

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
WATERWAY ADVISORY BOARD
 HYBRID MEETING AT BUILDING DEPARTMENT/ZOOM
 WEDNESDAY, December 4, 2024 - 5:30 P.M.
 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS	District	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY:
		24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	
Manny Chamizo	2	A	P	A	A	A	P	*	*	A	*	A	P	Vince Lago
Pat Nolan	1	p	P	P	P	P	A			P	*	P	P	Melissa Castro
Juan A. Galan Jr	3	P	P	E	P	P	P	*	*	P	*	P	P	Rhonda Anderson
Kevin Ritzenthaler	1	p	P	P	E	P	E	*	*	P	*	P	P	Kirk Menendez
Nancy Sanabria	7	p	P	P	P	P	P			P	*	P	E	Ariel Fernandez
Douglas Yoder	CR	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	*	P	P	Amos Rojas, Jr.
Bertram Goldsmith	7	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	*	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Levi Meyer	6	p	P	A	E	P	P	*	*	P	*	A	A	Board-As-A-Whole
Vacant														Commission-As-A-Whole

P – Present

P*- Present (zoom)

E – Excused Absence

A – Absent

R – Resigned

(-) – No Appointment

(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

- Lorena Garrido, Central Division Administrative Manager
- Jessie Acebo, Assistant to the Public Works Director
- Sergeant Guido Antezana
- Sergeant Erasmo Lopez

GUESTS:

- Jennifer Garcia, Planning and Zoning Director

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mr. Yoder. Quorum was met.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

Mr. Galan made the motion to approve the minutes of November 6, 2024, seconded by Mr. Ritzenthaler, all were in favor, and adopted unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Galan made a motion to approve the 2025 Board meeting schedule as presented, seconded by Mr. Nolan, all were in favor, and adopted unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Yoder brought up the subject of the pending resolution, approved at the July 9, 2024, City Commission meeting.

Ms. Garrido introduced Ms. Jennifer Garcia, Director for the Planning and Zoning Department and stated she would assist with the draft resolution.

Mr. Galan inquired about the current requirements regarding notices. Ms. Garcia explained that the requirements vary depending on the board involved and the nature of the request. She provided an example, stating that if the Board is seeking a variance for conditions affecting waterways—such as extending a dock further out to avoid mangroves—notifications would be sent to residents residing within 1,000 feet of the property in question.

Mr. Galan noted that waterways vary in size and definition, with some being more difficult to define than others. He questioned whether, in cases involving variances affecting waterways, the Board should adopt a resolution specific to each waterway or one encompassing the entire waterway.

Mr. Yoder inquired about the process for a change of use. Ms. Garcia explained that this applies specifically to commercial properties, such as converting an office into a restaurant or a retail store. She clarified that the zoning code does not require notice for such changes, as they fall under permitted uses already established in the code.

Mr. Yoder inquired about the process for a change of use. Ms. Garcia explained that the process begins with the Zoning Department, where the application is reviewed. Once the review is completed, it is forwarded to the County for further review.

Mr. Galan suggested that the Board be notified of any projects on the waterways requesting a change of use. He explained that this would help ensure all members remain informed about ongoing projects and allow for any necessary recommendations. Mr. Chamizo expressed his agreement with Mr. Galan's suggestion.

Ms. Garcia explained that a change of use can be classified as either permanent or conditional. She added that if the Board wishes to see conditional use applications, arrangements can be made to facilitate this.

Based on Ms. Garcia's feedback and Board's discussion, the below motion was made.

Mr. Chamizo made a motion to amend the proposed resolution recommending to the City Commission to amend the City Zoning Code to include notice to the Waterway Advisory Board of waterway properties seeking a variance relating to the waterway or requesting a conditional use. The motion was seconded by Mr. Galan, and all members voted in favor. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Galan noted that during the previous meeting, the Board had a discussion with Mr. Rojas Jr., the City Manager, regarding the issue of Code Enforcement and the ability to submit anonymous complaints. He inquired if there was any update on the matter. Ms. Garrido responded that she did not have an update at this time but would follow up and report back to the Board.

Mr. Chamizo inquired about the progress of the park located on Blue Road. Ms. Garrido responded that it is still in the bid process and is moving forward. Mr. Chamizo requested that staff provide an update on the park at the next meeting.

Mr. Chamizo requested that staff provide an updated Board Member contact list at the next meeting. Additionally, he requested a copy of the City's budget reflecting the amount allocated to the Coral Gables Waterway. He noted that there were previously 1,477 properties on the waterway and inquired about the current actual value. This information would help the Board understand how much residents living on the waterway contribute from their taxes to support the waterway.

Mr. Chamizo inquired about the status of the Cocoplum bridge. Ms. Garrido responded that the project is still in progress.

Mr. Goldsmith requested the addition of a new no-fishing sign at the end of Lugo Avenue. Ms. Garrido stated that she would look into the possibility of installing one.

Mr. Galan noted that during the previous meeting, the Board discussed with Mr. Rojas Jr., the City Manager, the possibility of installing FLIR (thermal and night vision) cameras on the waterway. He inquired if there was any update on the matter. Sgt. Antezana responded that he did not have an update at this time.

Marine Patrol Report:

Sgt. Antezana stated that the month of November was relatively quiet and provided the following report on November activities:

Dead Manatee:

On November 22nd, Marine Patrol assisted FWC with the removal of a dead manatee at the 5400 block of Riviera.

Large Barge entering the Mahi Canal:

On November 25th, Marine Patrol responded to a large barge entering the Mahi Canal carrying a crane and a large tree. The barge operator stated that the intention was to drop off the tree at a yard; however, they had not made prior contact with the residents, who were not home at the time. As a result, boats blocking access to the yard were not moved.

While attempting to maneuver around the boats, the tide rose, and due to the narrowness of the area, the barge became stuck between the bridge and the boats. The barge operator was cooperative and managed to position the barge along the side, allowing other boats to pass.

At approximately 5:00 PM, the homeowner at 6700 Granada Blvd. returned, and moved the boats, allowing the barge to proceed. The barge successfully exited the canal the following day during low tide.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 8, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.