



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWER 101 – SUITE 1100, 101 NE 3RD AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 – 2:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

January-December 2025

Attendance

Peter Partington, Chair	P	5	0
Marta Reczko, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Gerald Angeli	P	4	1
Gregory Barnett	P	5	0
Shane Grabski (arr. 2:03)	P	3	1
James LaBrie	P	5	0
Roosevelt Walters	P	5	0
Lindsey Way	P	2	1
Ralph Zeltman	P	5	0

As of this date, there are 9 appointed members to the Committee, which means 5 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

- Semele Williams, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Shaelyn Mack, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Omar Castellon, P.E., Assistant Public Works Director – Engineering
- Jill Prizlee, P.E., Chief Engineer
- Daniel Fisher, Senior Project Manager
- Roberto Betancourt, P.E., Stormwater Division Manager
- Brandy Leighton, Division Manager – Engineering
- J. Oppерlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

1. Call to Order

i. Roll Call

Chair Partington called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ii. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Mr. Zeltman, seconded by Mr. Walters, to approve the Agenda.

Chair Partington requested that Item 3.i, an update on the new water treatment plant, be moved up on the Agenda.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously [as amended].

iii. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2025

Motion made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Mr. LaBrie, to approve with or without corrections. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Partington asked if all the items requested by members at the April 7, 2025 meeting had been received. Vice Chair Reczko and Mr. Angeli confirmed that they had received these items.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

3. New Business

i. Update on New Water Treatment Plant

Senior Project Manager Daniel Fisher introduced Joseph Padron of the Prospect Lake Clean Water Center, which is the project company partnering with the City to construct the new water treatment plant.

Mr. Fisher gave a PowerPoint presentation on the plant's progress, recalling that in 2023, the City approved an agreement with the project company to design, build, and operate the plant. At present, the plant is more than halfway complete with its commercial operations schedule. The majority of construction will be complete by the end of 2025.

Mr. Angeli arrived at 2:03 p.m.

Mr. Fisher continued that the City's infrastructure obligations, known as enabling works, have been designed and transferred to the project company. This portion of the project is expected to be complete in August 2025.

Mr. Zeltman requested confirmation that the plant will be designed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. Mr. Fisher explained that while the original plans were for a metal building which could withstand a Category 5 storm, the material was changed to concrete, which is also able to withstand that level of severity, for both the administrative and nanofiltration buildings.

Mr. Fisher continued that another change order brought to the City Commission in 2024 addressed an Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment (OCCT) study. This study is currently underway, with results anticipated in October 2025.

Chair Partington asked if there will be testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Mr. Fisher explained that PFAS was not mentioned in the base agreement for the plant, which was signed in 2023. Current plans include running a PFAS pilot to determine what can be addressed by the proposed system as well as any additional steps needed to meet PFAS standards.

Mr. Padron explained that there may or may not be a challenge at the federal level to the standard recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is not yet known whether or not this challenge will be made by the current presidential administration.

Vice Chair Reczko commented that nanofiltration is one of the recommended treatments for PFAS removal, and expressed concern that no change order has been submitted in recognition of this recommendation. Mr. Fisher explained that the company which will operate the new plant for the next 30 years plans to study this issue further to determine what the plant can accomplish.

Mr. Padron further clarified that the project company is working to determine the best design to remove PFAS. A study is required to determine the level of PFAS which the plant can commit to removing.

Mr. LaBrie requested additional information on the plan for testing for PFAS, as well as its ultimate goal. Mr. Fisher replied that the wellfield's baseline is 20 parts per trillion, which can be lowered through the use of ion exchange resins. The two leading choices for PFAS treatment are membranes and ion exchange, both of which will be used in the new plant.

Omar Castellon, Assistant Public Works Director (Engineering), explained that there were different options for the technological makeup of the plant. The method ultimately selected was nanofiltration, which was chosen for a number of reasons; at the time, however, PFAS was not the primary concern. If the plant were developed to use 100% nanofiltration, significant wastewater would result. The methods adopted for the plant represent a compromise.

Mr. Castellon continued that there will be additional testing to determine which membranes are more successful at removing PFAS than others. Mr. Padron advised that the plan is to create a model, including nanofiltration and ion exchange technologies, and test the efficacy of these methods against the highest PFAS levels found in the wellfield. Operating the plant at a different nanofiltration/ion exchange ratio may also be more effective at meeting the current goal of four parts per trillion. This will be determined through testing.

