



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**DRAFT  
MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
MARINE ADVISORY BOARD  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.**

		<b>Cumulative Attendance</b>	
		<b>May 2020 – April 2021</b>	
Grant Henderson, Chair	P	6	1
Ed Strobel, Vice Chair	P	7	0
Cliff Berry II	P	5	2
Deirdre Boling-Lewis	A	4	3
Robyn Chiarelli	P	4	3
Barry Flanigan	P	7	0
Richard Graves	A	4	3
James Harrison	P	7	0
Rose Ann Lovell	P	7	0
Kitty McGowan	P	6	1
Norbert McLaughlin	P	6	1
Ted Morley	A	5	2
Christopher Rotella	P	2	1
Bill Walker	A	5	2
Steve Witten	P	7	0

As of this date, there are 15 appointed members to the Board, which means 8 would constitute a quorum.

**Staff**

- Andrew Cuba, Marine Facilities Manager
- Jonathan Luscomb, Marine Facilities Supervisor
- Sergeant Todd Mills, Fort Lauderdale Police Department
- Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

**Motion** made by Ms. Chiarelli, seconded by Ms. McGowan, that the Marine Advisory Board urges the City Commission to address the rebuilding of the seawalls in Downtown Fort Lauderdale along the New River, to request a Master Plan and budget for implementation, and to support grants through FIND and other sources that might be available. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**I. Presentation – Riverwalk Seawall Discussion / Genia Ellis**

Genia Ellis, representing Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale, explained that this organization oversees the Riverwalk and its surrounding district. Its footprint includes portions of both the New River and the Downtown core. She showed a PowerPoint presentation on the seawalls in the Downtown area, most of which were constructed beginning in the late 1980s. These seawalls are typically repaired only on an emergency basis, with no set plan for their maintenance. As a result, they have begun to deteriorate.

With sea level rise and the possibility of dredging the New River, attention to these seawalls is critical. In 2018, the City received a report assessing its existing seawalls, forecasting the necessary funds for these repairs. Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale also undertook a number of studies and forecasts for the repairs they believe are needed for the same specific areas. The City's study did not address the need for new seawalls on sections of the Riverwalk where these structures do not currently exist.

Representatives of Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale recently took a boat trip with the City Manager, Director of Public Works, Director of Parks and Recreation, and other members of City Staff so officials could see the seawalls' deterioration from the water. Ms. Ellis showed photographs of a number of structural concerns and failures, noting that sea level rise and king tides contribute to flooding on land. The undermining of seawalls also leads to the failure of the attached pedestrian walkway, creating unsafe conditions.

The City has recently completed its list of Commission priorities for 2021. It has identified seawalls along the New River and Downtown, including Riverwalk docking on the north and south sides of the river. At present, this is an unfunded need, although there are grant opportunities through the Florida Inland Navigational District (FIND) that would allow for the project to be realized in phases. The City does not, however, have plans or permitting in place to facilitate this project if grant funding is obtained. Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale is requesting the Marine Advisory Board's assistance in encouraging the City Commission to take these next steps and raise the priority level of seawall repair.

The Board members discussed the presentation, with Mr. Walker noting that the Riverwalk's south side between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridges also has issues related to its vacuum pumps for sewage systems. He felt this should be considered alongside seawall repairs, as it creates a water quality issue. Ms. Ellis noted that when the Riverwalk was built, the south side included a number of stairways down to the water; however, over time, flooding has pulled upland material into the river. The raising and repair of seawalls should be done at the same time to address this concern.

Mr. Flanigan recalled that at an earlier time, the Board had hoped to address seawalls on the north side of the river which are over 60 years old. In approximately 2010, the City attempted to address seawall concerns with concrete and pilings, but this approach

was ultimately unsuccessful. He also noted that the City had requested funds through FIND for seawall improvements in the past, but matching funds were not allocated for this purpose.

Ms. Ellis noted that at present, the need the City lacks most is a set of design drawings and permits, as well as matching funds, for FIND grants. FIND requires a 50% match for its grant funds.

**Motion** made by Ms. Chiarelli to support [the request]. Chair Henderson and Mr. Cuba advised that the Board may make a communication to the City Commission in support of the proposed repairs.

There being no further questions from the Board at this time, Chair Henderson opened the public hearing. As there were no individuals wishing to speak on this Item, the Chair closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board.

Ms. McGowan asked if there is a current City plan or timeline for the maintenance of its marine infrastructure. Mr. Cuba replied that while there is a recognized need, and spot repairs have been made, he was not aware of a Master Plan to address seawalls. A plan of this nature would need to be developed by the City's Public Works and Engineering Departments. He suggested that the best course of action would be for the Board to make a communication to the City Commission expressing their concern for this infrastructure.

The Board discussed how marine infrastructure would be funded, either by a bonding effort or by asking newer development to pay into a supportive fund. Ms. Ellis advised that new development pays into a fund that can be accessed by the Parks Department; however, waterway infrastructure is not included among the needs that can be funded. Ms. Chiarelli suggested that the communication also include a financial component to access available funds through FIND or other grant sources.

After additional discussion, Ms. Chiarelli's **motion** was restated as follows: **motion** that the Marine Advisory Board urges the Commission to address the rebuilding of the seawalls [in] Downtown Fort Lauderdale along the New River, and to request a Master Plan and budget for implementation, and to support grants through FIND and other sources that might be available. Ms. McGowan **seconded** the **motion**, which passed unanimously in a voice vote.

Mr. Cuba advised that he would make the Board members aware of the City Commission Conference Agenda meeting on which their communication would be placed for discussion. The Board members, and the general public, may address this issue before the Commission at that time.