

**CALL TO ORDER**

A Meeting of the City Council of Marathon, Florida was held on July 24, 2020 via Zoom  
Mayor Cook called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL - There were present:**

Councilmember John Bartus

Councilmember, Mark Senmartin

Vice Mayor Luis Gonzalez

Councilmember, Dr. Dan Zieg

Mayor Steve Cook, comprising a quorum

Also in attendance were:

City Manager, Chuck Lindsey

City Attorney, Dirk Smits

City Attorney, Gaelan Jones

City Clerk, Diane Clavier

Planning Director, George Garrett

Ports and Marina Director, Sean Cannon

Assistant Ports & Marina Director, Matt McJunkin

Public Works Director, Carlos Solis

Parks & Rec Director, Paul Davis

Marathon Fire Rescue, Chief John Johnson

Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Captain Don Hiller & Sheriff Rick Ramsay

FWC officer, David Dipre

City of Marathon  
City Council Action Minutes  
July 24, 2020 5:30 pm City Council Special Call Minutes

Pledge was led by Vice Mayor Gonzalez

Roll call.

Jones read into the record the virtual viewing instructions.

Gonzalez announced Key Largo and Islamorada have closed their unattended boat ramps during lobster mini season. Harry Harris Park and Sunset Park will be opened to locals only. Founders park will be open to locals and lodging guests. He spoke on the three public boat ramps in Marathon, MM 54, Harbor Drive and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. He felt it would be a disaster if no action is taken to minimize the impact at the boat ramps in Marathon. He proposed to close the city ramps 7/28-7/30 and felt it would help keep the large groups of people to a minimum.

Cook called for public comment.

Ingrid Tyree, 49<sup>th</sup> Street, requested clarification regarding vacation rental occupancy load and contact numbers for illegal lobstering.

Cook explained the meeting is specifically to address the boat ramps and referred her to call City Hall for questions.

Shanna Gaskill-Coco Plum, expressed public advertisement of the boat ramp closures will be imperative.

Michelle Frank- Gulfstream Blvd., Supported closing the harbor drive ramp for three days to alleviate the impact in the community.

Inaudioable Speaker-Copa D'Oro, questioned why the boat ramps are not closed now and was in favor of protecting the residents versus the local businesses.

Wendy Bonilla-Tuna Drive, questioned what the Council will do about the rest of the season with boat ramp traffic.

Jones directed Council to view and review the comments that were coming in through the YouTube channel.

Jeff Pinkus-behind the airport, expressed concerns about the heavy boat ramp traffic and recommended the ramps be closed 7/28-7/31 with additional closures into the regular lobster season. He also voiced concerns about the safety of the citizens of Marathon during the pandemic.

Armand Messina- Coco Plum, was in support of closing the boat ramps and raised concerns regarding the enforcement of such closures.

City of Marathon  
City Council Action Minutes  
July 24, 2020 5:30 pm City Council Special Call Minutes

Dr. Charles Nitus-Gulfstream Blvd, stated from a physician point of view any limiting of congestion will help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Isabelle Goriazo-Miami, spoke against closing the boat ramps.

Debra Wonderlin-Marathon, stated many people with vacation rentals are on their way down to Marathon and it's too late to close the boat ramps for mini-season, but supported closing the ramps 7/28-7/31 to the day trippers. She felt the meeting could've been called earlier to get ahead of the situation given the circumstances with the pandemic.

MCSO, Captain Don Hiller, Lt. Derrick Paul and Sheriff Ramsay were on hand to answer questions and discuss the enforcement of the possible ramp closures.

Cook questioned how the Sheriff's office is staffed to deal with the situation.

Hiller explained the enforcement will be difficult as it is under such short notice and no planning has been made and will be a burden on the agency and traffic will be a very big concern due to the lack of notice. He spoke on the issue with stopping every vehicle to check for credentials and exposing the deputies to face to face contact and COVID-19.

FWC, David Dipre agreed with Capt. Hiller and stated FWC officers will be brought in to assist with the mini season but unfortunately he said there's not enough time to advertise to the public and the officers will also be contending with COVID-19.

Bartus asked if the boat ramps were completely closed, would that make their jobs any easier? Ramsay explained it would be easier because there would not be traffic to manage, congestion and the exposure to possible COVID-19 would be at a minimum. Dipre explained that if the ramps are closed in Marathon and the upper keys the day trippers will most likely continue further south and traffic could get congested on US1 and cause issues.

