

Palm Beach County Vessel Traffic Study Consensus Group
Wednesday, November 19, 2008 -- 4:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County Vista Center
2400 N. Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida

Meeting called to order at 4:35 p.m.

Jupiter Inlet –

John Sprague – He stated there is only about 3 - 4 mph difference between idle and slow. No safety issues between idle and slow. He also is adverse (sic) to most of the idle speeds. This regulation won't affect property owners, and advocated changing from idle to slow. He also stated the boating safety rules need to be consistent with manatee zones.

Bert Winters Park –

Leonard Rubin – He discussed the Juno Park area, stating it is a bit over a nautical mile with no regulation other than the manatee zone. The channel is narrow and he disagrees with 300' measurement. This stretch of waterway inhibits boaters with the double 'S' curve. There is very little natural shoreline, shallows, and rapid currents in this area along with increased boating traffic and the addition of boat clubs with inexperienced boaters. Just south of PGA Boulevard are three public restaurants; there are no commercial boats in this area. Area is problematic due to physical characteristics alone. He also made a reference to some fatalities which occurred in 2001-02.

Ted Schiff – He had an issue regarding the shoreline to shoreline 300' study width of the channel – stating that it excluded docks and marinas – more realistic would be 150'– 190'. He also stated that the 3' low tide change in the waterway reduces low water volume – seawall – no natural shoreline – bathtub effect as it churns water back and forth, leaving no way for water to dissipate. Also spoke about blind corners and rapid current which runs between 2.2 and 2.4 knots, exacerbating maneuverability issues. Indicated there has been a dramatic increase in boat traffic; an individual in the area rarely slows his boat because it is considered dangerous; as a result, enforcement becomes difficult. He did not indicate any problem with the tugs that traverse this area; stated that the main problem is power boaters. Stated that he didn't know of any charter boats that use this route. He is asking for a full time slow or idle speed from Bert Winters and Juno Park. Also stated he thought a fulltime weekends and holidays zone would work about 75% of the time. His last choice would be a seasonal zone. He also mentioned that the blind curve was not addressed in the study, nor were the two fatalities.

Captain Bill Taylor - Charter Boat Captain – He advised that an extra five minutes would not make a big difference. Indicated that weekends are a key

Palm Beach County Vessel Traffic Study Consensus Group
Wednesday, November 19, 2008 -- 4:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County Vista Center
2400 N. Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida

issue in the area just north of Parker Bridge. Appeared to be more in favor of slow vs. idle speed.

John Sprague – He stated that vessels coming off and going up on plane get slammed. When you can't have fun and get to a fishing spot then boaters tend to avoid them due to a cumulative effect (sic). Stated that FWC needs to very carefully look at vessel accidents; there were 66 accidents in West Palm Beach. Analyze the accidents and see why they happened. Part of the issue is enforcement, along with a regulation problem. FWC doesn't have enough officers and for FWC to just add additional regulations with no enforcement will not help. If we continue to shut down section after section of the waterway, we will shut down boating. Sales of boats are down a few million dollars, but there are not any stats to support lack of sales being reflective of more regulations.

Gene Folden – Indicated a weekend zone helped cure the problem in Lake Boca. He also indicated that most of the City of Boca Raton is shut down due to manatees. The area from Lake Wyman to Spanish River Bridge which is just south of Highland Beach would be ideal for a slot zone, i.e., regulating vessels by size.

John Sprague – He believes we need to look at size of vessels, similar to the Jupiter Island (Martin Co.) rule since some small boats can run fast with no wake.

Ted Schiff – He believes speed is one issue; wakes are another issue. Boaters can go to Lake Worth Lagoon for speed-type activities.

Val Kattel – Water Skiing – US 1 bridge (zone 4.) She indicated personal watercraft lie in wait. She suggested the regulation should go from no wake to slow speed instead of to the current 25 mph. The Parker Bridge already has an idle speed zone.

John Sprague – The Parker Bridge area might be appropriate for regulating vessels by size. He believes that water skiing is popular in this area because it's protected water.

