

FORT MORGAN NEWS

October 2019~Issue 152



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greeting to all FMCA members! Especially those of you that are new to our association, welcome!

Congratulations to the newly reinstated members of the Fort Morgan Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee and thank you for volunteering for another term of service to our community. I would like to remind everyone that the Baldwin County Commission will be having a workshop at Foley Satellite Courthouse in the big meeting room on Tuesday October 8th, 2019 at 8:30am. The Commissioners will be working on agenda items for vote on October 15th. Among these items are the proposed text amendments to our local ordinances regarding building height, beach walkover regulation and more. These amendments are being proposed in order to help ensure the preservation and protection of Fort Morgan for years to come. I encourage anyone that is willing and able to attend this workshop to do so. This will be a public meeting and public comment is encouraged.



I recently reached out to Gulf Shores City Hall regarding some questions members of the community have posed in the past few weeks. Here is what I found:

Q: Are Fort Morgan residents eligible for the new free medical transport program provided by AirMed & Rescue?

A: According to Gulf Shores City Hall, this service is provided to residents living inside the municipal limits of the City of Gulf Shores.

Q: How do I obtain Hurricane Re Entry Decals for my vehicles?

A: Residents living in the unincorporated areas outside of Gulf Shores City Limits must go to Gulf Shores City Hall to purchase Re Entry stickers. The stickers are \$5 per sticker, limit 2 per household. You must provide proof of residency such as utility bill or current lease as well as valid driver's license. All inquiries should be made with the City of Gulf Shores.

As always, I encourage each member of our association to help spread the word about the Fort Morgan Civic Association and its work to preserve and protect the Fort Morgan community. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday October 14th, 2019. I hope to see you there!

Joe

Joe Emerson

Agenda for this month's FMCA General Meeting

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance	Joe Emerson, President
Previous FMCA General Meeting 2019 Minutes	Carol Kittrell, Secretary
Treasurer's Report	Greg Strategier, Treasurer
Membership Report	Jennifer Noojin, Membership
Fort Morgan Fire & Rescue Report	Ernie Church, FMFRD
Old Business	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter to Commissioners - Coastal Clean Up - FMVFD Auxiliary Fish Fry 	
New Business	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declaratory Judgement - Open Floor 	
Adjournment: Next Meeting, Nov 11	

FMCA Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Monday September 9th

FMCA 2019/2020 MEETINGS:

FMCA Monthly Member Meetings ~ 2nd Monday, 6:30pm, Shell Banks Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
Nov 11~Dec 9~Jan 13~Feb 10~Mar 9~Apr 13

FMCA Membership Report~~~~~ Jennifer Noojin

Reminder: Annual Dues are due by Due December 31 annually.

Membership Application process:

NOTE: The fillable form online will not work on Chrome or Edge or Safari browsers. Internet Explorer and Firefox are currently the only browsers that will work with the fillable form

On the Fort Morgan Civic Association Membership webpage, Click on Membership Application (fillable form) on the webpage or this [LINK](#) and complete. Select "Submit Form". Email will open in your email window. Complete email and send.

To complete the electronic submission process, utilize the PayPal link at the bottom of the Membership webpage and follow prompts to pay Membership Dues.

NOTE: Membership Dues are \$15.00 and \$3.00 is the PayPal processing fee for a total electronic transaction of \$18.00. Any amount above \$18 will be accepted as a donation to the Fort Morgan Civic Association.

Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department~~~~~Jerry Ralston, Fire Chief, FMFRD

The Fort Morgan Fire Department ran 29 calls in September:

18 Medical Calls	1 Grass Fire
6 Fire Alarms	1 Traffic Hazard
3 Swimmer in Distress	

The ADEM Burn Ban is still in effect until November 1. It has been dangerously dry for the past month. The risk of wild fire is very high. Please be fire aware.

