

CITY OF CORAL GABLES WATERWAY ADVISORY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021 - 5:30 P.M.

In-Person Meeting – Commission Chambers

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	District	M 20	J 20	S 20	O 20	N	D 20	J 21	F 21	M 21	APPOINTED BY:
Lisette Stancioff	1	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	Raul Valdes-Fauli
Carla Isaias	3	*	*	P	P	*	P	E	P	P	Jorge L. Fors
Juan A. Galan Jr	3	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	Patricia Keon
Manny Chamizo	2	*	*	P	P	*	A	P	P	P	Vince Lago
Mario Lamar	4	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	E	Michael Mena
Douglas Yoder	CR	*	*	P	P	*	P	A	P	P	Peter Iglesias
Bertram Goldsmith	7	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
John Swain	2	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Andria Codina Miyares	6	*	*	P	A	*	A	P	P	P	Board-As-A-Whole

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Jorge Acevedo, Utilities Division Director/Board Secretary
 Pilar Wiese, Recording Secretary
 Gustavo Ceballos, Assistant City Attorney
 Billy Urquia, City Clerk
 Ed Hudak, Police Chief
 Maj. Jennie Hoff, Specialized Enforcement Division
 Lt. Henry Barnet, Marine Patrol
 Ray Toledo, Marine Patrol
 Chris Challenger, Marine Patrol

GUESTS:

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m. The roll was taken and a quorum was present.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of February 3, 2021.” The motion was seconded, voted upon and adopted unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:

- Discussion Ordinance No. 2016-15

City Clerk Mr. Billy Urquia was in attendance to clarify questions board members have about terms, elections, and selection of chairman and vice chair. He said that he has sent an email to board members advising them that everyone’s term comes up on May 31st in odd-number years and members are reappointed if they choose to continue to serve on the board or if not termed out. Board members can serve up to eight years, two-year terms. The email was sent to inquire if there is interest to continue to serve on the board.

Mr. Urquia said this election cycle is an example: The Mayor is not running for re-election and he has an appointee on this board. If the Mayor’s appointee wishes to continue to serve, he can pass that information to an incoming Commissioner. Members can also reach out to a new Commissioners and request to continue to serve on the Board under his or her appointment.

Mr. Galan asked if somebody who is currently serving and its appointing Commissioner is not re-elected, does it mean that they will no longer serve unless reappointed by someone else? Mr. Urquia confirmed. Members will continue to serve until a replacement is appointed for the board to continue to have quorum, and work on any current projects.

Mr. Galan said that board had some discussion about the chairman position. Ordinance says it should be rotated every year. He thinks one year is too short, that maybe it should be two years. Can the board make that decision? Mr. Urquia said the norm in the City is one year to serve as chairman. Ordinance 2016-015 established the Waterway Advisory Board. If you want to have something different, the board can take a vote and it will go as a recommendation to the City Commission to amend the legislation that created the board.

Mr. Swain said that he does not think the ordinance should be changed as the board can reappoint a chairman. Mr. Urquia said that it will be at the will of the board. If the board feels to have that person for more than a year, the board can reappoint that person for another year with a vote.

- Marine Patrol – Enforcement on waterways

Maj. Jennie Hoff said that she was transferred over to the Specialized Enforcement Division as of November last year. She introduced Lieutenant Barnet to the board. He was also transferred early this year to the Specialized Enforcement division. They both oversee the whole division as well as four Sergeants.

Mr. Chamizo said that there are a couple of issues marine patrol should know. There are two charter businesses going on to the waterway on Caballero at the very end, at the University Inn on Saturdays and Sundays. By four or five o'clock it gets crazy. There is no observation of rules over there at that time.

Board members asked if the marina at University Inn was a legal one. Maj. Hoff said that she parks her boat over there and it is a working marina. Mr. Chamizo said that marinas are supposed to have a pump out station for waste. Mr. Galan intervened saying that we need to figure out whether if it is a legitimate marina or not and if it is under the regulations of the Police Department. Maj. Hoff responded that it would not be under the Police Department; it would be probably is under the Building and Zoning Department. Mr. Chamizo said that he is getting emails from residents from each side of the canal complaining about boats ignoring the “No Wake” zone.

Maj. Hoff said that there is not restriction to navigate the Coral Gables’ canals. Only the Mahi canal is required to have a permit to go inside because of the manatees.

Mr. Chamizo said that there are two charter boats navigating the canals and they are not being observed right now. Mr. Galan said people are complaining about the noise coming from the boats. He asked to what extent the regulations the City imposes regarding loud cars, like on Miracle Mile, applicable to the waterways? Do the same rules apply to the waterways? Maybe the board wants to bring up to the Commission the street enforcement and the waterway enforcement issue similarly.

Mr. Chamizo asked Maj. Hoff about the regulations when a bunch of people that are unrelated are hanging off these boats coming through the waterway. Maj. Hoff said that there is a noise ordinance in place for the City. If the people on the boat say they are all friends, there is nothing we can do on our end.

