

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FIRE STATION # 2
528 NW 2ND STREET
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Vanessa Apotheker (left at 7:31 pm)	P	7	0
Ruchel Coetzee	A	5	2
Idan Eckstein	P	5	2
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	P	6	1
Christine Fanchi	P	2	0
Nazir Lavji (arrived at 6:11 pm)	P	5	1
Steven Woytko	A	3	1
Solomon Schoonover	A	5	2
Anna Vratsinas	A	4	3
Patricia Zeiler	A	4	3
Joy Oglesby, Chair	P	6	1
James Saunders	P	1	1
James Ward	P	1	0

Oct 2025 - Sept 2026

As of this date, there are 12 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

Staff

Quentin Pough, Assistant City Manager
Norelli Liguori, Senior Administrative Assistant
Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation
Andrew Cuba, Manager of Marine Facilities

Others

Nicole Day, Recording Secretary, Prototype-Inc.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Oglesby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of April 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes

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Motion was made by Vanessa Apotheker and seconded by Idan Eckstein to approve April 22, 2026, meeting minutes with corrections. In a voice vote, the motion passed 8-0.

1. Introduction: New Board Member-

Chair Oglesby welcomed the Board's new members. Mr. Saunders introduced himself and provided an overview of his professional background and experience. Mr. Ward also introduced himself, shared that he was excited to join the Board, and provided members with information regarding his background and experience.

2. Design & Update on Fort Lauderdale Beach Project Colette Satchell and Quentin Pugh – City Manager

Assistant City Manager Quentin Pugh and Project Director Colette Satchell provided an overview and update regarding the Fort Lauderdale Beach Project, noting that the presentation had previously been shared with the Central Beach Alliance and City Commission. Mr. Pugh discussed the project's history, including the 2019 Parks Bond allocation of \$1.3 million for Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, the subsequent interlocal agreement with Bahia Mar, and the development of various conceptual site plans. He explained that the current proposal would maintain the basketball courts in their existing location while adding four pickleball courts, upgraded fitness equipment, synthetic turf areas, landscaping improvements, relocated picnic tables and grills, and resurfaced basketball courts with new backboards and goals. Financial information was also presented, including Bahia Mar's proposed contribution of up to \$1 million toward the project improvements. Mr. Pugh stated that the current interlocal agreement is set to expire in January 2027, and the City is seeking an extension to allow completion of the project. He further noted that the conceptual design was scheduled to be presented to the City Commission on June 2, with an estimated project completion timeline of approximately 35 to 40 months pending approval.

Board members asked numerous questions regarding the proposed layout, relocation of amenities, public access, project funding, lighting, landscaping, and the overall concentration of recreational elements within the northern portion of the park. Questions were also raised regarding the agreement with Bahia Mar, the origin of the four pickleball court proposal, and whether the project would provide any exclusive access or benefits to hotel guests. Mr. Pugh clarified that the beach and recreational facilities would remain open to the public with no exclusive access for Bahia Mar guests. Director Williams also provided clarification regarding the grills, basketball court improvements, and the history of prior Commission discussions and agreements.

Public speakers expressed concerns regarding the lack of public input, the proposed artificial turf, removal of trees, increased congestion, and the number of pickleball courts

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being proposed. Additional concerns were raised regarding preserving the character of the public beach, the timing of the City Commission vote, potential environmental impacts, and whether the project primarily benefited Bahia Mar. In response, Mr. Pugh discussed prior public outreach efforts completed during the 2016 Master Plan process and additional community input conducted in 2021, as well as prior Commission discussions held in 2025. He also clarified that only one Australian pine tree identified as an invasive species would be removed under the current conceptual plan.

