

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes September 14, 2026

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, September 14, 2026, in the Downtown Library Auditorium, 101 W Flagler. Sign in sheets are attached.

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

Jim Murley, designee for Miami-Dade County Mayor Cava
Jon Fernandez, designee for City of Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins
Martha Garay, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Escalona
William Gonzalez, designee for State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle
Philip Everingham, designee for Miami Marine Council
Eileen Broton, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Richard Murphy, designee for Eileen Broton
Gary Gunness, Miami River Marine Group
John Michael Cornell, designee for Member at Large Appointed by the Governor
Esther Evora, designee for Miami-Dade County Member at Large
Neal Schafers, designee for Downtown Development Authority
Theodora Long, Appointed by the City Commission Neighborhood Representative

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

I. Chair's Report and "Voluntary Improvement Plan" (VIP) Update

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murely stated MRC Chairman Horacio Stuart Aguirre is unavailable to attend today, therefore he will be running the meeting and provided the following report:

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

The free 28th Annual Miami Riverday will be held April 3, 2027, 1-6 PM, Lummus Park, 250 NW North River Drive, featuring free boat rides, live music, environmental education, historic reenactors, children's activities, food and drinks. If you would like to sponsor Miami Riverday, or advertise in the MRC's 24th Annual Miami River Map & Guide, please contact MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau.

The Miami River Commission has been actively assisting the efforts of the City, County, State, and private sector to keep the Miami River District clean. The MRC pays professional maintenance companies every day to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping, pressure washing, and Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel services along the Miami River. We remove 3 large 30 cubic yard dumpsters full of garbage every week. The MRC thanked all City Commissioners whom co-sponsored the renewal of the MRFI's 3-year contract to maintain the public on-road Miami River Greenway.

The MRC thanks Commissioner Gabela for recently joining us for a Miami River cleanup in Curtis Park, and we will now watch a City of Miami video about the positive event.

The MRC thanks the wonderful Hands-on-Miami Volunteers for picking up garbage along the shoreline in riverfront Curtis Park on August 23 and September 13, and in Sewell Park on August 9.

II) Discussion Regarding Miami-Dade County's Boater Safety Task Force Report

Katie Oswald, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resource Management, and MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley presented the recently completed Miami Dade County Boater Safety Task Force Report which was emailed in advance of the meeting and available as backup to this agenda at www.miamirivercommission.org.

Attendees reviewed and discussed the following draft letter:

September 14, 2026

The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
And The Honorable Anthony Rodriguez, Chair
and The Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Comments on the Boating Safety and Bay Education Task Force Report and Proposed Ordinance Creating the Miami-Dade County Boater Safety and Bay Education Advisory Committee

Dear Mayor Cava, Chairman Rodriguez and Commissioners;

At the September 14, 2026 meeting of the Miami River Commission a discussion took place among the Commission members, representatives of public agencies and the general public on the subject Task Force report and draft legislation. Everyone in attendance agreed on the utmost importance the issues being addressed and commended the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners for proceeding with prompt actions addressing the Task Force recommendations. The following comments are focused on the impact of the subject Report and proposed legislation on the navigable section of the Miami River. The Miami River is one of three federal navigation channels in Miami-Dade County and provides water access to Biscayne Bay for residents and visitors conducting recreational and commercial activities.

Task Force Report Overarching Recommendations:

1. The MRC supports creation of the Miami-Dade County Boater Safety and Education Advisory Board pursuant to the proposed Board of County Commissioners legislation (Agenda Item No. 1(G)2 of the Recreation, Tourism and Resiliency Committee, September 9, 2026). The MRC strongly recommends that the Mayor and Board include a representative of boating interests on the Miami River in one of the nine voting member slots

2. The MRC recommends that when deliberations commence to create a “Marine Enforcement Group” that the Mayor and Board consider using the existing United States Coast Guard (USCG) Miami Harbor Safety Committee and ensure special attention is placed on issues unique to Port Miami River and to the proliferation of illegal boat charters.

Task Force Report Pillar One: Education

1A. The MRC recommends that the process for establishing a comprehensive, multilingual public awareness campaign to improve boating safety across Biscayne Bay that special attention be placed on the Miami River’s unique vessel traffic patterns, including international shipping vessels under tow, charters, recreational fishing boats, etc.

1B. The MRC recommends leveraging technology and digital platforms to provide targeted, on-demand boater safety education that special attention be placed on the operation of the State and County owned bascule bridges to ensure boating, pedestrian and vehicular safety, using AI solutions and enhanced enforcement of idle no wake speed zones on the entire Miami River.

1C. The MRC recommends that expanded community-based engagement programs to strengthen boater safety include the prohibition of passing vessels within the Miami River no wake speed zone. The Miami River should be treated as a two-way marine channel with no passing.

1D. The MRC recommends in addition to using County proprietary authority that efforts be made to include municipal and private marinas in place-based boater education.

1E. The MRC recommends that Boater Safety courses be required for County owned marinas and encouraged for municipal and private marinas on Biscayne Bay and the Miami River.

1F. The MRC recommends that Boating Safety Courses be required for County boat ramp permits and encouraged for municipal boat ramps.

