

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes September 12, 2022

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, September 12, 2022, in the Downtown Main Library Auditorium, 101 W Flagler. Sign in sheets are attached.

Miami River Commission (MRC) Policy Committee Members and/or Designees attending:

Horacio Stuart Aguirre, Chairman, Appointed by the Governor
Jim Murley, Vice Chairman, designee for County Mayor Danielle Levine Cava
County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Mercedes Librada Rodriguez, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Alex Diaz de la Portilla
Megan Kelly, designee for City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez
T. Spencer Crowley, III, Member at Large Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Patty Harris, designee for Governor
Bruce Brown, Miami River Marine Group
Neal Schafers, designee for Downtown Development Authority
Phil Everingham, designee for Miami Marine Council
Alvaro Coradin, designee for Sara Babun
Mike Simpson, designee for Sallye Jude
Tom Kimen, designee for Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City Commission

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

I) Chair's Report

The Miami River Commission unanimously adopted their July 11 public meeting minutes.

MRC Chairman Aguirre provided the following report:

On behalf of the Miami River Commission, I warmly welcome our 3 newest volunteer board members, Mercedes Librada Rodriguez, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Alex Diaz de la Portilla, Eddie Marti Kring, designee for Miami-Dade County Commissioner Eileen Higgins, and Spencer Crowley, Member at Large appointed by the City Commission.

The Miami River Commission has been advocating for various initiatives to improve openings of the Brickell Bridge. When the Bridge operator is ready for a scheduled opening, as regulated by federal law, first they drop the vehicular and pedestrian gates, which is when the vehicular traffic starts to cue. Then they are unable to quickly start opening the actual bridge for the waiting vessels to pass, because impatient people are putting their lives at risk by jumping over the safety barricades to walk over the bridge because they don't want to wait for the opening. This unnecessarily significantly extends the total bridge opening time, which significantly increases the vehicular traffic backup. Then when the bridge is down there are illegal lane blockages.

Therefore, the MRC has been recommending off-duty police officers be hired for “white glove” traffic control at the Brickell Bridge, which will reduce traffic. The MRC thanks Gencom and the Hyatt for pledging to fund the off duty police officers for this effort during a trial period where they hired Langan Engineering to conduct a Brickell Bridge traffic study.

The MRC thanks Kiki’s River for donating funding needed to clean the public Riverwalk beneath the 5 ST Bridge twice a week.

The MRC thanks RMK Merrill Stevens for donating upcoming improvements to Art Greenfield Park in Spring Garden.

Commissioner Eileen Higgins stated unfortunately the County’s 17 Ave Bridge has an immediate safety issue which will take 4-6 weeks to repair in the open position allowing passage of vessels. The County has started the PD&E needed to replace the Bridge.

MRC Vice Chairman Murley – Voluntary Improvement Program (VIP) Update

The Miami River Commission has been actively assisting the efforts of the City, County, State, and private sector to clean up the Miami River District. In addition to the maintenance professionals the MRC pays daily to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping and pressure washing services along the Miami River, the MRC thanks the volunteers from Hands on Miami whom on July 16 and August 6 picked up garbage along the public Riverwalk in Curtis Park.

The MRC forwarded a Spring Garden resident’s video and report of a new illegal charter business operating in the Seybold Canal, and the City of Miami cited the location for multiple code violations.

II) Presentation Regarding Updating City Parks Master Plan

Carlos Perez, Perez Planning & Design, LLC, and City of Miami Parks Director Barbara Hernandez distributed and presented a “Reimagine Parks Miami – Parks and Recreation System Master Plan – Miami River Commission – September 12, 2022” PowerPoint. The City of Miami’s current Parks Master Plan was adopted in 2005, and is therefore being updated. The City of Miami is completing an extensive 3.5 month public outreach campaign. The distributed Power Point featured the Miami River Commission’s “Miami’s 21st Century Park – An Integrated System of Parks and Greenways Along the Miami River” which was shared and reviewed when this item was presented to the MRC Greenways and Urban Infill Subcommittee on May 27, 2022, for which the public meeting minutes were distributed.

Spencer Crowley suggested the City use an app similar to the County notifying the public when a boat ramp is full so they know not to try an launch at a ramp which is already full.

Mercedes Rodriguez stated North River Drive in the area of Curtis Park does not have sidewalks, where there is a senior center, etc. Director Hernandez replied the City of Miami has funding and design to reconstruct North River Drive in the area featuring the on-road Miami River Greenway's wide sidewalks, landscaping, decorative lighting, etc.

Ms. Rodriguez stated she had visited the City of Miami's "Miami River Rapids Park" and is interested in making improvements and dedicating it to fallen firefighters.

The MRC noted the need to improve and reopen FT Dallas Park. Director Hernandez replied the City is working on restoring the Park's historic structure, demolishing the non-historic structures, repairing the dock, and then advertising an RFP for a food and beverage component in the public park.

Commissioner Higgins stated the County has grant \$ available for trees. The City is working with the MRC on a westerly waterfront expansion of Fern Isle Park, which needs funding for new trees.

Commissioner Higgins added she met with MDX and FDOT whom are willing to use the public ROW beneath 836 on the Miami River's south shore to be a public park, connecting with the public Riverwalk and greenspaces to the east in the County's "Riverparc" area (formerly known as Robert King High Towers).

III) Informational Presentation Regarding Centauri Transport Inc. – International Shipping Terminal located at 3300 NW North River Drive

Mr. Frank Visconti, owner and operator of Centauri Transport Inc International Shipping Terminal located at 3300 NW North River Drive, distributed copies of a "Capabilities Statement" and "Background, US Base of Operations on Port Miami River, Centauri Transport Bahamas, LTD, Current Markets and Services Provided, and Centauri Transport's Cargo Vessels" (which were recently built in Florida). They have been in operation on the Miami River since January 2020, shipping food, construction materials, vehicles etc. once a week to Eleuthera, Abaco, Exuma Bahamas, including refrigerated containers. This international shipping terminal on Port Miami River generates local jobs while providing critical trade to build the economy of our neighbors in the Bahamas.

IV) New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

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Miami-Dade County Library, 101 W Flagler ST

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