



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES  
 CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
 MARINE ADVISORY BOARD  
 FORT LAUDERDALE FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT  
 528 NW 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET, STATION #2  
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33311  
 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance  
 May 2025-April 2026**

Steve Witten, Chair	P	4	0
Robert Washington, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Norm Bekoff	P	3	1
Tyler Brunelle	P	4	0
Jeffrey Coburn	P	4	0
Jason Dunbar	P	4	0
Barry Flanigan	P	2	2
Robert Franks	P	3	1
John Lynch	P	3	1
Sam Mitchell	P	1	0
Ted Morley	P	1	0
Dr. Bret Ribotsky	P	3	0
Bob Swindell	P	2	2
LaRhonda Ware	P	4	0

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

**Staff**

- Andrew Cuba, Marine Facilities Manager
- Marco Aguilera, Chief Waterways Officer
- Dean Trantalis, Mayor of Fort Lauderdale
- Bob Dunckel, Assistant City Attorney
- Sergeant Travis O’Neal, Marine Unit
- Captain Chad Robertson, Fire Rescue
- Deputy Chief Garrett Pingol, Fire Rescue Marine Team
- Edward Eason, Code Compliance Officer
- Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer
- Glenn Marcos, Chief Procurement Officer
- N. Day, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

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

Chair Witten called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**II. Statement of Quorum**

Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**III. Introduction of New Members – Ted Morley & Sam Mitchell**

New Board members Sam Mitchell and Ted Morley introduced themselves at this time.

**IV. Approval of Minutes – July 8, 2025**

**Motion** made by Dr. Ribotsky, seconded by Mr. Bekoff, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Witten requested a moment of silence to honor the memory of Rachel Nisanov, who recently passed away following a waterway accident.

Chair Witten reported that an amendment to City Ordinance 8145 was recently passed upon first reading by the City Commission. This amendment addresses anchoring within the City. He recognized Assistant City Attorney Bob Dunckel and Chief Waterways Officer Marco Aguilera for their work in preparing this amendment.

Chair Witten continued that he and Marine Unit Sergeant Travis O'Neal met with representatives of Florida's Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) with regard to the regulation of speed on the City's waterways. He also raised the subject of providing throw rings and life jackets at City docks to FWC and was informed that these were available upon request.

Chair Witten distributed copies of the Marine Advisory Board's (MAB's) purpose and duties to the Board members, emphasizing the importance of their responsibilities with regard to the City's waterways.

The Chair cited three ongoing items for which the Board is seeking support:

- An electric boat for use by the Marine Unit: Mr. Lynch will partner with Sergeant O'Neal and Chief Waterways Officer Aguilera on this effort
- Naming the City's new pump-out boat: Ms. Ware will partner with Fort Lauderdale Chief Education Officer Susan Leon
- Developing a staggered capital replacement program for City vessels

Chair Witten continued that he has reached out to jet ski rental providers to learn more about how riders are prepared for use of these vessels, including suggestions for how safety could be improved. Assistant City Attorney Bob Dunckel advised that Florida Statutes prohibit discrimination with regard to the use of personal watercraft.

#### **V. Waterway Crime and Boating Safety Report**

- **Sgt. Travis O'Neal (FLPD) / Capt. Chad Robertson (Fire Rescue) / Edward Eason (Code)**

Code Compliance Officer Edward Eason reported the following activity:

- Citation of a property owner for a rafting vessel that obstructed the waterway; the vessel has since been removed
- Citation of a vacant lot for storage of a boat on undeveloped vacant land; the property owner has not complied and is scheduled for a Special Magistrate hearing on September 9, 2025

Captain Chad Robertson of Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue reported the following activity:

- 29 calls for service, including three calls for fire boats
- Jet ski accident resulting in injury
- Overturned vessel on the Intracoastal Waterway
- Jet ski accident resulting in injury and death

Sergeant Travis O'Neal of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department Marine Unit reported that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) is investigating the jet ski accident which led to injury and death. Officers in the Marine Unit responded to this call, which occurred on the Middle River when two individuals on a jet ski crossed a wake and struck a dock and seawall. The owner of the jet ski operation that rented the vessel was arrested and placed on probation.

