



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM – EIGHTH FLOOR  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance  
May 2019 – April 2020**

Grant Henderson, Chair	P	5	1
Ed Strobel, Vice Chair	P	5	1
Cliff Berry II	A	4	2
Robyn Chiarelli	P	3	3
James Harrison	A	1	2
Rose Ann Lovell	P	6	1
Kitty McGowan	A	3	3
Ted Morley	P	1	0
Norbert McLaughlin	P	7	0
Curtis Parker	P	3	3
Rossana Petreccia	A	4	2
Roy Sea	P	6	0
Randy Sweers	A	1	4
Bill Walker	A	5	1

As of this date, there are 14 appointed members to the Board, which means 8 would constitute a quorum.

**Staff**

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

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

**I. Call to Order / Roll Call**

Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes – October 3, 2019**

This Item was deferred.

**III. Statement of Quorum**

#### **IV. Waterway Crime & Boating Safety Report**

Sergeant Todd Mills of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department reported the following Marine Unit activity from October 2019:

- 14 citations
- 71 warnings
- 28 safety inspections
- 2 boating accidents
- 15 incidents, including 9 electronic thefts

Sgt. Mills stated that the recent Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show was a success, with no major incidents or accidents. The next major event is the Winterfest Boat Parade, which is scheduled for December 14, 2019.

Suzee Bailey, president of the Nurmi Isles Homeowners' Association, reported that boats are running into a sand bar in that neighborhood, resulting in damage. Sgt. Mills replied that he had seen no reports on this issue but would look into it. He recommended that individuals reporting conditions such as this call the City's non-emergency Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) dispatch number, as this would result in quicker action. He noted, however, there may be little the Marine Unit can do to address the situation.

#### **V. Presentation – Tri-Rail Coastal Link, New River Bridge Feasibility Study – Mike Ciscar**

Larry Merritt, representing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and Howard Newman, Leo Villalobos, and David Mairena, consultants, presented an initial feasibility study on freight and passenger rail crossing the New River. The study's directive was a specific appropriation passed in summer 2019. Its intent is to provide a solution that meets reasonable needs for marine navigation as well as freight and passenger train services. It will identify three alternatives that will be moved into the project development and environmental (PD&E) phase, which provides more details as well as a time frame for design.

Another part of the study's directive is the identification of potential funding sources and an implementation plan incorporating both timeline and funding elements. It will also include a comparative analysis that looks at environmental and engineering factors, as well as costs.

The study has identified four alternatives thus far in coordination with agencies and users of the corridor:

- A low-level bascule bridge with 21 ft. clearance from mean high water to the bottom of the structure
- A medium-level bascule bridge with 56 ft. clearance and the ability to open

- A high-level fixed bridge with 80 ft. clearance
- A tunnel with construction of actual approaches to the station

These and other alternatives have been coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard. The study team has held meetings with the Coast Guard, Brightline, the FEC Railway, and the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF), and plans to meet with Fort Lauderdale's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) as well. The study will also allow for the possibility of future light rail train or premium transit service over the existing FEC tracks.

Mr. Newman provided a schematic overview of the four alternatives, noting that the low-level bascule bridge would include roughly 1.1 mile of track improvements. The bridge would be approximately 1020 ft. in distance and would include retaining walls from the end of the structure down to grade. This concept would result in the closing of portions of Himmarshee Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate the retaining walls. The bridge would also affect 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue as it returns to grade and the existing tracks.

Pros and cons for the low-level alternative include:

- No impact on Broward Boulevard or the Brightline station
- Maximizing the use of the existing track configuration
- Closure of multiple streets
- Creation of temporary tracks and signalization during construction
- Access issues to nearby historic sites

The medium-level bascule bridge would provide 56 ft. of clearance and would open to accommodate taller vessels. The Brightline station would be raised approximately 55 ft. The structure would be roughly 7000 ft. in distance and would affect access across the corridor. Its implementation would result in closure of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street crossing. A transit envelope would provide for east-west crossing over the tracks along Broward Boulevard with a clearance of 47 ft. over the existing track.

Pros and cons include:

- Increased maritime navigations for high-mast boats
- Passenger rail crossings that extend from Andrews Avenue across SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, while freight would remain at grade
- Closure of 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- Significantly elevated Brightline station
- Effects on the right-of-way, and additional historic site, visual, noise, and environmental considerations

The high-level bascule bridge would be approximately 1.5 mile in length, with a 68 ft. platform and an impact of roughly 2.5 miles to the tracks themselves. Mr. Newman compared this alternative to an existing bridge across the Miami River with 80 ft. clearance.

Pros and cons include:

- Elevating over cross streets from Andrews Avenue to 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- No bridge openings required due to 80 ft. clearance
- Consistency with existing fixed vertical elevation along the corridor
- Closure of 9<sup>th</sup> Street
- Elevated platform
- Environmental, noise, historic site, and right-of-way impact considerations

The tunnel alternative would be 63 ft. below the existing track due to the depth of the New River. A 40 ft. bore would be used to create the tunnel in order to accommodate double-tracking and pedestrian safety access. Portals would be roughly 1.34 mile apart, with touchbacks to existing tracks at 1.85 mile and tie-in at 2.5 miles. The station would be “cut and covered” at a width of roughly 75 ft. with a center platform. There would be no changes to freight service.

Mr. McLaughlin observed that there has been discussion of moving Tri-Rail service onto the same tracks as Brightline. Mr. Villalobos advised that this would need to be discussed between FDOT and the owners of the rail corridor, as Tri-Rail is public transit, while Brightline service is private.

Pros and cons include:

- Significant effects from construction of the cut and covered station, including a temporary bridge over the cut on Broward Boulevard
- A construction timeline of five to six years
- Disruption of Downtown traffic circulation and businesses
- Accommodation of life/fire safety issues inside the tunnel

The next phase of the study includes comparative evaluation, development of cost/benefit analysis, and identification of initial alternatives and future phases. The report must be finalized and submitted to the Florida Legislature by January 2, 2020. Stakeholder coordination will continue into the future. The project team will return to the Marine Advisory Board at their December 2019 meeting to further discuss recommendations. The PD&E phase will include a full public involvement effort once alternatives have been recommended.

## **VI. Reports**

None.

## **VII. Old / New Business**

Chair Henderson recalled there was discussion of how the City addresses sewage in waterways at the October 2019 meeting. Mr. Cuba advised that he hoped to have a

water quality report to present to the Board at a subsequent meeting. While sewage is never supposed to be released into the water, pump-outs can be an issue, although free pump-outs are available at all City marinas.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]