



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
NUISANCE ABATEMENT BOARD MINUTES
CITY HALL, CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020, 7:00 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance
3/2020 through 2/2021**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
John Forman, Chair	P	3	0
Howard Elfman, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Glen Lindsay	P	3	0
Robert Phaneuf	P	2	0
Joel Slotnick	P	3	0

Staff Present

Detective Paul Maniates, Liaison
Bruce Jolly, Board Attorney
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

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Purpose: Promote, protect, and improve the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens by imposing administrative fines and other non-criminal penalties in order to provide an equitable, expeditious, effective, and inexpensive method of enforcing ordinances under circumstances when a pending, or repeated violation continues to exist.

1. Call meeting to order; Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ms. Chiappetta called roll and determined a quorum was present.

2. Election of officers

Mr. Elfman nominated Mr. Forman for Chair. In a roll call vote, Mr. Forman was elected Chair.

Mr. Forman nominated Mr. Elfman for Vice Chair. In a roll call vote, Mr. Elfman was elected Vice Chair.

3. Roll call; witnesses sign log; swearing in

Witnesses were sworn in. Mr. Jolly briefly reviewed the purpose and process of the Board.

4. Approval of minutes for October 8, 2020

Motion made by Mr. Elfman, seconded by Mr. Lindsay, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Cases

- 5. Case Number 20-09-02**
3031 West Commercial Boulevard
Hometown Studio Hotel
 - **Status Hearing**

Detective Maniates stated that the property owner was mailed legal notice of tonight's meeting. There have been 27 Police-related incidents in the past 30 days, none of which were nuisance-related.

The property's Manager of Operations sent an email to Det. Maniates informing him that the property is in the permitting stage to add a gate system. Det. Maniates has visited the property several times in the past month and has met with General Manager Tarek Khan to ensure that all Police recommendations have been completed. A Police detail has been implemented for the past two weeks. Individuals caught trespassing on the property have been warned and have not returned.

Since a Police presence has been at the hotel, its owners have indicated that problematic clients have checked out and not returned. After each shift, the Police detail coordinator receives an email informing him of any action taken. These emails are forwarded to the property's district manager, Rob Powell, who has problematic patrons removed from their rooms.

Patrons have informed management that the Police presence has helped the situation and they appreciate the detail. The property is in compliance at this time. Det. Maniates recommended a status hearing in December 2020.

At this time Chair Forman opened the meeting to public comment.

Korie Gavin, private citizen, stated that he is a federal Police Officer with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and resides at an adjacent property. He requested additional information on the Police detail's interaction with the subject property. Det. Maniates advised that the detail is present for three to four nights, beginning at 7 p.m. The hotel also has unarmed private security during the day. The Police detail is typically present for six hours, with varying start times.

Mr. Gavin asserted that he has witnessed drug use in the property's parking lot multiple times, including the night of November 11, 2020. He asked how this is addressed, noting that he has witnessed loud altercations and shots fired at the location. Det. Maniates strongly recommended that if the Police are not present on detail and criminal activity is witnessed, Mr. Gavin should call the Police so it can be documented.

Mr. Gavin continued that in addition to signage posted at the property, the hotel could benefit from additional security cameras and other countermeasures. Det. Maniates stated that he would meet with Mr. Gavin to discuss this further.

Zak Colangelo-Trenner, attorney representing the property owners, advised that his clients have installed cameras to cover the hotel within a 360 degree radius. He reiterated that the property is in the late stages of permitting to install a fence and gate. Tarek Khan, manager of the Hometown Studio Hotel, advised that camera footage is stored on a DVR for at least 90 days. Cameras are monitored at the front desk.

Sara Betzalel, property manager for Summer Lake Estates, stated that the community is separated from the hotel by a chain-link fence. She described the hotel as both a nuisance and a danger to the neighborhood, noting that there have been shootings on the hotel property. She asked why the security detail and gate cannot be added to the list of items stipulated for the property at the October 8, 2020 meeting, pointing out that she has still not seen a security presence.

Mr. Jolly explained that the intent of the orders to which the property's attorney had stipulated was to find the property a nuisance so the Board could act on those recommendations. Absent a stipulation to the recommendations, the attorney had no authority to proceed. No additional recommendations were made at that time. While the property remains under the jurisdiction of the Board for the next year, if there is a continuing problem with nuisance activities that is brought to the attention of the Police Department and the Board, the Board may conduct a supplemental evidentiary hearing and make additional recommendations.

Mr. Jolly concluded that the property is currently in compliance, and recommended that Ms. Betzalel work with the Police Department to address any ongoing issues that are not being addressed.

Ms. Betzalel advised that communication with the Police Department is one of the reasons she came forward at tonight's meeting. She has reached out to Det. Maniates and Assistant City Attorney Don Londeree due to additional issues on the property, including physical violence, trash, and theft. Mr. Jolly advised that Ms. Betzalel should remain in touch with to the Police Department and be prepared to be placed on an upcoming Board Agenda for modification of the case's recommendations.

Mr. Phaneuf noted that the Summer Lakes Homeowners' Association currently has an active suit against the subject property. He recommended that Ms. Betzalel speak with the Association's counsel. Ms. Betzalel asserted that she is appealing directly to the Board in order to create immediate change on the property, which she reiterated is a danger to the community. She stated again that she has seen no progress on the property and felt the Board should consider mandating full-time armed security on the property until there is some resolution.

Mr. Jolly noted that of the 27 incidents reported on the property by Det. Maniates, none were determined to be nuisance-related. Det. Maniates replied that the incidents included trespassing, embezzlement, larceny, and vandalism. Several calls came from the hotel asking to have individuals trespassed from the property. He pointed out that the property has only been under the Board's jurisdiction for one month and it may take more time to fully address all issues.

Ms. Betzalel asserted that a neighborhood resident witnessed a stabbing on the property. Det. Maniates and Mr. Khan replied that they were not aware of this incident.

Amanda Peralta, private citizen, stated that she manages a Chevron station across the street from the hotel. She explained that she witnessed an altercation between two patrons of the hotel that resulted in a stabbing. She suggested that the Police were not called about the incident because the victim did not want the Police involved. While the two patrons were regular customers at her store, she has not seen them since the incident occurred.

Ms. Peralta continued that she would like to see a Police detail during daytime hours, as there are ongoing problems with hotel guests littering on her business' property and stealing from the store. She related a number of issues she had heard occurred on the hotel property.

Det. Maniates stated that the Police Department will continue to monitor the progress of the existing Police detail and determine if more days and/or hours should be added to that detail.

Mr. Jolly advised that if there is no further public comment, the matter should be closed based upon the determination that the property is in compliance, subject to ongoing monitoring.

Det. Maniates provided contact information to Ms. Betzalel and Ms. Peralta in the event more incidents occurred on the site. He noted that they may also reach out to Assistant City Attorney Don Londeree.

As there were no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Chair Forman closed public comment.

6. Board Discussion

Det. Maniates advised that the next Board meeting will be December 10, 2020.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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