

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes February 5, 2024

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, February 8, 2024, 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
Jim Murley, Vice Chairman, designee for Miami-Dade County Mayor Cava
Commissioner Miguel Angel Gabela, City of Miami Commission
Betty Hermida, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Gabela
Megan Kelly, designee for City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Patty Harris, Appointed by the Governor
Theodora Long, Neighborhood Representative appointed by Board of County Commissioners
Eileen Broton, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Alvaro Coradin, designee for Sara Babun appointed by Miami-Dade County
Bruce Brown, Miami River Marine Group
John Michael Cornell, designee for Luis Garcia
Spencer Crowley, Member at Large Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Neal Schafers, designee for the Downtown Development Authority
Philip Everingham, designee for the Marine Council
Augustin Gus Barrera, designee for the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

I) Chair's Report - MRC Chairman Aguirre provided the following report:
The MRC unanimously adopted their January 8, 2024 public meeting minutes.

I'm pleased to announce that for the 2nd consecutive year the Florida Department of Environmental Protection awarded a competitive \$500,000 grant to the Miami River Commission. 100% of this funding will be spent directly cleaning the Miami River with the use of stormwater system vacuum trucks, a street sweeper truck, and manual labor.

The free 25th Annual Miami Riverday will be held April 6, 2024, 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. We are sending marketing materials to printers at the end of this week so this serves as the last call for sponsorships which are available with Brett.

In addition, last call to purchase advertisements which are available in the 21st Annual Miami River Map and Guide.

On behalf of the Miami River Commission, I warmly welcome our newest board members Honorable City Commissioner Miguel Angel Gabela and his designee Betty Hermida.

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley provided the following Voluntary Improvement Plan (VIP) Report:

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 daily to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping, pressure washing, vac truck, street sweeper and Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel services along the Miami River. The MRC thanks the Hands on Miami volunteers for picking up garbage along the Miami River in Curtis Park on January 20, and in Sewell Park on January 28.

II) Remarks from Honorable City of Miami District 1 Commissioner Miguel Angel Gabela

City of Miami Commissioner Gabela stated:

I'm honored that the City Commission unanimously appointed me to represent the entire City Commission on the Miami River Commission. I proudly own and live in a single-family home on the Miami River.

I'm pleased to report that the City of Miami is going to invest millions to improve the Miami River in District 1, with the following 3 major projects:

1. Major renovations to Sewell Park are designed and partially funded. I will be reviewing the design and encouraging construction ASAP.
2. In addition, major renovations of the public Riverwalk in Curtis Park are designed, fully funded and I will be requesting the City of Miami to select a contractor and commence construction ASAP.
3. The City of Miami has full funding and plans to construct the public on-road Miami River Greenway along NW North River Drive from 24 Ave – 19 Ave, featuring a wide mesa-beige sidewalk, landscaping, decorative lights, decorative trash cans, benches, new stormwater drainage, etc in areas that have no sidewalk today.

I'm happy to introduce my designee Betty Hermida, whom has joined us today.

I'm a strong supporter of the Miami River Commission's award-winning strategic plan which preserves the historic mixed-use Miami River District's following 3 geographic sections:

The “Lower River”, from Biscayne Bay to the NW 5 ST Bridge, features downtown with high density residential, hotels, restaurants, parks, etc.

The “Middle River”, from the 5 ST Bridge to the 22 Ave bridge, features single family residential neighborhoods, the Health District, River Landing, marinas, boatyards, parks, etc.

The “Upper River”, from the 22 Ave Bridge to the Salinity dam, features the heart of Port Miami River’s International Shipping Terminals and boatyards, which generate good paying jobs and critical international trade.

I appreciate the 25 years of successful MRC work which has significantly improved the Miami River District’s economy and natural environment, and I’m excited to roll up my sleeves with you and continue working hard improving the beautiful Miami River.

III) Discussion Regarding Status of Pending Permit Application to Construct a Public Riverwalk Connector Between Existing Public Riverwalks Beneath 2 Ave Bridge and Latitude on the River

Spencer Crowley, Jim Murley and Brett Bibeau presented pictures and plans for Latitude on the River’s submitted and pending application to construct a small bridge structure to connect the 2 existing sections of the public riverwalk between Latitude on the River and the 2 Ave Bridge. The Army Corps of Engineers continues to consider Latitude on the River’s application to construct a small bridge structure to connect the 2 sections of existing public Riverwalk, because surprisingly the public Riverwalk beneath the 2 Ave Bridge is located in the Federal Navigable Channel. MRC Director Bibeau stated he recently personally visited the site with Antillean Marine, Hempstead Towing and Miami River Towing Company, all of which are emailing the Army Corps of Engineers to express no objections to the previously submitted permit application.

IV) Discussion Regarding Vessel Dockage Along the South Fork Tributary

The “D5 Triangle” Miami -Dade County Public Works Manual and the following summary were distributed:

“City of Miami, Miami 21, Regulations for T3-R which are applicable to Durham Park Neighborhood:

- Extension of docks or piers into other waterways limited to 10 feet or 10% of waterway width, whichever is less. Further extensions permitted by Exception, when required by applicable agency.
- Only private pleasure craft may be docked or moored.
- Dock/ Pier Setbacks: 10 feet from any Abutting property
- Vessel setback: 5 feet from any Abutting property.
- Prohibited uses or appurtenances: davits in excess of 3 ton capacity, commercial vessels, commercial boat ramps, and commercial hauling and fueling.

The MRC does not have regulatory authority, therefore deferred this issue to the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County.

V) Subcommittees

The Miami River Commission's Urban infill and Greenways Subcommittee's January 22, 2024 public meeting minutes were distributed.

The Miami River Commission's Stormwater Subcommittee's December 6 public meeting minutes were distributed.

VI) New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

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