps out vessels outside of that mooring field. Mr. Jones clarified the County's vendor does go into marinas for pumpouts, but only after anchored vessels are served in unincorporated Monroe County. Brenda Altmeier commented that PumpOut USA will not pump out vessels in Garrison Bight Marina because there is a conflict of interest between the City and PumpOut USA. Mr. Jones clarified the vendor's contract says they do not pump out mooring fields.

Item 5. Derelict Vessel update

Ms. Hitchins provided an update on the derelict vessel program. Ms. Hitchins reported that 28 vessels so far this year have been removed. Projected out for the remainder of 2014, that would be about 80 vessels, which is a little higher than average, which is approximately 60. The County has applied with FWC for two grants for dv and marine debris removals. Ms. Hitchins thanked the Committee for their letter of support for the grant application. Mr. Jones mentioned

that the tugboat Tilly which sank south of Key West was discussed at the BOCC meetings in March and April, at which Commissioner Neugent explained that while the County does remove derelict vessels, the County is not under any statutory obligation to do so and probably does not have the budget to deal with the Tilly and there is no plan for the County to be involved with that at this point. Commissioner Neugent also mentioned at that March meeting that he wanted the Board to be more aggressive with derelict vessels, particularly with prevention. The commissioner held a meeting with Marine Resources, FWC, the Sheriff's Office and the County Attorney's Office at which different management strategies were discussed that the County could utilize if it chose to do so. Mr. Jones mentioned that Commissioner provided a follow-up to that meeting in an agenda item to the Board in April. At that meeting Rich Jones told the Board that the present direction of the Board is to 'look into' a mooring field at Boca Chica, and after the possibilities for that are exhausted the Board may want to consider alternative strategies for derelict vessel prevention, such as those described in the list provided at the previous meeting with Commissioner Neugent.

Captain Dipre provided an update on the ongoing FWC investigation of the sinking of the tugboat Tilly, and explained the options for removing the Tilly are not good ones and appear costly. One thing being considered to prevent the Tilly from being a hazard to navigation would be removing the superstructure from the top and it may remain where it is presently. Mr. Worthington asked about the possibility of raising the boat with air bags and taking it out beyond the boundaries of the sanctuary and sinking it. Captain Dipre feels that is a dangerous endeavor because it is a fuel hazard and it is an extremely large and heavy vessel. Rich Jones indicated that that would require federal approval and is not likely, and that the cleanup required to sink the boat could cost more than the removal and disposal. Bill Kelly asked for the number of derelict vessels identified by the County. Captain Dipre estimated there are 180 derelict vessels from Key Largo to Key West right now. Captain Dipre explained the process of removing a derelict vessel. Captain Dipre stated any wrecked, junked or substantially dismantled vessel left upon the public waters of the state is in violation. If it is left or stored or abandoned upon the public waters, the responsible person, not necessarily the owner, is held responsible.

Pictures of different derelict vessels were shown and described. Captain Dipre stated that the vessel need not be abandoned to be considered derelict. An abandoned vessel means it does not have an identifiable owner. It means it is disposed of on public property partially dismantled with no apparent intrinsic value. It takes time to investigate who the responsible person is. Letters of notification must be sent out. Opportunity to remove the vessel must be given. Disposal of the vessel is typically performed by, and paid for, from Monroe County funds. FWC must document the process very thoroughly so the case will hold up in court. Although FWC has the authority to remove vessels immediately, it is very expensive to put these vessels in storage before they can be destroyed. Marinas are allowed by statute to take care of the same issues by themselves without involving FWC. FWC has only 50 officers from Key West to Key Largo.

Captain Dipre noted that Sheriff Ramsay is getting very involved in the derelict vessel problem in Monroe County. Sheriff Ramsay has more freedom and has more authority in removing vessels. The Coast Guard can act sooner than FWC can in dealing with a derelict vessel. Florida Statute Chapter 705 states notice must be given by placing a sticker on the vessel and five days at

a minimum must be given. Captain Dipre stated FWC's timelines are not clear. If it is a life-or-death emergency the vessel can be removed immediately and put in a marina, however at a great expense. Right now there is a change in the law that has been promulgated that gives any sworn law enforcement officer the authority to tow a boat in order to eliminate that kind of hazard to navigation. Capt. Dipre mentioned that the Captain of the Port (USCG captain in Key West) can 'arrest' or lock-down a vessel and prevent it from leaving port, as in the case of the Platinum located in Safe Harbor. Mr. Worthington asked if there is a process that people can go through to get Cuban refugee boats, which would save the taxpayers money. Captain Dipre invited any interested person to call him. The Coast Guard and Border Patrol have started towing those vessels into their stations, which is saving the County quite a bit of money. Captain Dipre informed the Committee that FWC has a 30 percent success rate of actually locating owners and having them take responsibility for their vessels. Captain Dipre encourages his officers to immediately issue a citation for a clear violation to avoid the possibility of those responsible leaving the County.

