



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 17, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and City Commission

Via: Todd Stoughton
Interim City Manager

From: Steve McAlearney
Interim Assistant City Manager

Subject: Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Monroe County (County) for Upland Support to Man of War Harbor Mooring Field (File 24-6394)

Introduction

Approving an ILA with Monroe County to provide upland support to the County's Man of War Harbor Mooring Field.

Background

Unmanaged anchorages with historically high numbers of vessels in the waters surrounding Key West are significant sources of abandoned and derelict vessels. Monroe County has the greatest number of derelict vessels in Florida, a problem which causes significant environmental damage, navigational hazards, public safety issues, and removal costs to taxpayers.

To address, mitigate, and reduce the significant negative impacts associated with such unregulated anchorage, in 2021 the State enacted F.S. § 327.4108(3)(a), designating Monroe County as an "anchoring limitation area" and establishing a 90-day time limit for vessels anchored in waters throughout the Florida Keys. This legislation included a requirement that three hundred (300) new public mooring balls be placed, ensuring an available alternative for the existing liveaboard community, prior to implementing a ninety-day (90-day) time limit for vessels anchored in waters surrounding Key West.

Data collected by professional staff of the City of Key West, Monroe County, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission found that only 137 occupied liveaboard vessels were anchored in the vicinity of the Key West Bight City Dock. The remaining vessels were either being stored and/or already in derelict condition. Therefore, it was determined that 300 new moorings would exceed the needs of the existing liveaboard community. Additionally, it was determined that installing 300 new moorings was not feasible due to insufficient suitable space. This would create significant state and federal regulatory hurdles, likely resulting in the inability to implement the 90-day anchoring time limit.

Thus, in 2022, the State enacted F.S. § 327.4108(3)(d), reducing the requirement to one hundred (100) new public mooring balls, requiring their placement within one (1) mile of the Key West Bight City Dock, in order to generally apply the Monroe County anchoring limitation area's 90-day anchoring time limit.

The County subsequently directed staff to expedite the implementation of at least 100 new moorings, and to partner with the City of Key West to accomplish this goal and associated management of this location. The County completed a feasibility study to acquire site-specific data to assist in evaluating and determining the best location for the required 100 moorings. The feasibility study included a shoreside facility analysis at the Key West Bight Marina, the intended shoreside access and service location.

Procurement

Financial impact to the City will be covered by charging customer fees for use of all upland services, including dinghy dockage, bathhouse, trash disposal and water. The County is responsible for design, permitting, construction, maintenance and operation of the Man or War Harbor Mooring Field. In the event that data evidences occupancy exceeding reasonable capacity of City bathhouse, the County agrees to assist the City in the upgrade or replacement of those facilities.

Recommendation

The City Manager's Office recommends approving an ILA with Monroe County to provide upland support to the County's Man of War Harbor Mooring Field.