

## Pinellas County LRRC Meeting Minutes

### Weedon Island Preserve

May 13, 2014: 1-3 PM

Members in Attendance: Elizabeth Fleming, Serra Herndon, Dave Kandz, Mark LaPrade, Terri Skapik, Doug Speeler, Katie Tripp

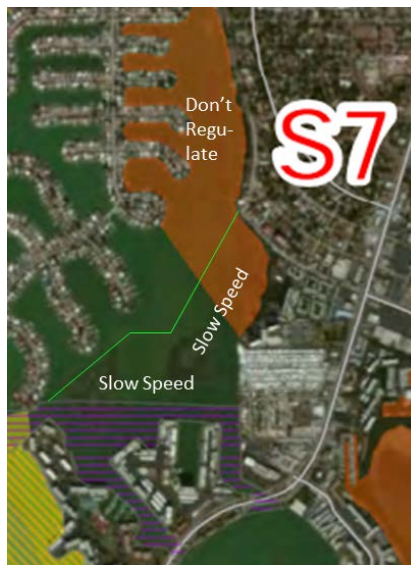
Members Absent: Bill Allbright, Dave Travis, Janine Cianciolo, Dave Markett, Charles White

Staff in Attendance: Dave Walker and Carol Grynewicz (Pinellas County), Scott Calleson (FWC), Pete Plage (USFWS)

1. Approval of Minutes from 5/8 meeting
  - a. Minutes are not yet ready, will be completed before next meeting
2. Discussion of committee members who have not yet attended a meeting
  - a. Pinellas County staff have had no further word from them
  - b. Committee was intended to be 50/50 membership of boating and manatee advocates. Manatee advocates under-represented due to absences.
  - c. The Committee requested that County staff try to establish voice contact with the missing parties to determine whether or not they will serve on the committee. We are almost one month into the process at this point.
  - d. Committee will decide next week what to do, based on the results of the County's outreach calls.
3. Public Input
  - a. Terri reviewed the role of the public at meetings as there was one member of the public present. Members of the public who wish to speak will be given 3 minutes to do so at the end of the meeting.
4. Discussion of Zones
  - a. S7: Treasure Island Causeway (South)
    - i. Abundant seagrass near east shore and patches in coves and canals to the west; most important are seagrass areas along the east shoreline south of Villa Grande; no existing zones; boating safety zones present in ICW but not in S7; proposed north limit at Causeway and south limit running southeast from the south end of the peninsula containing 79<sup>th</sup> Circle South to the western end of Majestic Way South.
    - ii. Mark LaPrade: the east side is used for watersports; 8 feet deep- safe enough to ski; Treasure Island Bridge has 5 foot clearance; watersports area is ~0.5 mi wide and 1 mi long
    - iii. Manatees eat in the seagrass along the east side
    - iv. Doug: there are so few areas families can use for recreation; Terri agrees and it is mostly smaller boats that use this area

- v. Mark, Terri, and Doug believed it would not be feasible to subdivide the region of S7 from north to south, leaving a high speed area in the middle and a shoreline buffer for manatees.
- vi. Katie proposed protection of the seagrass area along the southeast extent of the currently proposed S7, and to the south, encompassing known seagrass areas and meeting the existing idle speed zone to the south
- vii. Mark commented that there have been no manatee deaths here and few sightings; had 1 watercraft-related death north of the causeway, so he's not sure what we're disturbing here.
- viii. Elizabeth asked whether the 5 large marinas, currently on hold due to the No-Go BO would add traffic to this area if permitted.
  - 1. Terri gave a summary of the projects:
    - a. 1 was already built- a Condo Association built docks because they received a joint permit and assumed it was a state/federal joint permit. This is located in Treasure Island north of S7. Project listed as Peter Olms.
    - b. Madeira Grand modified their application and didn't expand their number of slips, just got the number of slips allowed- Santa Madeira
    - c. Spring Lake Aquaplex- developer wanted to dredge a connection to the coastal waters from Spring Lake to Frenchman's Creek, next to Huber's marina and put 300 wet slips in an area that could hold only 50. This was an application to test what could get permitted.
    - d. Bay Pines Marina (Dave Travis' marina) proposed a net increase of 90 wet slips and dry slips to create a total of 400 dry slips
    - e. Treasure Island- condo development on 114<sup>th</sup> for 6 slips- went back to residential dock density and only took 2 slips
    - f. Gulfport wanted 3 slips for a municipal project
  - 2. Nothing that exceeds residential dock density has been permitted since 2007
  - 3. Elizabeth's point in bringing this up is that we need to be planning for future development and mitigating for those impacts
    - a. Mark stated that this is a valid thought but what is existing is not likely to increase
  - 4. Doug has data he will bring to the next meeting about hi and dry and wet slips
- ix. Terri noted that this area received a "black" designation in Table 6, indicating 7 or more times the warm-season mean for fast overlap and suggested that the existing idle speed boating safety zone could be extended north to encompass the seagrass beds.