Stay Safe,
Jerry Ralston,
Fire Chief

Fort Morgan Peninsula Neighborhood Safety & Crime Report ~~~~~Sgt Mike Walker, BCSO

EMERGENCY: 911

Report all potentially life-threatening and suspicious activities

Sheriff's Department—Administrative Office.....972-6802

Sheriff's Office Website: www.sheriffofbaldwin.com

Anonymous Tip Email Address (NOT for Emergencies):

<http://sheriffofbaldwin.com/contactRC.asp>

Fort Morgan Planning & Zoning Committee~~~~~Chan West

At long last the zoning changes that many of our members and the county department have been working on are in the final stages. If you are not familiar with these changes, TA-19001, they may be reviewed on our website. Two important meetings are scheduled:

October 8 - 8:30 at satellite courthouse in Foley. County Commission workshop

October 15 - 8:30 in Bay Minette. County Commission meeting

We understand that some who are opposed to some of the provisions are mounting a campaign to have the changes disapproved; therefore, it is important that as many as possible go to these two public events where you may voice your support, as we work to control development and promote an environmentally friendly and family-oriented community.

October 16 - 9:00 a.m. Semi-annual meeting of our Fort Morgan Advisory Committee at Shell Banks Baptist Church Fellowship Hall.

Monthly P&Z Mtgs – To Be Determined – please check for information on upcoming dates and agendas on our webpage - <https://www.fortmorgancivic.org/planning-zoning-info>.

For updates on the variance requests acted on by the Board of Adjustment, check our website at <https://www.fortmorgancivic.org/planning-zoning-info> . If you have questions regarding the District 25 Planning and Zoning Committee please contact Chan West at chan@goefish.com or 251-979-4932.

Open Letter to FMCA members RE: Fort Morgan Zoning Amendments~~~~~Paul Stanton

Dear Fort Morgan Civic Association Members,

I am writing you as a homeowner and someone who cares deeply for the Fort Morgan community. Fort Morgan is the last remaining place along the Baldwin County Gulf Coast that hasn't been overdeveloped and retains its unique beach front cottage character. However, over the last several years the character has begun to be altered. The beach front cottages are now being torn down and replaced with 3 story, 60 'tall 'mini hotels' that contain 18 bedrooms and sleep 44 people. The parking generated by these "mini hotels" are tremendous and causes streets to be routinely blocked. Not only does this affect the residents and visitors, but it also severely impedes emergency services such as fire fighters and EMS staff. This issue is a fundamental critical emergency services issue that directly affects the safety and welfare of visitors and citizens alike. This exploitation of the zoning rules has diminished the unique character and only benefits a few while the rest of the public are at risk and left to deal with the negative consequences. I can't imagine that the citizens who initiated District 25 zoning process ever envisioned these small 50'-75' lots would be so overdeveloped with "mini hotels" destroying the unique character that they fought so hard to protect and has existed for decades in Fort Morgan.

Fortunately, citizens and homeowners have banded together with a common goal to protect this unique place we all love. **On October 15th the Baldwin County Commission will vote on several amendments that directly affect Fort Morgan. These zoning amendments demonstrate a great deal of hard work and a reasonable, fair approach to re-establishing and reaffirming the unique character and original vision of Fort Morgan while ensuring Fort Morgan Community and Visitors are SAFE.** These amendments fit squarely within the charge provided by the Local Act of the Alabama Legislature. In **Section 45-2-261.64 of the Act**, it says that the Baldwin County Commission **shall** specifically consider the historical nature of existing development within the Fort Morgan District, the historical and environmental character of the district, and the unique needs of the district related to hurricane safety and infrastructure for potential evacuation. It is clear that the "historical nature of existing development" is not gigantic mini-hotels that have sprung up in Fort Morgan. It is one of beach front cottages and a family friendly environment.

The Code of Alabama 1975 Section 45-2-261.64 - Enforcement and administration of subpart. The Baldwin County Commission shall enforce this subpart in the same manner as provided in Section 16 of Act 91-719, and, in performing its functions related to planning and zoning, the Baldwin County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Baldwin County Commission shall specifically consider the historical nature of existing development within the Fort Morgan District, the historical and environmental character of the district, and the unique needs of the district related to hurricane safety and infrastructure for potential evacuation. **(Act 2015-411, §5.)**



Please email or call your County Commissioners below and...

1. Please urge your County Commissioners to support the Fort Morgan Amendments and consider what the overdevelopment of these three-story mini hotel structures are doing to our unique beach cottage atmosphere on the Fort Morgan peninsula.
2. Please ask your County Commissioners to consider the unique public safety risks associated with hurricane evacuation off the Fort Morgan peninsula (while merging onto Highway 59 as Gulf Shores and Orange Beach evacuate.)
3. Please ask your County Commissioners to consider the environmental damage and risk to endangered species (Sea Turtle nesting areas and Alabama Beach Mice) that overdevelopment is causing.
4. And finally, please ask your County Commissioners to consider our brave First Responders that have the responsibility of entering these three story mini-hotels in times of crisis. Our Fire Chief has come out in a letter to the County urging Commissioners to pass these amendments as FMVFD does not have the capability to remove residents or visitors from structures over 2 stories.

