October 6, 2009
Milton, Florida

The Marine Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Jeff Marker and members Rick Harris and Dan Wakley. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker), County Engineer (Roger Blaylock) and Public Works Director (Avis Whitfield). Chairman Marker called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

The minutes of the August 4, 2009 meeting were approved.

DERELICT VESSEL UPDATE

Mr. Marker asked for a report from Mr. Blaylock on his findings regarding the grandfathering of permits for derelict vessels. Roger Blaylock reported that an individual permit is required for removal of the Symphonia. Mr. Walker noted that since Ms. Verlinde could not be here she had provided copies of an email from Phil Horning, with the FWC, who gave an update on the Symphonia saying that it is second or third on their list for removal by the State if they receive funding, and noting that the project is eligible for grant submission to the FBIP. He pointed out that Ms. Verlinde also gives a report on Monofilament recycling in her email. (See attached)

In reply to Mr. Marker's comment about estimates from PBS&J's of $90,000 to $100,000, and perhaps the need to wait on the State for funding, Mr. Walker noted that Mr. Marker's memory was correct in that we had received an estimate from PBS&J, the engineering firm the State had contracted with to provide services for removal of their derelict boats, initially for $40,000 to $50,000 but PBS&J later presented the higher estimate.

Mr. Wakley reported that Brown's Marine recently had a derelict vessel removed at no cost by Big Dog Services out of Mobile, Alabama, for the scrape metal. They also had a sunken barge removed by Dale's Marine Construction of Santa Rosa County. Since the Symphonia is solid steel with an empty hull we may be able to work a deal for the metal. Mr. Marker requested Mr. Blaylock contact each company to see if they have an interest in removing the Symphonia.

Mr. Marker reported that there is a derelict boat that has been dumped near the Shoreline Boat Ramp in the City of Gulf Breeze. He noted that there is no way to trace the owner because the identification numbers were removed. Mr. Marker stated that he had talked with Robert Turpin and Mr. Turpin believes that it can be removed without permitting by pumping it at low tide and attaching floating devices and then floating it at high tide to keep from disturbing the sea grass and towed to the dock where it can then be lifted out at the dock with a crane onto a truck and dumped in our landfill. Mr. Whitfield said that he will contact the City to see if they have any plans for removal and will work with the City to assist. Mr. Blaylock asked if the vessel has been declared derelict. Discussion continued about the ability of the Public Works Department to remove derelict boats and of the responsibility of the City to provide assistance. Mr. Harris made a motion to research the issue further and bring the information back for discussion at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wakley and approved unanimously.

CHAIRMAN / MEMBER ISSUES / REPORTS

Mr. Whitfield reported that he has investigated the property available for purchase near the Holley boat ramp and determined that there is some usable land. He has contacted the property owner and verified that the property is for sale. He recommends that the County Engineering department look at it for permitting, retention and site plans before any negotiations begin. He noted that it is about one third of an acre and most of the area appears to be usable for parking. Discussion continued about other possible lots for purchase in the same area and improvement potential for building a parking lot. Mr. Wakley made a motion for Public Works staff to investigate any available property and for Engineering staff to make a report on costs for improvements to lots in the area. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harris and passed unanimously. Mr. Wakley will contact Commissioner Goodin to see if he has any funding ideas.

Mr. Wakley mentioned that he spoke with a couple of FWC Law Enforcement Officers about the floating "No Wake" zone buoys at Juana's and in Blackwater River which they stated are unenforceable. The office said we need to have buoys with two sided signs that say "Slow speed, minimum wake" and on the other side say "Resume speed, safe operation." Mr. Harris said we do not have buoys in Blackwater River. The signage is on posts in Blackwater River. Mr. Blaylock clarified that the signage should not say "No Wake" it should say "Minimum Wake." Mr. Whitfield said that he spoke with a different officer who stated that he does enforce the signage. There was some confusion about the preference for buoys or fixed post for the signage. Mr. Marker recommended that the Captain that runs the FWC office should be contacted for clarification.

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Marker stated the Boat Registration Fee Fund has a current balance of $488,070.

Mr. Blaylock reported that we are still waiting for a biological opinion from the National Marine Fisheries to the Corp of Engineers for the Archie Glover Boat ramp. Mr. Marker asked what kind of time line they operate under and Mr. Blaylock responded that they have 135 days but he does not know when that begins or ends. He notate that the County is also trying to permit Hurricane Gustavo repairs on the west end and is waiting for a revised biological opinion also from the National Marine Fisheries. The Corp is working with us to try and expedite the permit every chance they get. Mr. Marker said it is disappointing because the low tide season is coming up and it would be nice to be able to get in there to do the work.

The Monofilament Recycling Update was discussed during the Derelict Vessel Update but Mr. Marker noted that braided line and floracarbon is not recyclable and needs to be removed from the signage.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Wakley said that in July of 2008 the Senate raised the Boat Registration fees by 51%, none of which comes to the counties. They are using the money for law enforcement staff (to fund 66 positions which would have been lost to budget cuts), fuel for law enforcement operations, derelict vessel removal and manatee rehabilitation. In addition, they passed a ruling giving counties with more than 35,000 registered boats 15 free points for their Boating Improvement Grant applications. In 2009, Santa Rosa County listed 14,005 registered recreational boats, 234 commercial boats and 12 canoes.

Mr. Wakley also requested permission to designate April as Boating Safety Awareness month and direction to implement a campaign to offer boat inspections with incentives offered to boaters to come out and get their inspections without fear of receiving violations. He would like to include safety demonstrations and maybe a swap meet. Mr. Marker requested that he get the program together and bring an outline back for MAC review.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2009 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.