Sgt. O'Neal emphasized the importance of recognizing whether or not young people are able to adequately operate a jet ski or similar equipment. He noted that the operator in question was licensed to provide guided tours on jet skis.

The following Items were taken out of order on the Agenda.

#### **VII. Presentation of Award to Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for well over 30 years of support to the City of Fort Lauderdale and a big "Thank You" for our first pump out boat.**

Chair Witten noted that the purchase of the City's new pump-out boat will go before the City Commission for authorization at the October 7, 2025 Commission meeting. He pointed out that the Board has worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for over 30 years to secure grants, most recently including grant funds to rebuild Cooley's Landing. He and Chief Waterways Officer Marco Aguilera recognized

representatives of FDEP who were in attendance via communications technology (Zoom) for their assistance over the years.

**VIII. Introduction to Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer for Fort Lauderdale. Brief discussion on plans to involve school children in naming the pump out boat.**

Chair Witten explained that the Board wished to celebrate the addition of a pump-out boat to the City's marine fleet, and recalled that it had been suggested that local schoolchildren participate in a naming contest for the new boat. Board Member Ms. Ware will work with Fort Lauderdale Chief Education Officer Susan Leon on this effort.

**IX. Presentation – Aquatic Control Group / Melissa Doyle (Sustainability Division Mgr.) & Robert Mureidas (Aquatic Control Group – Managing Partner)**

Chair Witten introduced Melissa Doyle, Sustainability Division Manager, and Robert Mureidas, Managing Partner, with Aquatic Control Group. The group was awarded a contract to provide waterway and canal cleaning.

Mr. Mureidas explained that a second boat was recently added to expand cleanup services in designated areas. One boat regularly serves 14 locations, while the other addresses "hot spots." Each boat collects approximately 50 bags of garbage from the water, which may include vegetation, plastic, litter, and more.

Ms. Doyle advised that Aquatic Control Group is in regular contact with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, including the Marine Unit. The presentation showed the locations of hot spots as well as regular service, which covers 165 miles of waterway each month. Some materials, such as fuel spills, require HAZMAT responses.

Mr. Bekoff advised that he had read Aquatic Control Group's contract with the City and did not see any exhibits clarifying a maximum payable amount. He requested additional information on this. It was explained that the contract, which was re-bid the previous year, is based upon estimates.

Mr. Bekoff emphasized the importance of waterway cleanliness and expressed concern with the level of debris in the New River. He asserted that there is significant room for improvement in the contractor's level of service. Ms. Doyle reviewed additional information about the service, noting that Aquatic Control Group collects over 155 tons of waterway debris and trash annually. She recognized that there are opportunities for improvement and encouraged feedback.

Ms. Doyle continued that both Aquatic Control Group and City Staff have access to global positioning systems (GPS) information which allows them to receive alerts. If issues occur in particular areas or residents have specific concerns, she receives text and email alerts

for these locations. She noted that some areas have higher concentrations of debris and require either further investigation or greater frequency of pickup.

Jeff Maggio, member of the public, expressed concern that although he regularly uses the City's waterways, he has not seen Aquatic Control Group there. Ms. Doyle advised that individuals who can share opportunities for improvement are invited to contact her office.

Chair Witten stated that he will follow up with Ms. Doyle on some of the issues discussed at today's presentation. He concluded that he would prepare a report to be shared with the Board at a subsequent meeting.

Mike Lambrechts, member of the public, asked how residents can support Aquatic Control Group and help make their efforts more efficient and effective. Mr. Mureidas encouraged use of the City's phone numbers to let the company know when and where there are problems with waterway maintenance and cleanup.

Mr. Bekoff asked if Aquatic Control Group's operators are licensed mariners. Mr. Mureidas replied that this is not a requirement of the service.

Mr. Aguilera acknowledged that one ongoing issue is the need to encourage other municipalities that share waterways to participate in cleanup of those areas, or otherwise reduce the amount of trash or debris that can be transmitted to Fort Lauderdale via shared waterways.

