

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
WATERWAY ADVISORY BOARD
 HYBRID MEETING AT CITY HALL/ZOOM
 WEDNESDAY, September 6, 2023 - 5:30 P.M.
 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS	District	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	APPOINTED BY:
		22	22	22	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
Manny Chamizo	2	*	*	P	A	P	A	P	A	P*	*	*	P	Vince Lago
Pat Nolan	1												P	Melissa Castro
Juan A. Galan Jr	3	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	*	*	P	Rhonda Anderson
Kevin Ritzenthaler	1	*	*	*	*	A	A	P	P	P	*	*	A	Kirk Menendez
Nancy Sanabria	7												P	Ariel Fernandez
Douglas Yoder	CR	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	Peter Iglesias
Bertram Goldsmith	7	*	*	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	*	*	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Levi Meyer	6				A	P	P	A	A	P	*	*	P	Board-As-A-Whole

- P – Present**
- P*- Present (zoom)**
- E – Excused Absence**
- A – Absent**
- R – Resigned**
- (-) – No Appointment**

- (*) – No Meeting**

STAFF:

- Lorena Garrido, Central Administration Division Manager
- Jessie Acebo, Assistant to the Public Works Director
- Sergeant Guido Antezana, Marine Patrol
- Antoine Loar, Code Enforcement Officer
- Gustavo Ceballos, Deputy City Attorney
- Rhonda Anderson, Vice Mayor

GUESTS:

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Mr. Yoder. The roll call was done, and quorum was met.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

Mr. Goldsmith made the motion to approve the minutes of June 7, 2023, seconded by Mr. Galan, all were in favor, and adopted unanimously.

DISCUSSIONS:

The Board introduced themselves and welcomed Mrs. Sanabria and Mr. Nolan to the Board.

As requested by the Board, Mr. Antoine Loar, Code Enforcement Manager was present at the meeting to answer the Boards questions.

Mr. Galan brought up the subject of the mangroves not being maintained and inquired about Code Enforcement. He stated that the properties on the waterway pay a lot of money in taxes and would like Code Enforcement to monitor on a regular basis, in the same manner as they monitor the front of the properties. Mr. Loar stated the main issue is accessibility since they only go out when a vessel is available and right now, it's once a month with Public Works staff. Mr. Galan said that to his understanding, the Police Department agreed to take Code Enforcement out once a month. Mr. Loar clarified that waterway inspections have always been monthly, and they used to go out with the Police Department; however, now they are going out with Public Works. Mr. Meyer asked, what is the City doing about it? How can the Board ensure that Code Enforcement is getting more time on the water and that issues are being addressed? Mr. Loar responded that issues are being addressed. He explained the process for homeowners to comply with mangrove complaints is lengthy as they must go through DERM to obtain a permit and Code Enforcement has no control over it. He also mentioned if there is a piece of parcel with no owner, that piece of parcel goes unenforced until they can find determine who the owner is. This is the case in an area within Cocoplum. Mr. Galan suggested for the Police Department to take Code Enforcement to the waterway once a month as well as Public Works. Mrs. Sanabria stated that she is certain that homeowners would like to have the mangroves trimmed; however, they may not know the process and should be educated.

Mr. Yoder stated that Board adopted a resolution a couple of months ago which was presented to the City Commission and there was a discussion relating to encroachment of trees into the waterway that create safety and navigation hazards. He stated the City Manager was not in favor of the City taking full responsibility and considers this to be a Homeowner Association issue; however, at the City Commission meeting, he directed Code Enforcement and Public Works survey and identify the areas that are problematic and need attention.

Mrs. Sanabria suggests for the City and homeowners to gather and collaboratively obtain a permit to trim the mangroves.

Mr. Galan asked Sgt. Antezana if the Police Department could continue to take Code Enforcement to the waterway monthly as well as Public Works. Sgt Antezana said yes.

Mr. Ceballos brought up the subject of the piece of property, within Cocoplum, in question. He stated that the plat restrictions dedicated to that section of land was not written well and that it is dedicated for the perpetual use of the public for a park area.

Vice-Mayor Anderson discussed the difficulties she has experienced in the past in trying to get Miami-Dade County to trim the trees. She stated the County has only one tree trimmer crew. She has been asking for Coral Way trees to be trimmed for a very long time and getting them to trim trees has been an uphill battle.

Mrs. Sanabria stated that a one-hour meeting is not sufficient time to cover everything and suggested that the Board have workshop meetings between their monthly meetings. Mr. Meyer agreed and suggested that the Board provides staff with a list of 5 topics considered a priority to be shared and discussed at the next Board meeting. Mr. Ceballos stated that as per the Sunshine State Law, any time the Board meets, the meeting needs to be noticed, accessible and staff needs to be present to take minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on the survey identifying the areas that create safety and navigation problems on the waterways.

NEW BUSINESS:

The appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman and re-appointment of Levi Meyer, Board-As-A-Whole, will be placed in the next meeting agenda.

MARINE PATROL REPORT:

Sgt. Antezana reported on a few violations they had on the waterway such as speeding, jet skis, and kids jumping off the bridge. He also reported on upcoming projects such as the work that Public Works will be conducting on the force main at the Le Jeune Road where the pedestrian bridge is located. He stated that there will be intermittent blockage of the waterway, under the bridge commencing on October 2nd through October 20th. Sgt. Antezana stated that he is expecting the intermittent blockage to be for a week, and it will be for 30 minutes at a time.

Mr. Chamizo brought up the subject of the rope that was hanging from the pedestrian bridge on Le Jeune Road and kids swinging from it. Mr. Chamizo stated this is the third time he has seen this and suggests that Marine Patrol emphasizes coverage, on higher traffic days and long weekends, from noon until dawn.

Mr. Chamizo stated that the water marker light under the pedestrian bridge on Le Jeune Road is off.

Mr. Meyer asked how many vessels the City owns and if they are all navigable and in good condition. Sgt. Antezana said they have 2 vessels right now and they are both in good condition. Mrs. Sanabria

inquired about obtaining a third vessel. Sgt Antezana said that it is not in the budget; however, they are working on it.

Mrs. Sanabria asked Sgt Antezana how many officers he had. Sgt. Antezana said including him, there are 4.

Ms. Sanabria brought up the subject of signage on the waterway. She asked Sgt. Antezana if there were sufficient signs in the waterway. Sgt Antezana said there are a lot of signs; however, people tend to ignore them. He stated that signage is not an issue, but more is always better.

Mr. Nolan stated that the manatee warning sign at the entrance of the Mahi Canal was knocked down years ago and it was never replaced. Mrs. Sanabria asked Ms. Garrido to speak with the City Commissioner and inquire about additional No Wake signs. Ms. Garrido said that she would reach out to the agency and inquire.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.