

# City of Marco Island Florida

*51 Bald Eagle Drive  
Marco Island, Florida  
cityofmarcoisland.com*



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

**Monday, March 1, 2021**

**5:30 PM**

**Community Meeting Room**

### **City Council**

*Chair: Jared Grifoni  
Vice-Chair: Greg Folley*

*City Council: Claire Babrowski,  
Rich Blonna, Erik Brechnitz,  
Becky Irwin, Joe Rola*

*City Manager: Mike McNees  
City Attorney: Alan L. Gabriel  
City Clerk: Laura Litzan*

## 1. Call to Order

Chair Grifoni called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

## 2. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Folley, Councilor Rola, Councilor Babrowski and Chair Grifoni

## Also Present

Michael McNees, City Manager  
Casey Lucius, Assistant to the City Manager (via Zoom remote conference connection)  
Laura Litzan, City Clerk  
Alan L. Gabriel, City Attorney  
Dave Baer, Police Captain  
Dave Batiato, Deputy Fire Chief  
Guillermo Polanco, Finance Director  
Daniel J. Smith, Community Affairs Director  
Tim Pinter, Public Works Director  
Jose Duran, Information Technology Director  
Kelli DeFedericis, Flood Plain Coordinator  
Martin Luna, Video/Broadcast Technician  
Citizens and Visitors

## 3. Invocation

Offered by Reverend Tom Boeck of the Marco Island Lutheran Church.

## 4. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Chair Grifoni.

## 5. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Grifoni requested that the Agenda be Amended under 'Proclamations and Presentations' to recognize a City proclamation announcing Flood Awareness Week.

**MOTION by Vice-Chair Foley, seconded by Councilor Brechnitz, that the Agenda be Amended under Item 8 (Proclamations and Presentations) to include a Proclamation regarding Flood Awareness Week. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOICE VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Folley, Councilor Rola, Councilor Babrowski and Chair Grifoni

## 6. Approval of the Minutes

No Minutes were brought forward for approval at this meeting.

## 7. Approval of Consent Agenda

No items were on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

## 8. Proclamations and Presentations

### *Proclamation of Marco Island Flood Awareness Week (week of March 8th)*

*With the intention to:*

- 1) raise the awareness of flood risks to property owners and visitors to the Island;*
- 2) promote the availability of flood insurance;*
- 3) share information on flood protection methods, and;*
- 4) educate the public on how to better prepare for storm-related weather emergencies,*

*Chair Grifoni and the City Council declared the week of March 8, 2021 as 'Marco Island Flood Awareness Week' and noted the availability of City Flood Plain Coordinator Kelli DeFedericis to address citizen questions by phone at 239-389-3926 or by visiting the City's Information Tent at the weekly Marco Island Farmer's Market on March 3rd and March 10th.*

### **9. Citizens' Comments on Agenda Items Not Scheduled for Public Hearing and Items Other Than Those Appearing on the Agenda**

*No comments were brought forward by members of the public during this portion of the Agenda.*

### **10. Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing**

*No quasi-judicial issues were on the Agenda for this meeting.*

### **11. Ordinances**

#### *A. Public Hearings*

[ID 21-1406](#) Ordinance - Second Reading - Proposed Changes to Sec. 2-204 - Terms of Members

*City Clerk Laura Litzan read Ordinance 21-04 into the record by title only.*

*As sponsor of this revised Ordinance, Councilor Irwin briefly stated the revised language regarding the maximum term for citizen service on a City Committee or Board.*

*No members of the public came forward to comment.*

**MOTION by Councilor Brechnitz, seconded by Vice-Chair Folley, that Ordinance 21-04 - Second Reading - Proposed Changes to Sec 2-204 - Terms of Members be Adopted as Proposed. MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

**Yes:** 7 - Councilor Blonna, Councilor Irwin, Councilor Brechnitz, Vice-Chair Folley, Councilor Rola, Councilor Babrowski and Chair Grifoni

#### *B. First Readings - None*

### **12. Resolutions & City Council Items**

[ID 21-1405](#) Discussion - Sidewalk Repair and Replacement Program

*City Manager McNees briefly outlined the direction provided by the previous City Council on this issue. He noted that the question of the City taking over the future maintenance of all sidewalks that have been brought up to the City's standards by currently-responsible property owners is a policy decision for this*

*Council to determine.*

*After considerable perspective-sharing and questions for the City Manager and his Staff, the Council directed the City Manager to continue to define a program for the City to assume the future maintenance of city sidewalks with an eye toward presenting a full review of the expected future costs for this program on or before the scheduled annual capital budget workshop on May 17th.*

