

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes November 4, 2024

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, November 4, 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
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Megan Kelly, designee for City of Miami Mayor Suarez
Betty Hermida, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Gabela
Theodora Long, designee 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 the City Commission
Philip Everingham, designee for Marine Council
Tere Garcia, designee for Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
Lorena Pucme, 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 October public meeting minutes.

MRC Chairman Aguirre provided the following report:

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. Sponsorships are available with Brett.

In addition, advertisements are available for the 22nd Annual Miami River Map and Guide.

The long Planning Development and Engineering (PD&E) process to design a new 17 Ave Bridge is having its 1st public meeting on November 12, 6:30 PM, 2300 NW 14 ST, next door to Ronald Reagan Park on the South Fork Tributary.

The MRC thanked Gus Barrera for serving as the designee for the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC), and welcomed the GMCC's new designee Tere Garcia.

II. Discussion Regarding Fort Dallas Park

The MRC's March 4, 2024 public meeting minutes were distributed stating:

“Richard Heisenbottle, R.J. Heisenbottle Architects, presented the “City of Miami, Office of Capital Improvements, Flagler Workers House (Palm Cottage) Restoration – Construction Documentation Progress Set 12-10-23”, featuring a depiction of the restored historic structure constructed in 1897 is on the National Register of Historic Places and currently in need of restoration. In addition, the City will demolish the 2 non-historic structures on the site

The Miami River Commission (MRC) unanimously agreed to continue supporting the expedited restoration of the historically designated Flagler Workers House, reconstruction the public Riverwalk, and reopening Fort Dallas Park.”

Hector Badia, City of Miami Capital Improvements Department, stated the City was ready to commence demolition of the site's non-historic buildings. Richard Heisenbottle stated the plans were complete to restore the historically designated Flagler Workers House, and Mr. Badia added the restoration work is estimated to commence in August 2025. Theo Long asked what after the historic house is restored, what use will it serve? Mr. Mora, Assistant Director of the City of Miami's Parks Department, suggested a conversation regarding future uses needs to occur with the City Manager Art Noriega and the Parks Director Chris Evans. Spencer Crowley suggested repairing the site's dock damaged in Hurricane Irma, and consider using it and the historic structure for the City of Miami Marine Patrol and Police Department. Mr. Crowley stated he will provide pictures of a historic house on the Fort Lauderdale Riverwalk.

III. Discussion Regarding Sewell Park

The MRC's May 6, 2024 public meeting minutes were distributed stating:

“Keith Ng, City of Miami's Office of Capital Improvements (OCI) presented plans, awarded FIND Phase 1 Grant Application, and Miami-Dade County DERM letter essentially denying the City of Miami's presented plan because it includes a boat slip for marine patrol and 5 transient boat slips which although would be allowed if the site was zoned residential, since its zoned Parks and Recreation the slips are not allowed under the current Manatee Protection Plan.

Commissioner Gabela stated support for the City of Miami's current plans to improve Sewell Park.

The MRC adopted a resolution 13-1 to support the City of Miami's plans to improve Sewell Park and send a letter to Miami-Dade County urging the Board of County Commissioners to amend the manatee protection plan to regulate transitory boat slips in the same fashion as Palm Beach.”

Hector Badia, City of Miami Capital Improvements Department, stated on November 1 the City of Miami sent DERM a letter appealing the permit denial, etc. Mr. Badia stated the City of Miami is hosting a public meeting regarding the City's completed Master Plan of improvements to Sewell Park, including the Conservation area, on November 12 in Sewell Park, 1815 NW South River Drive. Mr. Badia stated the planned improvements are estimated to cost \$12 million.

Spencer Crowley stated other Counties' FWC and EPA approved Manatee Protection Plans, (i.e. Palm Beach), do not regulate transient slips because they provide an opportunity for the vessel to stop and visit a park, which reduces the risk to the Manatee. Consistent with the MRC's 3/6/24 resolution, in support of the City's presented plans the MRC will continue supporting the City of Miami's appeal in order to permit the completed construction engineering documents.

IV. New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission

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November 4, 2024 – 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

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