Vice Chair Reczko requested clarification of the contractual language which required the City's partner agency to meet compliance requirements. Mr. Fisher replied that the contract required the partner to meet various primary and secondary standards, as well

as additional concerns such as color. PFAS was a determining factor in the decision to include nanofiltration. The plant's proposed configuration will remove PFAS; the question remaining is the level to which they can be removed.

Mr. Fisher continued that the only enabling works yet to be completed are a water main, which is presently under construction, and water/sewer communication lines, on which construction will begin in July 2025. The City's remaining infrastructure obligations are either complete or scheduled to be completed soon. The major remaining requirements are chemical procurement and the hiring of additional staff.

Mr. Fisher reviewed aerial photos of the water plant site, reiterating that the bulk of construction is expected to be complete by the end of 2025.

Chair Partington asked what has been the greatest unforeseen issue regarding the plant. Mr. Fisher replied that this has been the emergence of PFAS as a significant concern. The OCCT study also represented an additional proactive step taken by the City to avoid metal releases in the distribution system. He concluded that the project remains on time and on budget.

Chair Partington also asked if there are expected to be any additional emergent concerns between now and completion of the plant. Mr. Fisher stated that the only anticipated hurdle would be if the City determines that it cannot meet PFAS requirements of four parts per trillion.

Mr. Barnett asked if there is expected to be any noticeable difference to system users when the new plant goes into operation. Mr. Fisher advised that there is expected to be a transition period between the turning off of operations at the Fiveash Water Treatment Plant and turning on operations at the new plant. This message will be shared with the public in advance of the new plant's operations. Mr. Castellon added that after a transition period, the City's water can be expected to be clear.

Mr. Castellon further clarified that the new plant will work in conjunction with the existing Peele Dixie Water Treatment Plant. The existing Fiveash plant will continue to serve only as a storage and distribution facility. A number of improvements will be made to the Fiveash plant for this reason.

Vice Chair Reczko asked if the \$411 million contract value cited in the presentation represents the final price including change orders. Mr. Fisher explained that \$367 million goes toward the project itself; a portion of another \$160 million will go to the project company to cover capped costs.

Vice Chair Reczko referred to six change orders for the project, which include the OCCT study, booster pumps, and other needs. Mr. Fisher confirmed that these are funded using contingency funds.

Mr. Zeltman asked if there will be a redundant line in addition to the 48 in. connecting line from the new plant to the Fiveash plant. Mr. Fisher confirmed this.

Chair Partington asked if City Staff will need any additional training in order to operate the new plant. Mr. Fisher explained that there is a schedule determining when new Staff members will need to begin training. Mr. Castellon further clarified that some operators currently working at the Fiveash plant will have the opportunity to transfer to the new facility.

Mr. Barnett asked how the ongoing progress of the plant will be communicated to the general public. Mr. Fisher replied that the City's Public Information Office (PIO) reaches out approximately every six months to provide updates.

2. Ongoing Discussion of ITFAC

Chair Partington stated that the communication to the City Commission sent by the Committee at their April 7, 2025 meeting will be on the Commission's schedule at their May 6 Conference Agenda meeting. He advised that he will attend that meeting to speak on behalf of the Committee.

Chair Partington continued that there are three possible responses to the communication: the Commission may allow the Committee to sunset, request additional information on the Committee's future work, or request a joint meeting with the Committee. Should they choose the third response, Chair Partington recommended that the Committee decide what information they would like to present to the Commission to encourage their continuation as an advisory body.

The Committee members discussed what they would like to bring forward at a joint meeting, including the options of transitioning the Committee into a Board, or, alternatively, reauthorizing the Committee to continue for at least another two years. Mr. LaBrie observed that because the Committee would not sunset before the end of calendar year 2025, there is no real urgency in scheduling a joint meeting. He was in favor of allowing sufficient time to prepare documentation to encourage the Commission to change or continue the Committee.

Mr. LaBrie stated that he had made some proposed changes to the letter prepared by Chair Partington and distributed at the April meeting. He provided the members with copies of the amended document.