Please join us in support of these Fort Morgan Zoning Amendments moving from three story mini hotels to two story beach homes and help us protect the unique character of Fort Morgan. Help us keep our Fire and Emergency First Responders safe from trying to rescue residents and visitors from these dangerous three-story structures that they are not equipped to enter with existing equipment. These Amendments were presented by Baldwin County Planning & Zoning Department with the full support of the Fort Morgan Planning & Zoning Advisory Committee; and **Unanimously** recommended by the Baldwin County Planning & Zoning Commission.

The County Commission will vote on these Fort Morgan Residential Zoning Amendments on October 15, 2019 at 8:30am at Bay Minette Administration Building, 322 Courthouse Square, Bay Minette, AL. Baldwin County Commissioners will hold a Work Session to discuss the proposed Residential Zoning Amendments with a Public Hearing at the Foley Satellite Courthouse, 201 E. Section Ave., Foley, AL on Tuesday, October 8, 2019 @ 8:30am.

Please make every effort to join us at these Meetings and email your County Commissioners below before October 15!

James E. (Jeb) Ball (251) 937-0330 Ext. 2330
Joe Davis III (251) 990-4620 Ext. 4620
Billie Jo Underwood (251) 972-8515 Ext. 8515
Charles F. (Skip) Gruber (251) 943-5061 Ext. 2804

jeb.ball@baldwincountyal.gov
joe.davis@baldwincountyal.gov
bunderwood@baldwincountyal.gov
cgruber@baldwincountyal.gov

Thank you for your consideration and Please FIGHT FOR FORT MORGAN! - Paul Stanton

Upcoming Events/ Community Support Opportunities in Fort Morgan:

19 October -Fort Morgan VFD Auxiliary Fish~::~::~::~::~Thelma Strong

The Ladies Auxiliary will be holding their annual Fish Fry Dinner Saturday October 19. The location will be Fort Morgan Fire Station #1 at 12105 Hwy. 180 W. The time will be 11:00 AM until 2:00PM. Meals will be \$8.00 a plate. There will be a bake sale, cook book sale, t shirt sale and a 50/50 raffle. ALL PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT THE FORT MORGAN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT. BENEVOLENT FUND.

Keep Fort Morgan Beautiful~::~::~::~Chan West

This is our adopt-a-mile type program whose faithful volunteers pick up trash along our highway. At this time, we have some who would like to retire. We need replacements. The idea is that you pick up roadside trash whenever you think it is needed – no organized campaigns.

We wish to recognize the following additions to the roster of trash scavengers: Heather Fuller, Belinda Clark, Wayne Zeek, Jeff Dale, Andy and Jenny Openshaw, and Joe Emerson. All sections are now covered except for mile 6 to 7, where Donna McKillip, who is only a part-time resident, needs a back-up. Surely there is someone in Surfside Shores who will step up to the plate to help Donna. **If you are willing to be responsible for mile 6 to 7 to assist Donna, call or email Chan.** (info under Executive Board Contacts). A grabber and a yellow vest will be furnished. All of us can assist in this program. When you go for a walk or run, on a road or the beach, stuff a couple of plastic grocery bags in your pocket.

Share the Beach 2019~::~::~Debbie Harbin

Fort Morgan Share the Beach team finished up the year with 19 nests, 6 of which were totally washed away with the storm Dorian. 2 more were infertile due to inundation. Of the nests that were left we put 792 babies to the water.

While this was our worst year, we had a great team with many new volunteers and we met so many visitors who were excited to be able to witness what for most is a once in a lifetime experience of seeing baby turtles make their way to the water. We have been told many times every year that this made their vacation. We have visitors from all over the country who plan their vacation around turtle hatching time.

Fort Morgan State Historic Site~::~::~Wendy Hyatt

Fort Morgan State Historic Site is currently booking for the "Who Haunt's the Fort Tours" October 23 & 26 6pm. Known deaths and burials at Mobile Point, by Mike Bailey, is the basis for this candlelit tour through the fort's recorded deaths and burials from 1812 to WWII. To register email wendyhyatt@fort-morgan.org or call 251-540-5257.