Item 6. Update on regulatory buoy maintenance at Whale Harbor no motor zone

Ms. Hitchins provided an update. Ms. Hitchins reported that Phase 1, which included the provision of new regulatory buoys and downlines along the main channel, was completed in March when a contractor replaced missing buoys in that area. The County has applied with FWC for a grant to continue reinstalling the buoy system to the east and west of the main channel to complete Phase 2. Staff is hoping to hear back from FWC by July to get Phase 2 completed. Mr. Jones explained for Mr. Worthington that the buoys in this area last approximately five years, give or take. Ms. Hitchins provided a graphic showing the 29 buoys along the main channel which were replaced in March, and the 51 buoys along the outside of the flats and along the Oceanside which hopefully would be replaced through grant funding.

Item 7. Committee discussion

Chair Koisch wanted to discuss development of education outreach materials for boating in the Whale Harbor Channel area. Chair Koisch proposed for Phase 2 reinstalling every other buoy to save money and using the balance of the money saved on educational materials. Mr. Jones clarified there is currently no money for the next phase, that the County is relying on FWC grant funding which could not be used for other projects, so there would be no funding balance. Mr. Jones explained the importance of suitable marker spacing so that boaters can 'connect the dots' when approaching a marked zone. Celia Hitchins added that the buoys along the outside of the shoals serve double duty by acting as channel markers. Chair Koisch asked what the spacing of the buoys at Whale Harbor Channel. Mr. Jones responded that he was not sure, but would determine the spacing for the next meeting. He did indicate that buoys are spaced closer together along the main channel than on the outside of the marked shoals. Mr. Jones suggested that if the County receives the grant that all the buoys be replaced, otherwise maybe every other one be replaced. Chair Koisch suggested the committee wait until they learn about the grant award before considering it further. Chair Koisch wanted consideration given to having some educational outreach materials for this geographic area due to the fact that it is a heavily used area and it is a big restricted area for boaters. Educational brochures from the Sanctuary and the Village of Islamorada were distributed to the Committee members. Mr. Jones explained education outreach materials can sometimes be done in-house very inexpensively, if the

materials are not overly complicated. He used the Pilot Program anchoring ordinance brochures as an example of educational materials generated in-house.

Mr. Kelly stated sign pollution has always been a concern in the Upper Keys, but if no buoys mark protected areas there can be no enforcement of these regulations. Mr. Kelly noted that there is no indication whatsoever upon entering the National Marine Sanctuary. It was mentioned that the County carries the burden of education for the Sanctuary because the Sanctuary is not funding that component. Ms. Altmeier clarified that the Sanctuary tries to put educational information at any and every access point possible. There is no visitor center, no entrance point in the Keys, but the educational information is available for individuals. A packet that the Sanctuary produces related to marine zoning was distributed to the Committee members as an example of educational materials. Mr. Jones agreed that the number of buoys in the Whale Harbor Channel area is disproportionate to the rest of these types of zones in Monroe County.

Celia Hitchins indicated that staff will provide an update of the FWC grant request at the next meeting. Mr. Worthington noted that Vaca Cut has only eight buoys. Mr. Jones pointed out that Whale Harbor is a no-motor zone, whereas Vaca Cut is an idle speed zone and only needs markers at either end of the zone. The purpose of the Whale Harbor zone is two-fold: To keep boats from destroying seagrass, but more importantly it is to keep boat props from running over people who may be wading in the shallow water.

In regard to the discussion of possible seagrass restoration projects by Mr. Makepeace at the previous meeting, Mr. Jones reported that the Sanctuary does not give blanket permits for seagrass restoration or other projects. He explained that Sanctuary staff had responded to the inquiry, and indicated that all projects permitted through the Sanctuary must be site specific and describe the project in detail. Mr. Jones indicated that it's probably not necessary anyway, that it doesn't seem likely that there would be multiple restoration projects conducted and completed in a short timeframe anyway. He said that a person could apply with the Sanctuary for a permit for a defined project at a specific location.

Item 8. Upcoming meeting schedule

Mr. Worthington pointed out that the next meeting is scheduled for the night before the opening of lobster season. That date was not convenient for Mr. Worthington or Ms. Stafford. Ms. Hitchins stated the meeting room is unavailable on August 2, but July 29 and August 19 are available. The Committee members agreed July 29 is good for everybody. Ms. Hitchins noted that the November 4 meeting date is Election Day. The Committee members agreed November 5 would be convenient for everybody. Ms. Hitchins will check the availability of the room for November 5. Plan B will be November 18.

Mr. Worthington asked Commissioner Murphy for an update on the barricading of areas along Card Sound road previously used as boat ramps. Mayor Murphy explained that they were not proper boat ramps and had to be blocked off due to improper use by folks from Dade County. She added that there is another area used as a boat ramp not too far away that is also in very bad condition and is more gravel than anything else. Neither area is safe for boat launching, and they are located on a narrow two-lane road with no shoulder. There has been fighting, drinking and large messes made at these locations. The license plates of cars parked at these locations are not

from Monroe County. Commissioner Murphy pointed out that the boat ramp is free at Harry Harris Park Monday through Friday, as well as Sunset Point Park. Mr. Worthington stated FDOT is looking at replacing the two boat ramps closed on Card Sound with a kayak launch ramp just north of the Dade/Monroe County line.

Item 9. Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Worthington made a motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion passed unanimously.