- x. Serra commented that she would like to see the cove at the bottom of the proposed S7 area protected and maybe the easternmost strip of shoreline along the length of S7. The group proposes to add protection along the shoreline at S6 but stop north of the causeway. Manatees will go to a protected shoreline area to a watersports area. If we can provide some protection in the important feeding ground, she feels that would be a good compromise. Move the Carry slow speed protections north of the idle speed boating safety zone and extend northeast into the southern portion of S7.
  - 1. Doug noted that this would still leave a major portion open for watersports.
  - 2. Terri said she was leaning towards support for this modified zone
- xi. Scott Calleson asked if the existing watersports area extends south of S7
  - 1. Mark said that it does come a little further south but if we protect the seagrass there, it won't hamper the activity
- xii. Doug proposed squaring off an area to protect the seagrass bed
- xiii. Scott Calleson inquired whether there are a lot of these watersports areas
  - 1. Doug said there is one in every community; maybe 2 more south of this one; this watersports area serves a lot of people from this immediate vicinity and the Paradise Isles area to the west
- xiv. Mark proposes to bring protections north from the existing idle speed zone to protect manatees and their feeding area in the contiguous seagrass area. Leave a gap between the zone and the finger canals to the west to allow boats to run along the shore up to the watersports area.
- xv. Doug: Kids don't ski on the east side so it will leave a natural corridor for manatees to traverse, but it shouldn't be marked because it would impede recreation
- xvi. The group showed support for the following modification of S7:



b. S8: Blind Pass

- i. Existing Zones only on weekends and holidays; warm season zone proposed in all or part of area; use same north boundary as existing local zone? New FWC zones would be more protective since existing zones are only in effect on weekends.
- ii. Serra supports a 7 day a week slow zone in the warm season
- iii. Mark supports warm-season only
- iv. Treasure Island and St. Petersburg collaborated to create existing zone
- v. Terri has no problem with a warm season slow speed zone
- vi. The underlying local rule will stay in effect during the cold season
- vii. All members present accepted a warm season, 7 day a week slow speed zone
  - 1. Scott mentioned that the existing zone extends north of the FWC proposal
    - a. Mark responded that there is another existing zone there that is also in effect during the weekdays

c. S9: Pasadena Avenue

- i. Doug doesn't accept encumbering any more of the ICW
- ii. Mark: already have a shore to shore boating safety zone to the north; the area outside the ICW he is fine with for S9 but is not OK with slowing down the ICW; people will go out into the Gulf of Mexico on days they shouldn't
- iii. Terri said that Bill Albright had expressed that he did not want any more zones in the ICW
- iv. No one present had an objection to the Option 2 portion of the FWC proposal- including the existing boating safety zone
- v. None of the 3 boating advocates present wanted the ICW channel regulated
  - 1. A 0.5 mi stretch of ICW would be regulated by the FWC proposal
- vi. Katie asked Scott why FWC thought regulation in the ICW was needed in this area
  - 1. Scott responded that manatees use this section as a corridor to cross over between S9 and S10 and are probably crossing the ICW frequently in this general area
  - 2. Katie expressed that she thinks this is a valid reason and location to regulate a very short stretch of ICW (0.5 mi) and noted that no additional ICW regulations are proposed from here south.
- vii. Elizabeth asked how fast boats go in this area of the ICW
  - 1. Mark said 30 mph; Scott said 25-30 mph is accurate
- viii. Terri asked if everyone agreed with a warm season slow speed zone in the southern area of S9 outside the ICW

1. Mark responded that he wanted a corridor left open along the finger canals to the south to allow people to run their boats to the ICW; and he wants the ICW excluded from regulation
2. Terri doesn't agree with leaving a channel off the tips of the finger canals because she thinks boaters coming out of residential properties won't go fast and this would push more boat use to the very southern edge
  - a. Mark said that is what they do now
- ix. Elizabeth questioned whether this area of ICW would have more use in the future
  1. Terri said a developer owns 8-10 parcels on Corey Ave. where Leverocks used to be and is waiting for the market to turn; the moratorium allows him to maintain and keep up the slips, but not expand; he keeps paying submerged land fees on docks he can't use but his only other option is to lose his grandfathering
- x. 4 LRRC members present accepted FWC's proposal including the ICW channel; among the 3 other members present, there was a proposal to accept the FWC proposal minus the ICW regulations and another proposal to exempt the ICW and a channel along the finger canals in the south portion of S9 leading to the ICW
- xi. Scott commented that staff doesn't propose regulations in the ICW unless they really think it is necessary. This was 1 area where they really thought it was necessary and they consciously excluded the ICW in other areas.
- xii. Doug commented that boaters are already being punished with slow speed for 1.5 miles to the north.
  1. Katie commented that was for boating safety and not manatee protection
- xiii. Terri reminded the group that all comments will be taken into consideration and we are not setting a rule, just providing input
- d. S10: Pasadena Golf Club
  - i. Elizabeth accepts S10 as proposed
  - ii. Terri has no issue with S10
  - iii. Doug said there is no skiing here so no objection
  - iv. Mark has no objection
  - v. All members present accepted S10 as proposed
5. 5/21 meeting at the County offices in Clearwater will begin with discussion of S11
6. Terri made a motion to adjourn at 3:10 PM, seconded by Doug