Ted Schiff – Questioned why you need to speed up and slow down in a distance of only 2.5 miles. The area south of Donald Ross Bridge is a high speed area for water skiing.

Palm Beach County Vessel Traffic Study Consensus Group
Wednesday, November 19, 2008 -- 4:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County Vista Center
2400 N. Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida

Peanut Island –

It was stated during the course of the consensus meeting that this area has the highest concentration of boaters in Palm Beach County.

John Sprague – Believes that the current slow speed zone at Peanut Island has taken care of the area.

Jenna Bradley – Believes the area needs enforcement. Also suggested that if the southern edge of the zone was placed in line with the general contour of Peanut Island, i.e., signage on shore, it would be easier to post and therefore possibly more enforceable.

Flagler Memorial Bridge Area –

Royal Palm Bridge –

John Sprague – Believes that slow speed (5 knots) would lessen time for bridge openings.

Lantana Bridge –

One participant stated that the zone at this location needs to be consistent at the bridge.

Ted Schiff – Doesn't believe that current 'boater responsible for wake' signage works, as no one pays attention to them.

Capt. Taylor – Believes that education is key.

John Sprague – He requested an analysis of the 66 accidents from Capt. Richard Moore's shop. Also wants to look at the growth of number of registered boats. Be very cautious about projections. Advised FWC to be very careful, because the study is flawed. Also look at the ability to build more boat ramps and docks. Advised that FWC may be flawed in these projections and using flawed data. Thinks we're pretty close at capacity. Hard to navigate through the permit nightmare. Ability to launch in the future – this will be a deciding factor on whether or not recreational boating continues to grow in Palm Beach County.

Ted Schiff – He wanted to know if additional regulations would adversely affect boat registrations in the county. Asked if such a study has been done.

Palm Beach County Vessel Traffic Study Consensus Group
Wednesday, November 19, 2008 -- 4:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County Vista Center
2400 N. Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida

Paul Davis – Does not think that study took into account the impact of manatee speed zones.

John Sprague – He wants to see maps of manatee overlays with boating restricted zones.

Gene Folden – He inquired regarding number of accident reports. Staff provided Lieutenant Ed Cates with Mr. Folden's information and they will be in touch. Mr. Folden is looking for accident and citation stats.

Captain Dave Schaeffer (FWC) – Depending on whether or not the correct charging statute was listed on the citation: this will dictate whether or not the ticket gets captured.

Ted Schiff – Questioned why FWC hadn't contacted all local governments and made corrections for submission of citations.

Gerald Ward – Comments were presented via electronic mail on November 18, 2008 - I was able to make an uninterrupted view of subject report the morning of 16 November 2008. I also compared the current "draft" to my evaluation email comments of 0645 21 April 2008 prior to the FWC's boating & waterways review meeting in Tallahassee on 22 April 2008. In substantial part the comments have been satisfactorily addressed as related to the determined consultant scope.

In the public meeting comments of 16 March 2006 at the top paragraph of page f-3, my citizen testimony should show reference to the rights-of-way width of 300 feet of the land-cut section of the intracoastal waterway (north of lake worth and effectively south of lake worth creek or south of effectively Donald Ross bridge).

I find the "accident & citations" detail and discussed (appendix e) to be more helpful in "fleshing out" the report. This data translates currently into the two figures 2-8 and 2-9 on pages 48-50. What is more important is review of appendix e, particularly page e-1 summarizing that within short five year period of record analyzed (2002-2006) only 66 accidents were reported for a waterway length of roughly 47 statute miles. The FWC should work to extend the period of analysis to improve the product, as observed by the consultants on page e-5. None-the-less vessel operation in Palm Beach County is good boating!

Although, time allotted is short for the consensus group meeting on 19 November 2008, I do believe before proceeding to proposed rulemaking that

Palm Beach County Vessel Traffic Study Consensus Group
Wednesday, November 19, 2008 -- 4:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County Vista Center
2400 N. Jog Road
West Palm Beach, Florida

further discussion needs to occur as related to model factors as related to page 58 and most importantly appendix C. This should be a specific topic for future meetings after a cursory discussion on Wednesday.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m. to begin 6:00 p.m. public workshop.