

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
WATERWAY ADVISORY BOARD
 HYBRID MEETING AT CITY HALL/ZOOM
 WEDNESDAY, February 1, 2023 - 5:30 P.M.
 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS	District	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	APPOINTED BY:
		22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	23	23	
Manny Chamizo	2	P	A	A	*	*	*	P	*	*	P	A	P	Vince Lago
Daniel Tormo	3	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	*	*	P	P	P	Jim Cason
Juan A. Galan Jr	3	P	P	P	*	*	*	A	*	*	P	P	P	Rhonda Anderson
Kevin Ritzenhaler	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	A	Kirk Menendez
Joel Kallan	4	-	-	P	*	*	*	P	*	*	P	P	P	Michael Mena
Douglas Yoder	CR	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	*	*	P	P	P	Peter Iglesias
Bertram Goldsmith	7	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	*	*	E	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
John Swain	2	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	*	*	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Levi Meyer	6											A	P	Board-As-A-Whole

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

STAFF:

- Jorge Acevedo, Utilities & ROW Division Chief/Board Secretary
- Lorena Garrido, Administrative & Fiscal Affairs Manager
- Yanissey Solivera, Administrative Assistant
- Mayor John Baublitz, Marine Patrol

GUESTS:

- Irela Bague, Chief Bay Officer, Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mr. Chamizo. The roll call was done, and quorum was met.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

The January 4, 2023 meeting minutes are pending approval.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Acevedo presented Irela Bague, Chief Bay Officer, Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience who presented on Biscayne Bay: “Improving Our Water Quality”.

Ms. Bague introduced herself and stated she was appointed by Mayor Daniela Levine Caba as a recommendation from the Biscayne Bay Task Force. She added her job is to advise, coordinate, and advocate and advise the Mayor and the County Commission on recovery efforts pertaining to Biscayne Bay. She also works internally with County departments local government agencies, State and Federal agencies.

Ms. Bague stated that their focus and efforts related to sewer, wastewater improvements, storm water improvements, restoration of their postal habitats and most importantly, educating the public on the importance of Biscayne Bay and our water quality.

Ms. Bague’s presentations is attached.

DISCUSSIONS:

Mr. Swain stated during the previous meeting, they had a discussion regarding producing a list of questions for the City Manager who is invited to attend the March WAB meeting. Mr. Swain added a question relating to placing security cameras on the waterway.

Mr. Tormo made the motion to include the question about surveillance to the list and it was seconded by Dr. Kallan, all were in favor.

Mr. Swain suggested that the wording for the security cameras request should be as follows:

The subject of installing security cameras on the waterway often comes up. Is there anything that the City Manager can do to help get the cameras installed. This should be added to the list of questions.

Dr. Kallan stated that the City started building a water collection system in Cocoplum and that 3 additional pumping stations were added. Dr. Kallan inquired if the pumping station pumps the water into the system or directly into the bay. Mr. Yoder commented that it is illegal to pump storm water into the sanitary system.

Mr. Acevedo clarified that the project in Cocoplum relates to a pumping station project and that sanitary sewer pump station have nothing to do with the running system. These are not storm, they are sanitary.

Mr. Yoder stated that the City is currently working on a citywide master drainage plan. Mr. Chamizo asked Mr. Acevedo about the available funding. Mr. Acevedo responded that for the projects that Ms. Bague referenced, the City received 2.7 Million for the septic to sewer conversion; however, this was rejected by the community and the funds were returned to the State.

Mr. Acevedo added the City received \$700,000.00 for a project, matching 50% of the City for the septic to sewer conversion and that there's also a 1-million-dollars for the stormwater master plan in which the City must matching 50%.

Mr. Meyer stated that in Ms. Bague's presentation he saw \$900,000.00 for water quality improvement construction for the Coral Gables Waterway and Biscayne Bay. Mr. Acevedo said this relates to the Riviera floodgate which is owned and maintained by the City and the idea is to conduct an assessment to improve the water quality in the basin. The basin includes downtown Coral Gables. He further stated that the City has 3 major projects with fundings. Mr. Chamizo asked for the sum and Mr. Acevedo stated approximately 1.5 million.

The Board discussed the below questions and concerns:

1. The amount of trash that flows into the waterway by Riviera located at the bottom of Coral Gables High School between Geronimo and Vilabella. The current device that is in place is not working. They stated pontoon boat solution is appreciated but is not as effective.
2. The general aesthetic appeal of some of the bridges, such as the Granada and the Blue Road Bridge. They are deteriorating. The bridges have litter, graffiti and need visual maintenance.
3. The Board is concerned about a regular sighting of a crocodile that comes up into the Geronimo canal. They contacted FWC, their position was that if it's not aggressively bothering, they would not remove.
4. The Board's involvement in the development and permitting process in the debris cleaning, the maintenance issue, the vegetation trimming, the City's ongoing review of the city-wide drainage plan and the water quality problem in the waterways.

OLD BUSINESS: *(Update on discussion by Assistant City Attorney at December's meeting regarding a. Legality of renting dock space in private homes; b. Board review and recommendations on permits for docks and other structures in the waterways).*

Mr. Galan stated since December's meeting presentation he thought of another question relating to boat storage during a hurricane emergency. He said there's limited storage at Dinner Key and other yacht clubs. He feels that during these emergencies, it may be a good idea to allow owners to come into an agreement to allow others to store their boats in docks not being used.

Mr. Yoder asked if the City has any rules about hurricane storage of boats in the waterway. Mr. Galan stated that from his past experience, he has seen a number of people who enter the waterway that are not residents or property owners. In addition, there have been a number of sailboats from Dinner Key that anchor their boats to mangroves. Mr. Galan would like to know the rules pertaining to hurricane emergencies, and if this is acceptable.

Dr. Kallan added that there are certain areas in the Cocoplum waterway that are designated hurricane anchorage on marine charts. He would like clarification of what this means (legally) and its process. Mr. Goldsmith asked if this area would be used as a first come, first serve basis.

Mr. Galan suggested for areas to be identify on the waterway that can be used for hurricane storage during severe weather events. This would allow for the Marine Patrol to enforce accordingly.

Dr. Kallan asked: if 1-obstruction of the navigable waterway is an infraction of the law that the Marine Patrol can act in any manner; 2- demine the manner; 3-determined if this falls under Federal, State or City jurisdiction. This will be forwarded to the Marine Patrol for clarification and input.

The Board discussed questions and request for clarification to be discussed with the upcoming meeting with the City Manager.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

MARINE PATROL REPORT:

Mayor Baublitz introduced himself. Major Baublitz will review the Boards questions and report back his finding at the next WAB meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.