### **13. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda**

*No items were removed from the Consent Agenda at this meeting.*

### **14. Council Communications & Future Agenda**

*Councilor Blonna reported on his cross-departmental meeting with City Staff leaders on the City's experience to date since the passage of the revised Noise Ordinance. Recognizing: 1) that the previous Council proposed a six month follow-up review on the success of the revised Noise Ordinance, and; 2) that the Florida State Legislature is actively considering House Bill 219 and Senate Bill 522 limiting the power of local governments to regulate short-term vacation rentals in the future, Councilor Blonna proposed that a Future Agenda item on these topics come before the City Council.*

*Councilor Babrowski observed that the City of Naples is often looked to by City Staff as a 'model' to be considered for policy, regulatory or procedural comparisons even though it is generally acknowledged that Marco Island is a far different community on many dimensions of importance. She proposed that the City Staff investigate, analyze and establish a peer group of other municipalities and Island communities within and outside of Florida that may provide better policy or procedural insights on issues of importance to the City and citizens of Marco Island.*

*Referencing back to the priorities outlined by District 1 County Commissioner Rick LoCastro at the Special-Called Marco Island City Council Meeting on February 22nd, Councilor Babrowski proposed that the Council engage in an in-depth review and understanding of the proposed septic conversion plan for the Isles of Capri with Marco Island's Sewer & Water Services General Manager well in advance of any decision-making action by the Collier County Board of Commissioners on the Isles of Capri plan. Chair Grifoni encouraged Councilor Babrowski to "take the lead" on reaching out to City Staff to prepare and bring this discussion forward.*

*Councilor Babrowski next noted that the Committee Summary attached to each City Council agenda has not been meaningfully updated during calendar year 2021, and she questioned the relevance of this report if it does not accurately reflect the status of Committee and Board direction and actions on key initiatives. She augmented this observation by also noting that, though the monthly Department Reports included with each City Council agenda contain a great deal analytical data each month, there is no qualitative insight or commentary by the Department leaders on key concerns or issues of importance where the City Council might be able to provide assistance.*

*Councilor Brechnitz followed Councilor Babrowski's comments regarding the proposed septic conversion discussion for Isles of Capri by recalling earlier conversations (and pushback) by the previous Marco Island City Council regarding potential expansion of the City's water and sewer service area.*

*Vice-Chair Folley provided his perspective on expansion of the City's water and sewer service area and, in harkening back to the Council Communications discussion on February 22nd, voiced support for Councilor Brechnitz's and Chair Grifoni's proposal that special 'Council Communications' sessions with members of the public be scheduled soon on a monthly or bi-monthly basis for the remainder of 2021.*

*Councilor Rola raised questions regarding the City's capacity to handle wastewater from service areas outside of Marco Island proper, and Chair Grifoni asked City Manager McNees to work with Councilor Babrowski to bring all of the facts and individuals together to be able to conduct an informed discussion*

regarding this issue.

Councilor Blonna noted that Environmental Research & Design, Inc.'s report should provide some insight on the effect of existing nearby septic systems on the water quality in and around Marco Island. He further noted that substantial grant money may be available to offset the cost of expanding the service area of the Marco Island Water & Sewer Department, should the Council wish to consider it.

Councilor Irwin, in noting the unique ecology and importance of the beach and dune areas to many species of birds, turtles and other wildlife here on Marco Island, advised the Council of her discussions with the City Manager and Staff to provide greater educational opportunities for visitors who access the Island's beaches via the public beach access points. Additionally, Councilor Irwin proposed that a date (and a Proclamation establishing it) for "Marco Island Day" with related celebratory activities be considered by the Council for calendar year 2021.

Chair Grifoni reminded the Council of its meeting with U.S. Congressman Byron Donalds beginning at 4:00 P.M. on Monday, March 15th. He also advised the Council that State Representative Bob Rommel has agreed to participate in a Zoom teleconference call with the Marco Island City Council to discuss House Bill 219 regarding vacation rentals beginning at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, March 15th as well. Additionally, Chair Grifoni has arranged for the City Council to engage with Florida State Senator Kathleen Passidomo in a Zoom teleconference during the Council's regularly-scheduled meeting on Monday, May 3rd.

Referencing back to the Council Communications discussion initiated by Vice-Chair Folley at the February 22nd meeting of the Council regarding potential Councilor scheduling conflicts in early June, Chair Grifoni requested feedback from members of the Council on their availability for an alternative date. After brief Councilor input and dialogue, it was decided to leave the June 7th City Council meeting date as originally scheduled.