1G. The MRC supports the recommendation that private Marinas adopt Boater safety requirements.

2. Law Enforcement Pillar

2A. The MRC recommends using the USCG Miami Harbor Safety Committee.

2B. The MRC supports a unified marine radio communication protocol.

2C. The MRC supports standardization of citation and data-collection systems across all marine enforcement agencies.

2D. The MRC supports the creation of a countywide boating data clearinghouse.

2E. The MRC supports application of proven traffic enforcement strategies to marine operations to deter unsafe and impaired boating, and further recommends additional marine patrol, video and audio surveillance on the Miami River.

2F. The MRC supports establishment of a specialized boating court process.

2G. The MRC strongly endorses and supports the targeting of illegal land-based charter operations through coordinated enforcement and digital monitoring, especially single family residential neighborhoods on the Miami River and its tributaries.

2H. The MRC supports a review to improve County Business Tax Receipts (BTR) process for marine related businesses, especially in single family residential areas along the Miami River and its tributaries where BTR activity is not allowed.

2I. The MRC supports establishment of a permanent funding source for marine enforcement, including special attention to manatee protection.

Legislation Pillar

3A. The MRC supports using County authority to expand Boating Safety Requirements and close regulatory gaps.

Waterway Management Pillar

4A. The MRC supports a comprehensive vessel congestion study for Biscayne Bay, including revisiting the North Bay Report. The MRC recommends using the Federal Ports and Waterways Safety and Risk Assessment along the Miami River in lieu of a congestion study.

4B. The MRC supports restoration and standardization of navigational markers, including a countywide audit of marine storage and mooring infrastructure.

4C. The MRC supports the integration of integral charter prevention protocols into marina operations, and further recommends special attention on Marine Operating Permits to prohibit illegal charters.

Miami-Dade County has more registered boats than any other County in Florida. The boating industry produces high-quality jobs and pays applicable taxes and appropriate fees. As our shorelines are redeveloped, access to River and Bay recreational opportunities are increasing in demand. The MRC welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with public, not-for-profit and private entities to maintain a safe marine environment for our residents and visitors.

Sincerely,
Horacio Stuart Aguirre
Chairman,
Miami River Commission"

Theo Long recommended inserting requiring boater education, and Katie Oswald, DERM, replied the State of Florida does not allow Miami-Dade County to require boater education, and the FL Legislature took that part out of "Lucy's Law" before its adoption last session. Jim Murley stated the MRC will add recommended boater education into the draft MRC letter. The MRC unanimously adopted the draft letter.

III) Update & Discussion Regarding Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study

Christian Kamrath, CFM, Resilience Program Manager | Division of Environmental Risk and Resilience, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM), presented a detailed PowerPoint regarding the Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study (available as backup to this agenda item at www.miamirivercommission.org). The study will be finalized in April 2027, and will be presented to the MRC again at that time. Mr Kamrath stated the County will be seeking federal funding to implement the plan in the 2028 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Bill.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

- a. The Miami River Commission Urban Infill and Greenways Subcommittee's July 29, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed. MRC Vice Chairman Murley stated this subcommittee is being renamed the Miami River Enhancements Subcommittee.
- b. The Miami River Commission Stormwater Subcommittee's September 2, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed. The MRC thanked the City of Miami for funding to operate 9 water quality cleaning machines, and 3 water quality sensors in Wagner Creek for 1 year. Fast Cleaning Solutions, LLC rented a vacant warehouse near the Miami River, where they have been assembling the machines using American made parts, for example solar panels purchased in California, etc. The machines will be operational in Wagner Creek and Seybold Canal this month. FIU thankfully just placed a water quality sensor buoy in Wagner Creek, and DERM continues taking monthly water quality samples for numerous parameters at 3 locations along Wagner Creek.

V. New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

brettbibeau@miamirivercommission.org

From: brettbibeau@miamirivercommission.org
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2026 8:44 PM
To: 'Gretchen Perez'; 'Mike Simpson'; 'accounting'
Cc: 'Brett Bibeau'
Subject: Attached Invoice THX
Attachments: sightseeing invoice 9 14 26.doc

Hi Mike,

THX for making donations to MRC to provide maintenance in public swale in front of your riverfront site. PLS see attached invoice.

Sincerely,

Brett Bibeau

Managing Director,

Miami River Commission

Cell 305 987 4446 – www.MiamiRiverCommission.org

From: brettbibeau@miamirivercommission.org <brettbibeau@miamirivercommission.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 10:21 PM
To: 'Gretchen Perez' <gretchen@islandqueencruises.com>; 'Mike Simpson' <mike@islandqueencruises.com>; 'accounting' <accounting@islandqueencruises.com>
Cc: 'Brett Bibeau' <BrettBibeau@MiamiRiverCommission.org>
Subject: Attached Invoice THX

Hi Mike,

THX for making donations to MRC to provide maintenance in public swale in front of your riverfront site. PLS see attached invoice.

Happy 4th of July!!

Sincerely,

Brett Bibeau

Managing Director,

Miami River Commission

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

September 14, 2026 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

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Organization

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Email

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Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

September 14, 2026 – 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

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