

MEXICO BEACH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Type: Special Meeting
When: Monday, March 27, 2017 - Mexico Beach Civic Center
Attending:

Sandie Yarbrough	Director	Debbi Mulligan	Director
Cathey Hobbs	Director	Wylie Petty	Director
Linda Albrecht	Director	Kimberly Shoaf	President
Robert Carroll	Director	Melissa Williams	
Shawna Wood	Director		

The meeting was brought to order at 10:04 a.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

Citizens Comments: None

Business:

- Leave No Trace – Director Yarbrough stated that the agenda business was to discuss Leave No Trace (LNT) and the request of funds from the City of Mexico Beach. She apologized for the tabling of this issue at the last Board meeting; however, the Board was in need of information from an attorney on what can and can't be done. President Shoaf introduced attorney Mike Burke who is also legal counsel for the Panama City CDC. Mr. Burke explained to the Board and audience that the CDC's main purpose is to promote tourism and the Florida Statute 125.0104 Tourist Development Tax is slightly specific stating that the governing board of the county can adopt up to 5¢ tourist development tax; however there are restrictions on the last 2¢. Mr. Burke explained that of the 3¢ that can be used to promote tourism, 1¢ can be used for beach projects such as beach nourishment and improvements. He reviewed the amount budgeted in FY17, \$30,000 for canal dredging, \$18,000 for beach cleaning, \$500 for park operations and \$100,000 for other beach maintenance project and informed the Board that the money allotted to beach projects was about a full penny or possibly more. He questioned what exactly the City was asking the CDC to pay on LNT costs. Director Yarbrough stated that the City was asking for removal of items left on the beach plus turtle monitoring costs. Director Albrecht stated that the City was asking for \$48,312 to cover LNT cost and turtle monitoring costs. However, if the Board allows, the City would like the total request of \$59,327 that also covers beach patrol/ambassador cost. She inquired whether the \$100,000-Other Beach Maintenance Project needed to be considered under the 1¢ and Mr. Burke replied yes. Director Albrecht stated that the turtle patrol does not want anyone riding the beach in the morning before they patrol and President Shoaf stated that Barbara Ells had informed Mr. Smigielski that there should be no reason for nighttime pickup in Mexico Beach. Mr. Burke pointed out to the Board that with the Board's small budget that spending has to be balanced and using one-third of the budget for just beach cleanup opens the CDC up to not spending appropriately. Director Albrecht stated we advertise to bring visitors to Mexico Beach and why should citizens, who mostly keep it neat, pay for the cleanup while it's a convenience for tourists. Mr. Burke highlighted Walton County LNT ordinance and enacted procedures. He suggested the Board look to have some findings done and amend the CDC's strategic plan to realize an ambassador program. Mr. Burke cautioned the Board to saying yes to spending money today. Discussion followed regarding the City's proposal and whether the CDC should contract for LNT or whether the City should invoice the CDC. President Shoaf reminded the Board that the City has requested the CDC to cost share the 25% local funds needed for the Mexico Beach Inlet Sand Bypassing State grant. She also informed the Board that the CDC has purchased rack cards and magnets to make visitors aware of LNT and that more rack cards will need to be ordered in the future. Discussion followed on what was left in the budget that we allotted to the City, funds remaining from the Feasibility Study and the CDC reserve. Tanya Castro addressed the Board explaining that citizens of Mexico Beach voted in LNT but taxpayers should not have to pay for the impact of visitors. Discussion followed regarding sponsorships and events left in FY17 and the possibility of placing some of those funds toward LNT. Mr. Burke reminded the Board that sponsorships fall under the 4¢ and 5¢ that is dedicated and

designed for that reason and to be careful. President Shoaf stated the Board could pull \$3900 from 7075-Tradeshows/Conventions and \$900 from 7070-Travel Lodging total \$4800. President Shoaf also informed the Board that approximately \$7,000 would be left over from 7095-Other Beach Maintenance Project. Mr. Burke reminded the Board that when you take away from one operating expense to only use for beach cleaning then it starts to look suspect and the budget is appropriately allocated and almost set in stone. He suggested next budget year to assess what is needed and, again, cautioned the Board to do more study and take baby steps, in that, now might not be the time. Discussion followed.

President Shoaf informed the Board that she and Mell Smigielski can create a video to run on the local channel and the City could use to educate the public reiterating that Mexico Beach continues to stay a clean, friendly beach town.

Discussion followed regarding \$11,800 rolling into beach cleaning and whether to cut a check or make payment on a reimbursement scale.

After discussion, a motion was made by Director Albrecht and seconded by Director Carroll that the MBCDC provide \$11,800 for FY17 Leave No Trace removal of items to the City. The motion passed on a vote of 5-2.

A motion was made by Director Albrecht and seconded by Director Mulligan to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Melissa Williams for
Clayton Studstill
Secretary/Treasurer