The Committee members reviewed the draft letter and recommended additional changes to its language. Chair Partington recalled that the Committee was initially established as a Task Force in response to an infrastructure crisis; the members are now suggesting that the City Commission consider making its role more permanent.

Ms. Williams confirmed that once she has been provided with an electronic copy of the updated document, it will be distributed by email to the Committee members.

4. Public Works Update

i. CIP Financial Report

Ms. Williams advised that this report is presented on a quarterly basis.

ii. Water & Sewer Breaks Report w/Mapping

Mr. Castellon reviewed the water and sewer breaks report with the Committee members.

Mr. Zeltman asserted that older pipes in the gravity sewer system continue to deteriorate, and expressed concern that the longer it takes to address them, the more difficult it will be to line these pipes rather than replace them. He asked if the City can evaluate the possibility of salvaging these pipes by lining rather than replacement. Mr. Castellon replied that a number of inflow and infiltration (I&I) projects are currently in progress across several basins. The issue is funding: roughly \$20 million is available every year over the next five years for I&I, with an estimated total of \$200 million.

Engineering Division Manager Brandy Leighton further clarified that the I&I program includes lining, point repairs, manhole rehabilitation, and other needs. Staff is conducting smoke testing, implementing closed circuit television (CCTV) in targeted areas, and making other efforts to identify the most critical areas in need of repairs.

5. General Discussion and Comments

i. Committee Members

Mr. LaBrie recalled that at a recent City Commission meeting, consultant Hazen and Sawyer gave a presentation on how objective data is used to make decisions on which neighborhoods will be targeted for stormwater management efforts. He requested clarification of the next step in this process.

Stormwater Division Manager Roberto Betancourt explained that at the direction of the Commission, Staff placed increased emphasis on data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as on residents' input. Hazen and Sawyer is ranking neighborhoods' priority based on these and other criteria. This item will go back before the Commission at a June 2025 Conference Agenda meeting. The presentation will include recommended prioritization from the perspective of engineering data as well as resident input; however, the ultimate prioritization will be left to the Commission.

Ms. Way asked if Staff is still gathering data on this topic. Mr. Betancourt replied that Staff has compiled the data and is now conducting an analysis based on the Commission's direction to consider other factors. The process has identified 12 projects in 17 neighborhoods, including some smaller segments of adjacent neighborhoods. The goal is to identify four projects at a time before moving on to the design and construction phases. The program is estimated to take approximately 10 years. Chair Partington stated that the Committee would like to see a presentation on this program after it has been presented to the Commission.

Mr. LaBrie requested clarification of the most recent sunset date for the Committee. It was confirmed that this date is currently February 2026.

Ms. Way recalled that a previous presentation on the Fortify Lauderdale program had included discussion of seawalls, and asked if there will be further discussion of these structures going forward. Mr. Betancourt replied that the only seawalls likely to be affected by the Fortify Lauderdale program are those affected by outfalls. Mr. Castellon clarified that the rebuilding of seawalls would not be part of the program.

Chair Partington asked if there are other infrastructure issues on which the Committee wished to see presentations in the future. Mr. LaBrie commented that he would like to see an update on sidewalks. Chief Engineer Jill Prizlee clarified that while the Public Works Department conducts maintenance and repair for sidewalks, new sidewalk connections are made by the Department of Transportation and Mobility. There was discussion of the lack of sidewalk connections in some City neighborhoods. The Committee agreed by consensus to request an update on this topic.

Ms. Way asked if the Committee has seen presentations from or otherwise contacted the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). She explained that her concern was for the state of roadways. It was noted that state and county roadways fall outside the Committee's purview.

Mr. Walters recalled that the Committee previously discussed bike paths as well. Mr. Castellon advised that these are the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Mobility.

The Committee members discussed their upcoming schedule, noting that the City Commission will meet on June 30, 2025 before entering their regular summer recess. The next City Commission meeting is scheduled for August 19. There was discussion of cancelling either the July 7 or August 4, 2025 meeting; however, no consensus was reached at this time.

There was also discussion of moving the September 1, 2025 meeting to September 8 in observance of the Labor Day holiday. Chair Partington noted that Staff will need to ensure there is a meeting space available on September 8.

ii. Public Comments

None.

6. Adjournment – NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE: Monday, June 2, 2025

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:51 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.]