Escape Room "Espionage at Mobile Point" will be available for Wednesdays and Saturdays 10am or 2pm. To book email: escaperoom@fort-morgan.org.

WWII Event with Demonstration – Nov 1 and 2. More information will soon be posted on the Facebook (Fort Morgan State Historic Site) and website <http://www.fort-morgan.org>

Bon Secour NWR~::~::~Brittany Petersen

Upcoming Walks and Events at Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

Come and join us for our upcoming walks and events here at Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge! There will be four different informational walks in the coming weeks, as well as an educational movie about monarch butterflies!

8 October -The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies movie:

The movie, *The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies*, will be shown October 8th at 6:00 PM in the Conservation Hall at the Learning Campus at Gulf State Park.

9 October -Sea Turtle Talk!

Learn more about the sea turtles that nest along Alabama's beaches and the efforts involved in protecting their nests! The walk will be held at the end of the Mobile Street boardwalk on Wednesday, October 9th, at 9:00 AM. No reservations required!

15 October -Ask a Naturalist!

Join us on the Mobile Street boardwalk and ask one of our naturalists any questions you have about the native habitats, flora, and fauna here on our refuge! The walk will be held on Tuesday, October 15th, at 2:30 PM on the Mobile Street boardwalk. No reservations required!

15 & 24 October -Medicinal Plant Walks!

Take a journey back to when native tribes and early colonizers needed to rely on the land around them to supply the medication and food they needed to live in this coastal habitat! The walks will be held on Tuesday, October 15th, and Thursday, October 24th at 9:30 AM and will begin at the Jeff Friend Trail. They are 1 mile and will last about an hour. The walks are limited to 12 people; please call to make reservations at 251-540-7720.

Mid Oct – Mid Nov Monarch Walks!

Join refuge volunteer, Homer Singleton, as he leads participants along the Gator Lake Trail searching for this beautiful butterfly. During the walk Homer will introduce you to the butterflies which pass through this area, their habitats and their life cycles. Participants will also be asked to help catch monarch butterflies so that they can receive tags that will allow scientists to track their migration! The walk typically lasts anywhere from 2.5-3 hours and participants should come prepared to walk over 2 miles in soft sand with minimal shade. Water and bug spray are highly suggested. There will be 10 monarch walks, held on Wednesdays and Saturdays starting on October 16th and going through November 16th. They will begin at 10:00 AM at the Gator Lake Trailhead located off of Mobile Street.

The walks are limited to 12 participants; please call to make reservations at 251-540-7720.

Monarch Walk! Dates: Wednesday, October 16th; Saturday, October 19th; Wednesday, October 23rd; Saturday, October 26th; Wednesday, October 30th; Saturday, November 2nd; Wednesday, November 6th; Saturday, November 9th; Wednesday, November 13th; Saturday, November 16th

For upcoming events please visit our online sites at <http://www.fws.gov/bonsecour>; <http://facebook.com/BonSecourNWR>, or contact the Refuge Office by phone (251) 540-7720 or in person Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Fort Morgan History:

Request for contributions – please contact FMCA newsletter editor if you are interested in researching Fort Morgan history or providing personal memories to share of Fort Morgan

Governor's Mansion

On May 19, 1963 the first shovel of sand was flung commemorating the beginning of construction of the Governor's Mansion- a summer home for Alabama's governors. George Wallace was the Governor at the time. The land used for the construction of the home had been donated by developers with the purpose to attract investors to the coast of Alabama. Governor Wallace and his family used the 7,440 plus square foot mansion infrequently until 1982. Subsequent governors rarely used the facility and it slowly began deteriorating especially after damage in 1997 from Hurricane Danny.

Governor Robert Bentley made the controversial decision in to use leftover BP funds ~\$1.8 million to renovate the badly deteriorated mansion after receiving complaints from Fort Morgan residents about the “eyesore”. The renovations on the 5 bedroom / 3 bath structure included interior, exterior and increased security. The project was completed in 2017 providing a modern residence for state visits and VIP’s.

Special thanks to Bonnie Lowry, longtime Fort Morgan resident for her contribution to the Fort Morgan History segment this month; additional historic information was used from open internet resources.

FMCA Executive Board Contacts

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