While on the subject of future Council meeting dates, Chair Grifoni noted a change in the Council's regular meeting schedule in early September (from Tuesday, September 7th to Wednesday, September 8th) to accommodate a conflict with the Collier County School District Budget Meeting that is also scheduled for the evening of September 7th.

Chair Grifoni concluded the discussion regarding meeting schedules by requesting that all Councilors come to the regular March 15th meeting of the Council prepared to establish one or more additional special 'Council Communications' (possibly luncheon) sessions with the public as proposed by Vice-Chair Folley.

(Editorial Note: Later, during the City Manager's remarks, Chair Grifoni asked the Councilors to review their availability to conduct this special 'Council Communications' session from 12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, March 31st, just prior to the already-scheduled Comprehensive Plan Workshop for the Council. It is expected that members of the Council will come prepared to confirm (or offer alternative dates for this initial 'Council Communications' session) at the regularly-scheduled March 15th meeting of the Council).

#### [ID 20-1205](#) Future Agenda Items

Councilor Blonna requested that a Six Month Review of the Impact of the Revised Noise Ordinance on Short-Term Vacation Rentals be placed on a Future Agenda of the City Council.

Councilor Babrowski requested that the Isles of Capri Septic Conversion Plan and Implications for an Expanded Service Area for Marco Island Water & Sewer be placed on a Future Agenda of the City Council.

Councilor Irwin requested that a Proclamation establishing "Marco Island Day 2021" be placed on a Future Agenda of the City Council.

## 15. Council Reports

### [ID 21-1409](#) Ad Hoc Business Development and Redevelopment Committee - Councilor Richard Blonna

*Councilor Blonna, in speaking from prepared remarks, noted the experience, wealth of expertise, vision and long-term commitment of the Marco Island Chamber of Commerce and many long-term residents who own businesses on the Island. He expressed his belief that this group could offer important input into the Island's Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code and Strategic Plan if encouraged to come together in a structured environment under the umbrella of the City's Boards and Committees process. He requested that his fellow Councilors support a Motion to direct the City Staff to prepare an Ordinance that creates the 'Ad Hoc Business Development and Redevelopment Committee' for a First Reading before a near-term meeting of the City Council.*

#### *Public Comment*

*Mr. Dan High (Jamaica Ct.), as General Manager at Rose Marina over the past five years, voiced his support of Councilor Blonna's recommendation by citing specific examples where on-Island business community input on issues that businesses face on a daily basis could make doing business on the Island much more productive and beneficial for the many residents, visitors and guests who rely on the products and services that are available here.*

*Mr. Erik Condee (Osprey Ct.) noted his experience as an owner of a multi-unit commercial property, and he spoke to the disincentives that many new business owners experience in attempting to navigate the City Codes and requirements that could be streamlined with the input of the Island's knowledgeable and committed business community. He pointed to issues of zoning, parking, land use requirements and workforce housing as specific areas of concern.*

*After receiving these comments and other relevant comments offered by the City Councilors, Chair Grifoni asked for Council consensus endorsing Councilor Blonna's proposed direction and requesting that Councilor Blonna draft a proposed charter, Committee implementation specifics, action items and other relevant details to review with the Council at a future meeting. The Council voiced unanimous support (7-0) for this direction.*

## 16. City Manager's Report

*City Manager McNees reported that all COVID vaccine recipients who were processed through the City's former EventBrite registration site have successfully received both doses, and that, to date, 7,810 Marco Island residents have registered for vaccinations through the more-recent City website registration process.*

*In response to Councilor Rola's question, City Manager McNees noted that all vaccines received for Marco Island to date have been the Moderna vaccine, and that he had no information on the likelihood (or timeline) for Marco Island receiving the recently-approved single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.*

*City Manager McNees also reminded the Council of upcoming workshops on March 4th (Collier County Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Report) and March 31st (Comprehensive Plan).*

## 17. City Attorney's Report

*No report was provided by City Attorney Alan Gabriel.*

## 18. Departmental Reports

[ID 20-1206](#) Monthly Departmental Reports

*Councilor Blonna complimented the City's Building Department on its reported performance metrics for permits issued and inspections completed.*

**19. Citizens' Comments**

*No citizen comments were brought forward during this portion of the Agenda.*

**20. Adjournment**

*There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.*

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*Jared Grifoni, Council Chair*

ATTEST:

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*Laura Litzan, City Clerk*

PREPARED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Jim Kornas, Recording Specialist*