

**Miami River Commission
Public Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2025**

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, January 6, 2025, in the Downtown 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
James Murley, Vice-Chairman, designee for Miami-Dade County Daniela Levine Cava
Megan Kelly, designee for City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Betty Hermida, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Gabela
Theo Long, Neighborhood Representative appointed by Board of County Commissioners
Eileen Broton, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Richard Murphy, designee for Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Bruce Brown, Miami River Marine Group
Spencer Crowley, Member at Large Appointed by the City Commission
Neal Schafers, designee for Downtown Development Authority

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

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

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

MRC Chairman Horacio Stuart Aguirre provided the following report:

The MRC's 2024 Annual Report was distributed.

The free 26th Annual Miami Riverday will be held April 5, 2025, 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.

On behalf of the MRC, thank you to all the Miami Riverday sponsors, advertisers in the distributed 2025 Miami River Calendar and the upcoming 22nd Annual Miami River Map and Guide.

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley provided the following Miami River Voluntary Improvement Plan (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. The MRC pays professional maintenance companies every day to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping,

pressure washing, vacuum truck, and Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel services along the Miami River. In addition, the MRC thanks the Hands on Miami volunteers whom picked up garbage along the Miami River in Sewell Park on December 15, and in Curtis Park on December 22.

II. Discussion regarding Miami Dade County's "Connect 2 Protect" Program Transferring Houses from Septic Tanks to the County's Sanitary Sewer System

Christine Wartman, Miami-Dade County Water & Sewer Department presented an excellent and detailed PowerPoint regarding the Connect 2 Protect Program, disconnecting septic sewer tanks and connecting homes to the County's sewer system, which improves water quality. Ms. Wartman presented a map of an area within the Miami River Water Basin where the homes currently have septic tanks, which the County completed the design and has secured funding to disconnect their septic tanks and connect all the homes to the County's Sewer System free of charge

III. Discussion regarding Miami-Dade County's New "Smart Covers"

Galo Pacheco, M. Sc., P.E. Interim Chief, Water and Wastewater Division, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER), Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) presented an excellent and detailed PowerPoint titled, "RER-DERM Smart Cover Pilot Study." Smart Covers on sanitary sewer manholes have sensors which detect high levels of sanitary waters in the pipes and sends an alarm to the County and subject municipality so they may address the problem before a sanitary sewer overflow from the manhole into the Miami River, similar to the 2 sanitary spills Director Bibeau recently reported on South River Drive in Little Havana. Mr. Pacheco stated Phase I installed 192 Smart Covers and Phase II installed 234 Smart Covers, for a total of 426 current Smart Covers County Wide. Smart Covers also detects problematic infiltration, which the Department then eliminates. In only 1 year the new system detected 99 events which the Department repaired and therefore avoided sewage overflows, including 1 on Wagner Creek detected only 3 months after it was installed. The County's sewage lines get clogged with fats, oils, grease, rocks, etc.

IV. New Business

MRC Director Bibeau stated for a year riverfront residents in Neo Lofts had repeatedly contacted the City of Miami Police Department and the MRC reporting an illegal drug dealer operating from the public Riverwalk beneath the Flagler Bridge in Little Havana. The location is cleaned by the MRC once a week, and twice the individual threatened to kill me, stating he had a 9mm handgun. The Police arrested him for drug dealing. Less than 24 hours later I witnessed the same individual had returned to the same location, hid a backpack in the bushes, and aggressively interfered with the MRC cleanup crew and myself trying to clean the area, therefore I called the police. The Police searched the individual's backpack which he had hidden in the bushes, and found a 9 mm handgun. He was arrested again and I have received a subpoena to testify as a witness in his upcoming trial. This is just one recent example of the extra value provided by the MRC's efforts to clean the Miami River.

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

January 6, 2025 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
Armando V. Ibañez	SFWMD	305-396-0711	aviba@sfwmd.gov
Julio Tejeda	SFWMD	561-836-4261	jtejeda@sfwmd.gov
Galo Pacheco	RER-DEEM	305-372-6944	pacheg@miamidade.gov
Judith Paul	Springdale resident		j.paul703@bellsouth.net
Jim Morley	MRC		
Horacio Stuart Aguirre	MRC	305-968-4881	JamesfermoreMorley@gmail.com
Natalie Hernandez	RER-DEEM	786-685-7446	natalie.hernandez@miamidade.gov
Christine Wartman	Miami Dade Waters Sewer	786-877-6734	christine.wartman@miamidade.gov
Janet Mestri	Antillean Marine	305-303-6230	jmestri@antillean.com
Theodora Long	MRC	305-401-4595	riveroak901@gmail.com
Megan Kelly	MRC	305-361-6159	
Spencer Crowley	FIND	305-982-5549	ts Crowley@aicu.org
Eddie Marti Krings	BCC-DS	305-213-0118	Eddie.Marti.Krings@miamidade.gov
Betty Hermida	Comm-DI	786-853-0559	vmhermida@comcast.net

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

January 6, 2025 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
Ellen Broten	MRC/SBCA	3179-4284	Ellen@bellsoth.net
Richard Murphy	" "	786.525.5353	Rmur1@owest.net
Neal Schafers	Miami DDA	305-379-6675	schafers@miamidda.com
Mark Bailey	Miami River Marine Group	305-551-7777	markbailey@miamirivermarinegroup.org
Bruce L. Brown	MRC	305/7836411	bruce102@bellsoth.net
Brett Bibeau	MRC		
Horacio Stuart Aguirre	MRC		