

CITY OF CORAL GABLES WATERWAY ADVISORY BOARD

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

In-Person Meeting – Commission Chambers

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	District	A	M	J	S	O	N	D	J	F	APPOINTED BY:
		20	20	20	20	20		20	21	21	
Lissette Stancioff	1	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	Raul Valdes-Fauli
Carla Isaias	3	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	E	P	Jorge L. Fors
Juan A. Galan Jr	3	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	Patricia Keon
Manny Chamizo	2	*	*	*	P	P	*	A	P	P	Vince Lago
Mario Lamar	4	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	Michael Mena
Douglas Yoder	CR	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	A	P	Peter Iglesias
Bertram Goldsmith	7	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
John Swain	2	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Andria Codina Miyares	6	*	*	*	P	A	*	A	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  
 Matt Anderson, Sustainability Analyst  
 Lt. Henry Barnet, Marine Patrol  
 Sgt. Velier Zaccheo, Marine Patrol

**GUESTS:**

Alberto Aran, MPH

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. The roll was taken and a quorum was present.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:**

**A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of January 6, 2021.” The motion was seconded, voted upon and adopted unanimously.**

## **PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:**

- Presentation – Native Oysters

Mr. Alberto Aran made a presentation on a project to restore native oysters as a tool against algal blooms and to combat nutrient pollution in the Coral Gables waterway. These kinds of oysters are a little different than the ones we currently see in the waterways right now to give additional help to support, digest and process the nutrients, algae and bacteria in the water. According to a 2018 study, a big area of Biscayne Bay has lost 84 percent of the sea grass, which plays a key role in helping against storm mitigation. It also helps connecting the whole ecosystem from the mangroves to the sea, the seagrass, and to the reefs. Biscayne Bay has about 21 different basins where all the water is going to flow into the bay.

The percent of non-compliance with bacteria in the waterways is a large load of not only nitrogen but also phosphorus, causing some big blooms. Not only these oysters are essentially absorbing nitrogen and breaking down nitrogen and absorbing phosphorus, they also eat the bacteria and the algae to help clean the waters and reduce the turbidity. All these water quality improvements are going to make much easier for seagrass to take root again. The oyster itself is a filter feeder. It is going to take those solids out of the water and then the nitrogen is going to be absorbed by the oyster itself. Oysters need a hard surface to attach to in order to grow and a lot of shells have been removed from the bay as well as just the nature of building the drainage canals.

Mr. Aran is proposing to add a structure either a net or a simple live bait cage to put maybe 10-15 oysters under residents' docks along with some oyster lines as well as a bag with these oysters to be protected for three months. He is looking for sites for a pilot project.

Mr. Galan said that he does not have a problem with this work, but he thinks that before recommending anything to the Commission to consider enhancing the project and make it a waterway wide project, with trials in five or six different places of the various canals to be done for at least a one-year period, so when Board has something to recommend to the Commission, it is based on actual data and results. Every canal has a different water flow. He thinks that board members would be willing to provide access to their docks to hang oyster lines to see how they work and whether they can live with other oysters or the project becomes much more complex.

Mr. Chamizo said that he would recommend that every board member volunteer their dock space to see if it works. Mrs. Stancioff asked Mr. Acevedo to provide Mr. Aran with their contact information, addresses, and phone numbers.

***A motion was made, “Waterway Advisory board members to volunteer their docks and start this pilot project.” The motion was seconded, voted upon and adopted unanimously.***

- Discussion - Board members’ rotation of roles

Mr. Galan said he asked for the item to be added to the agenda for discussion. He has inquired about the rules with regards to elections. The Ordinance says that members should be rotating chairs every year. He said that Manny should be thanked because he has been doing the job for three or more years. He is not in favor of a one-year term as that is not enough for any person to serve as a chair. He would be more in favor of two-year terms. Board has not ever named a vice chair which is another issue. He does not want to be chair. He would like to recommend to a two-year term for chair and vice chair and take a vote to select a chair and vice chair for the next two years. We all understand that we are appointed by Commissioners and they have term limits so it could be that we appoint somebody for chair that is not going to be chair in a year. For the benefit of the board and everybody, we should have an agreed-upon rotation system and a vice chair which makes it easier when the chair is not available for the meeting.

Mr. Galan said that if nobody volunteers, he would like to make a motion that Doug Yoder be elected as our new chairperson. He asked if somebody would volunteer for vice chair. Mr. Chamizo said that he could do vice chair.

Discussion took place because elections are coming up in April and some board members could be replaced and others ratified.

Mr. Yoder suggested reviewing terms information and rotation so all the board members know the rules and they can vote to elect chair and vice chair on next month’s meeting.

Board members agreed to table this issue until next meeting.

- Discussion – Waterway related items before presentation to City Commission

Mr. Chamizo said that two items were presented at the City Commission. One motion is to recommend a semi-permanent construction to be placed so that no one can use a ramp with a trailer and motorized vessel. Second motion was to place signs for No Diving on the bridge, which includes no fishing.

Draft of the sign was shown for approval to move forward and for the sign to be recommended for placement at all bridges.

***A motion was made, “For the No Fishing No Diving No Jumping from Bridge sign to be recommended for placement at all bridges.” The motion was seconded, voted upon and adopted unanimously.***

Mr. Acevedo made a note that signs are being managed by the City so they will be placed on City bridges only.

- Mr. Chamizo - Wrap up items of the board since June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016
  - No Fishing, No Diving, No Jumping signs
  - No Wake signs
  - To find some grant money for City repairs
  - Bridge maintenance, minimum standards
  - Possible lighting underneath bridge
  - Notify Marine Patrol of any debris falling in the waterway
  - House numbers facing the waterway
  - Reactivate waterway parades and gondolas
  - Determine dredging, minimum standards
  - Coordinate the use of the Blue Rd water park
  - Repainting the bridges, minimum standards
  - Create a Waterway Advisory board page, to update residents of things Board is doing.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:15PM

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.