The Board continued discussions regarding the number of pickleball courts, the proposed synthetic turf, placement of fitness equipment, lighting concerns, and opportunities for additional landscaping and public engagement. Several Board members expressed support for reducing the number of pickleball courts from four to two, eliminating the artificial turf in favor of more natural materials and landscaping, and providing additional time for public input before final Commission consideration. The Board also discussed ensuring that no exclusive access or reservation priority be granted to Bahia Mar guests for use of the pickleball courts.

Chair Joy Oglesby asked the Board how they wished to proceed regarding feedback to the City Commission. Following discussion, the Board reached consensus to prepare a letter to the Commission requesting modifications to the conceptual design, including removal of the artificial turf in favor of natural landscaping materials, reducing the number of pickleball courts from four to two, allowing additional time for public input and outreach, and reaffirming that no exclusive access be granted to Bahia Mar guests for use of the recreational facilities.

3. Department Update - Carl Williams

Director of Parks and Recreation, Carl Williams, provided a department update highlighting recent organizational changes and upcoming community programming. He recognized Dave Gibson for his induction into the 2026 ASCA Hall of Fame and shared updates on key events and initiatives, including Starlight Musicals at Holiday Park, the Jazz Brunch scheduled for June 7, the Glam Bookworms Book Club at the South Side Cultural Arts Center, the Juneteenth Celebration at Carter Park on June 20, and planning efforts for Summer Camps 2026.

4. Inside Parks and Recreation Presentation - Andrew Cuba Marina Division

Marine Facilities Manager Andrew Cuba provided an overview of the City's marine operations, including marinas, boat ramps, floating docks, and related infrastructure. He explained that the City operates two major marinas—Downtown New River Docks and Cooley Landing—as well as a mooring field, all of which maintain strong occupancy rates year-round. He also noted that the City manages four boat ramp locations across Fort

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Lauderdale, which allow vessel launches of any size, though parking capacity is limited, and revenues from ramps are directed to Transportation and Mobility.

Mr. Cuba highlighted the City's participation in the Clean Marina Program, emphasizing environmental best practices such as spill containment, pump-out services, safety signage, and emergency life-saving equipment, including life rings and ladders. He also discussed partnerships and safety initiatives, including the Aiden Baird Initiative and the distribution of complimentary life jackets at Cooley Landing.

Additional updates included the City's floating dock system on the New River, which provides complimentary short-term docking, upcoming expansion of floating dock space, and ongoing use by residents and visitors. He also referenced environmental efforts such as participation in an oyster restoration study involving approximately 100 monitoring sites.

Mr. Cuba reviewed revenue performance from marina operations, noting steady annual income, and outlined administrative functions including dock waivers, dock permits, and Marine Advisory Board responsibilities. He explained staffing levels within the division and responded to Board questions regarding operations, dock regulations, environmental protections, and waterfront usage policies.

5. New Business – Joy Oglesby

Ms. Eckstein announced her departure from the Board after 11 years of service, thanking members for the opportunity to serve. Ms. Apotheker introduced her daughter, who briefly commented on pickleball courts. Chair Oglesby proposed a "DIY litter pick-up" program for the beach using buckets and grabbers, similar to an initiative used in the City of Hollywood, though staff noted there are operational challenges due to how beach maintenance responsibilities are structured and coordinated. Board members also asked how items are placed on the agenda, and staff explained that agenda topics are generally developed internally, although members may submit requests for consideration.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the Parks Bond program after a Board member referenced a Sun Sentinel article noting approximately \$200 million in bond funding with about \$39 million spent to date. Staff clarified that the bond is being implemented in phases and includes design, construction, and program management costs, and that progress has been impacted by COVID-19, staffing limitations, and the complexity of managing a large number of projects simultaneously. They also explained that additional funding sources such as interest earnings, district commissioner allocations, impact fees, and grants are helping supplement the program. Board members expressed concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and the pace of implementation, while staff emphasized that large-scale public infrastructure programs require extended timelines due to planning, design, and public approval processes.

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6. Adjournment – Joy Oglesby

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by JBurnham, Prototype-Inc.]

DRAFT