Senmartin agreed with Gonzalez with regards to closing the boat ramps. He explained the MM 54 ramp is under construction and closed, leaving Harbor Drive and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street ramp available. He felt the Harbor Drive ramp should be closed as a service to the residences behind the airport and the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street ramp to remain open only to local traffic. He stated he respected the Sheriff Office and FWC position on the issue and volunteered himself to work the boat ramp during the mini season.

Zieg stated the input from the local law enforcement agencies is vital to the decision. He stated closing the ramp entirely 7/28-7/30 is a reasonable decision.

Lindsey addressed the contractor being behind schedule at the MM54 boat ramp and stated the ramp is scheduled to be opened by mini season, and there will be minimal damage to the overlay. He asked MCSO what the impact would be if they kept 33<sup>rd</sup> Street & MM54 boat ramps open and closed the Harbor Drive ramp. Hiller responded with only two ramps open staff would be swamped with ID checks & verifications and traffic would be

congested. Gonzalez asked if MCSO would have the man power to work only one ramp, Harbor Drive, instead of all three. Hiller replied there is a plan in place to manage the traffic, congestion, enforce the law and keep traffic open and flowing to the residents behind the airport. Hiller stated it will be difficult with the short notice to acquire help, as his officers are already assigned to details. Gonzalez questioned if funds are available to hire detail officers. Lindsey replied yes, funds could be made available through budget amendments, etc., if there are officers available.

Cook asked if there is any support from Key Colony Beach Police Dept. because a lot of their vacation renters will be using the Marathon boat ramps. Lindsey explained he spoke to the Key Colony Beach City Manager and they are very short handed during mini season week, but they did offer to support with what they could.

Bartus questioned if closing the Harbor Drive boat ramp to everyone expect residents with a message board that the other two ramps are open would have an impact. Ramsay did not feel it would make a difference and explained voluntary compliance at the Harbor Drive ramp would be unlikely. Bartus expressed he would like to work with the FWC, MCSO and other local governments to come up with possible solutions in the future for mini season

**MOTION:** Senmartin moved to close all the boat ramps except for 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. He added the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street ramp will be for Marathon residents and vacation renters with valid documentation of their rental in Marathon. The timeframe will be for 7/28-7/30.

**SECOND:** Gonzalez

**Vote of the Motion:**

Yes: Senmartin, Gonzalez, Bartus

No: Zieg, Cook

Absent: None

Abstain: None

**Vote on the Motion:** 3 Yes, 2 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

Smits stated that for purposes for providing authority to the Sheriff's office or other law enforcement agencies, Resolution 2020-43 will need to be passed.

Resolution 2020-45, Authorizing The Enforcement Of Trespass Offenses On City Property, Providing For An Appeal Process; Providing For Severability; And Providing An Effective Date

Clavier clarified that the motion will not include Key Colony Beach.

**MOTION:** Zieg moved to approve resolution 2020-45.

**SECOND:** Gonzalez

**Vote of the Motion:**

Yes: Zieg, Gonzalez, Senmartin, Bartus, Cook  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

**Vote on the Motion:** 5 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent, 0 Abstain

**Council Comments**

Bartus commented that he would like to see the City form a task force with the other local governments and Florida Fish & Wildlife to come up with solutions for future mini seasons. He expressed his appreciation to MCSO & FWC during the lobster mini season. He asked the residents to stay safe and not be on the water if they did not have to be.

Senmartin encouraged press releases and messages to go out to the public to notice the boat ramp closures.

Zieg commented he felt the parameters should not have been limited to Marathon residents only and wished FWC & MCSO good luck during the mini sport season.

Gonzalez commented he was happy that Council agreed to get something in place moving forward and asked everyone to stay safe.

Cook thanked staff for putting together the meeting under short notice and thanked the public for their interaction and input. He thanked the FWC and MCSO for their support and reminded the public to practice social distancing and good hygiene.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Steve Cook adjourned the meeting at 11:09am by unanimous consent.

I certify the above represents an accurate summary of the regular Council meeting of July 24, 2020.

  
Diane Clavier, City Clerk

  
Date