Mr. Galan intervened if marine patrol checks the number of life vests versus number of people on the boat when they stop a boat, the capacity plate versus the

capacity of number of people on the boat. There is not capacity plate on the Sea Ray 400. Maj. Hoff said that yes, they will check the number of life vest versus the number of people and that there is a calculation you can make on how to get maximum capacity of people on the boat.

Maj. Hoff said that the noise ordinance applies to you as an individual, your home, your ambiance; if the noise affects you, then it is a violation of the noise ordinance. If a boat navigates on the waterways with loud music, that will fall under the noise ordinance and will be treated as such. You can call police and it would be addressed.

Chief Hudak was in attendance. He said that to address waterway issues residents complain about, the best way is to call the police and let them know as soon as they see it. Residents can call the Police Department, send a video or use the SaferWatch app to start an investigation and follow up. He wanted to caution everybody on the board to not take matters on their own hands by doing investigations. He said that there is not a charter business in the City of Coral Gables when it comes to boats. He said that he likes the advice and welcomes ideas and recommendations from the board. Unless people tell us directly whether making a police report or using the Saferwatch app to get information to us. We do not follow the NextDoor app. We would be chasing our tails and I can not afford to have those resources. That is not to say that legitimate concerns come up and if people want to flaunt what they are doing or they are lying that is something that you are just going to have to trust the police department that we are going to do a thorough investigation.

Mr. Chamizo thanked the Chief for mentioning NextDoor and for clarifying the issue. He talked about the parking underneath The Underline. It has been handled and mishandled a couple of times. He said that now there are paddleboarders, kayaks but the vehicles continue to park and leaving trash behind.

Chief Hudak said that it is a coordination effort. There are three jurisdictions dealing with that area. Miami-Dade County deals with on top of the track, the City deals underneath the tracks and the parks department of Miami-Dade County deals with the ramp. We have to coordinate all of those efforts along with our City Hall to get that done. He knows that there have been a lot of conversations about the issue for us as far as enforcement. We would have to write everybody a ticket. He said that he is amazed sometimes about how good his people are in the water. They have had a couple of spikes recovering boats. They saved people's lives last week. Last Saturday, they actually overturned a kayak and returned it to the owners.

Mr. Galan said that there has not been much progress with the issue of cameras on the waterway. Chief Hudak said that it came up at the Commission meeting. He is ok with the cameras on the waterways. The infrastructure to get to the water is a problem and that is working with I.T to make sure it is something we can get done. It is not off the table. It gives us evidence. It does not give us much deterrence. The sooner you start using the SaferWatch app or call us, people go away. It works on the streets. We have over 4,000 ring cameras in Coral Gables and when we arrest these people, they knew everybody is watching.

- Public Works Monthly Activities Report

Mr. Acevedo made an update presentation on waterway activities of the Public Works Department.

Right of Way division.

- Completed graffiti removal from multiple bridges
- Completed Sign Assessment along waterways
- Removed debris at Riviera Flood Gate Barrier
- Pruned Trees at Hardee Bridge
- Completed Door Hangers distribution along waterway properties
- Inspected the condition of mangroves throughout Canal system
- Assisted and guided residents at Alfonso Ave on Mahi canal
(resident trimmed excessive vegetation at the back property and waterway)

**Capital Improvement Projects
Utilities and ROW Division**

- Continue working with FIU Project including Water Quality Assessment
- Continue working with Consultant for the Canal Bank Stabilization Project at Taragona Dr.
- Implementing Pilot Project testing different devices to improve water quality discharge from storm drainage runoff
- Continue implementing best management practices to reduce pollutants along waterways, including street sweeping, CBs and Pipe cleaning

- Ideas for Educational Campaign

Mr. Acevedo said that at the last City Commission meeting items related to the waterways were discussed. City would like to have an educational campaign to improve enforcement efforts for paddleboards, kayakers and others, and outreach within the property owners in the waterways. We would like to ask board members to brainstorm how to best reach all of you and best way to do it, by email, website or any. Advertise projects, police code enforcement or any information on the waterways.

Mr. Chamizo said that bridge clearance is a big issue; where they launch; open parks. He likes the idea to have a little link on the website.

Chief Hudak intervened saying residents can report anything on SaferWatch app. It could be sent to all the residents along the waterways. A report will be sent directly to the Police Department. You can create a group for waterways' residents. There is a chat group that can be used to send messages out. You can do your outreach this way. You just need to have resident sign up for SaferWatch. You can report stuff anonymously.

Mr. Galan asked Chief Hudak what would prohibit if some of us were willing to allow you to do it, for a ring camera to be placed on each one of our properties that would allow you to access that ring camera and see what is going on in the waterway. Chief Hudak responded that we can not access your ring camera. If you see something, you can send it to us.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:00PM

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.