**VI. A Visit by Mayor Dean J. Trantalis *Discussion of the Mayor's Priorities / Front Burner Marine Related Items. Are We Moving Down Concurrent Paths.***

Chair Witten explained that in preparation for the Mayor's visit, he had reached out to the Board members to solicit questions he could provide to the Mayor in advance of tonight's meeting. He had received a very strong response, which will be compiled in a format that will be provided to all the City Commissioners as well as the Mayor. The document will include several items discussed by the Board as priorities at their January 2025 meeting, including some items on which progress has already been made as well as other concerns.

Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis introduced himself at this time. He emphasized the importance of the City's waterways and the marine economy, and expressed concern that these waterways are often desecrated by pollution, including litter and discharge. He noted that water quality is regularly tested in Fort Lauderdale and will continue to do so.

Mayor Trantalis briefly addressed water color, pointing out that while the City's water appears brown, this does not mean it is contaminated, but instead reflects hardness

through discoloration. He advised that a new water treatment plant is being constructed for the City which will likely affect water color.

With regard to the City's waterways, Mayor Trantalis asserted that his focus is on improving water quality. He expressed concern with discharge of solid waste or effluent into the water, acknowledging that this is not a recent development. He added that the Marine Advisory Board members are more involved with the City's waterways than the City Commission, and may have ideas on how to improve conditions, such as the recommendation to provide more boats for trash pickup.

Mayor Trantalis continued that the appointment of Chief Waterways Officer Marco Aguilera shows the City Commission's commitment to focusing on marine issues and conditions. While it is impossible to track down all the individuals responsible for discharge and trash in the City's waterways, he hopes to change the culture with respect to violations.

Chair Witten noted recent positive changes, including the purchase of a pump-out boat as well as the recent update to Ordinance 8145, both of which he characterized as important first steps. Mayor Trantalis emphasized the importance of enforcement as well as education to foster a culture of respect for the waterways. He also referred to the amended Ordinance, which limits the amount of time in which boats can anchor in Fort Lauderdale.

Mayor Trantalis also addressed safety, citing the recent tragedy that occurred on the Middle River. He recalled that there have been a great many complaints regarding the safety of rented jet skis, which may be rented to individuals too young to operate them correctly. He again emphasized the importance of education and enforcement.

Mayor Trantalis continued that several miles of the City's seawalls are being replaced, which carries a significant expense. This is primarily to ensure resilience against rising sea levels.

Chair Witten recalled that day dockage is also an issue in which many residents are interested. At present, residents cannot dock their boats temporarily at a reasonable expense and access different areas of the City. Mr. Dunbar also noted that overstuffed garbage receptacles on shore may fall into the water. Mr. Bekoff added that the City's marinas should offer pump-out service to the public, as some do not allow boats to come in for this service.

Chair Witten expressed concern that signage on waterways, such as signs addressing pump-out facilities and speed zones, is often insufficient and cannot be easily read by boaters. He was confident that when the City's pump-out boat services areas where live-aboard vessels congregate, it will make a significant difference regarding discharge into the water.

Mayor Trantalis requested additional information on the water treatment systems aboard some boats, as well as what can or cannot be discharged. Mr. Aguilera explained that water can be discharged after it is treated with a specific type of sanitation device. He added that the state and federal governments are empowered to establish No Discharge Zones, where no effluent can be discharged regardless of the level of sanitation.

Chair Witten addressed waterway areas where there can often be excessive speed and/or blind corners, noting that FWC has recently visited Fort Lauderdale to review these locations. He continued that another major concern raised early in 2025 was the importance of ensuring safe and accessible waterways, which can be compromised by excessive wakes and speeds.

Ms. Ware addressed dredging, particularly in canals near Broward Boulevard. Mayor Trantalis replied that the City Commission had considered dredging canals in this area some years ago, but there was opposition from residents who lived on the canals, which led the Commission to take no action.

Dr. Ribotsky addressed public dockage, expressing concern that many destinations no longer offer affordable public dockage to patrons. Attorney Dunckel replied that some locations, such as the Las Olas Marina, have to consider issues such as insurance when permitting public dockage, which contributes to the cost.

