

RECOMMENDATION TO SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH PROTOCOLS FOR USE OF MBNMS LISTSERV

Recommendation: That a Listserv Task Force be appointed to report back to the SAC at its December, 2001 meeting with a set of recommended, enforceable rules for the use of the MBNMS Listserv to be included in the SAC's Charter and Protocols.

The Task Force would be guided by the following principles:

- Affirm that Listserv is an informational tool
- Require that all business, including statements that warrant a response, be done in open and public meetings and not on-line
- Establish clear rules of etiquette for Listserve
- Use the Ralph Brown Act, which was designed to promote open meetings and public transactions in local government, as a model.

Background: The SAC Charter and Protocols are silent on the subject of proper use of the Listserv. The purpose of the Listserve is the dissemination of information. It is not:

- An on-line meeting platform upon which people are persuaded and issues are decided
- A chat room.

A large number of people are on various e-mail lists maintained by the MBNMS staff. Online arguments can turn off, drive away, or dissuade many of those who use, support, or collaborate with the MBNMS.

The proper forum for the exchange of ideas, debate over issues, and decisions are the Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings, which are open to the public. It is not the intent of the Listserv to persuade, accuse, or argue. Public debate should occur in public meetings with full participation by members of the public, and in which direct dialogue can occur. Information and announcements can be shared via the Listserv.

- MBNMS SAC Executive Committee, 9/21/01