**X. Presentation – Procurement Process / Glenn Marcos (Chief Procurement Officer)**

Chair Witten introduced Chief Procurement Officer Glenn Marcos, who reviewed basic information about public procurement, which refers to the process by which governments and public institutions acquire goods and services from the public sector. Because public money is involved, it is important to ensure this process is transparent, efficient, and fair.

Mr. Marcos explained that the City uses a very transparent process which is intended to show accountability. They must not only show that responses to solicitation are responsive to requirements but must also demonstrate the responsibility of vendors. Different methods of solicitation may be used depending upon specifications, including invitations to bid (ITBs) or requests for proposals (RFPs). ITBs provide detailed specifications that show the exact needs of the City, This method is subject to testing for pricing, responsiveness, and responsibility for looking into the qualifications and experience of the bidder. It is not based solely on the lowest bid.

RFPs function differently, as these are issued when the City has identified a problem and is seeking a solution to that problem from the private sector. Respondents to the RFP offer different solutions which are compared by the City. This process is more subjective than the ITB process, as it involves the use of weighted criteria and input from subject matter experts on the Evaluation Committee (EC). Responses are ranked according to

the criteria embedded in the solicitation. Due diligence occurs within the Procurement Office. Once these are ensured, the EC will review and rank the proposals.

Mr. Bekoff asked if there is any way to involve citizens' oversight boards such as the MAB before selecting a contractor. Mr. Marcos replied that this is unlikely, as it could compromise the transparency and accountability of the process.

Mr. Marcos continued that the subject matter experts who serve on ECs are usually City Staff, as they are required to adhere to the City's code of ethics. These experts ensure that the requirements of the RFP are met.

Mr. Bekoff stated that there are cases, such as the contract of the Aquatic Control Group, in which there are inefficiencies in the contract which must be addressed after that contract was signed. He asserted that in the future, if contracts such as this came before the MAB, it could help the procurement process. Mr. Marcos replied that he will reach out to representatives of the Aquatic Control Group to suggest that in the future, when preparing a response with requirements, they may wish to come before the MAB to hear and possibly consider additional requirements.

Mr. Marcos reviewed procurement information on the City's website, including a list of all active contracts as well as renewal options. Prices are included so competitors can determine how they may be more responsive in the future.

**XI. Dock Waiver – 3013-3019 Harbor Drive / Peter Jago, Mgr. of Ocean Harbor Properties, LLC**

Stephanie Toothaker, representing the Applicant, explained that the subject property is adjacent to the former Bahia Cabana site. Applicant Peter Jago of Ocean Harbor Properties, LLC partnered with a yachting entity to form Reba Residences, which are condominiums located on the site. She noted that neighbors of the site have provided letters of support for the requested waiver.

Ms. Toothaker continued that there will be no conflicts with the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, and representatives of the Boat Show have provided letters of support.

Gabe Detina of the Chappell Group, also representing the Applicant, showed aerials and other visuals of the subject property, noting that most of the boats docked on the site are approximately 50 ft. to 65 ft. in size. Many of the boats have been docked at the site for several years.

Mr. Detina reviewed the existing layout of the site, which extends approximately 39.1 ft. from the property line into the waterway. The closest distance to structures across the waterway is 159 ft. The existing dock is 36 ft. in length.

Mr. Detina continued that boats at the 3019 Harbor Drive property will be moved to the middle of the location. The proposed project, which will include mooring piles at 54.5 ft., is 159.4 ft. from structures at Bahia Mar. This is roughly the same distance as what currently exists. Additional mooring piles are located at 38 ft. from the property line, while the docks are 28 ft. from the property line.

Extraordinary circumstances on the site include:

- Deterioration of the existing structures
- Improvement to the safety and maneuverability of the area within the same footprint

Mr. Detina reviewed existing waivers in the vicinity of the subject site and produced letters of support from the owner of the Boat Show as well as from neighbors to the property. Mr. Cuba noted that there are also two letters of objection.

Mr. Detina continued that there is an existing submerged land lease on the property. The proposed changes would lessen the subject property's footprint by 1 ft., as it is wider but does not extend farther into the waterway. Setbacks on each side are being increased to 25 ft. on both sides of the property.

Pat Rathburn, representing the Villa Madrid Apartments, Inc., explained that her clients' property is a 24-unit two-story cooperative located at 325 Harbor Drive, directly west of the subject site. The Villa Madrid's board voted to have their objections heard at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Rathburn noted that the Application states the change to the site would include three finger piers and 14 mooring piles; however, the Applicant's documentation shows three finger piers and 15 mooring piles. She continued that while the Applicant asserts the waterway is roughly 1,000 ft. from wet face to wet face, her measurements show the actual navigable waterway distance is approximately 700 ft. She estimated that the distance from the edge of the property line to Bahia Mar is roughly 118 ft.

Attorney Dunckel requested clarification of the distance from the subject property line to structures at Bahia Mar. Ms. Rathburn stated that while the City's Ordinance considers distances as measured from property lines, the impact of the proposed change would lessen the distance from the mooring piles to the Bahia Mar property on the other side of the waterway to a maximum of 118 ft. of navigable waterway.

Attorney Dunckel explained that his concern is to ensure the waiver sought by the Applicant would not extend more than 30% into the waterway. In his opinion, the change would not exceed this limit.

It was clarified that there is a distance of 255 ft. from property line to property line. Mr. Morley stated that the Applicant's measurements are consistent with the measurements found on Google Earth.

Ms. Rathburn advised that her client's objection is not to the measurements of the plans but to the navigable waterway as affected by the proposed docks. Attorney Dunckel confirmed that there are places on the New River for which a waiver request may look acceptable but could still impede navigation.

Ms. Rathburn addressed the extraordinary circumstances described by the Applicant, pointing out that the actual width of the waterway is less than the 1,000 ft. cited in the Application. Another circumstance cited is that the structures would be perpendicular to the waterway rather than horizontal, which she did not feel was a significant factor. The third extraordinary circumstance noted that the prior property included finger piers and a submerged land lease, which are reconfigured in the Application. She asserted that this does not make sense, as the existing structures are being removed rather than reconfigured.

Ms. Rathburn concluded that her clients object to the requested waiver because it will result in larger boats that affect navigation on a busy area of the waterway. They also feel it will negatively affect views from the clients' properties and does not identify actual hardships. She added that the Applicant's letters of support are not from nearby properties.

Mr. Detina reviewed the waterway distance cited in the Application, pointing out that the reconfigured docks will reduce projection into the waterway from 36 ft. to 25 ft. The waiver request for the finger piers is 3 ft. The Application proposes 14 pilings. He acknowledged that large boats regularly navigate the area, and added that boats at the subject site would be moved farther away from the objecting property by the reconfiguration. The lease area is being reduced and the boats will be stacked so smaller vessels are on the outside slips.

Mr. Bekoff asked if the pilings are being moved farther into the waterway. Tyler Chappell, also representing the Applicant, confirmed that they would be "a couple of feet" beyond the existing pilings. It was clarified that if the Application is approved, there would not be significantly larger vessels docked in the same space.

Mr. Morley commented that applications cannot be approved or denied based on view, and acknowledged that the Application moves structures further into the site. He expressed concern with the temporary placement of additional docks in the area for the duration of the Boat Show. A representative of the Boat Show confirmed that they have no objections to the waiver request.

Chair Witten emphasized that the Board's focus does not involve the upland property on the site.

The Board members further discussed measurements on the site and the waterway, including temporary docks during the Boat Show. It was clarified that existing conditions include a sovereign submerged land lease which cannot be exceeded. The maximum

boat size that can be docked at the location is 65 ft. The Applicant expects to receive a new submerged land lease which would be 1 ft. less in width. It was confirmed that the Applicant was willing to accept a condition limiting vessel size to no more than 65 ft.

Chair Witten requested that Attorney Dunckel draft a Resolution restricting vessel size to 65 ft. Attorney Dunckel confirmed that this is a legal condition that may be imposed upon the waiver, subject to enforcement by Code Compliance.

**Motion** made by Mr. Morley, seconded by Mr. Brunelle, to approve.

Dr. Ribotsky requested clarification of the value of moving the pilings. It was explained that the existing pilings are in disrepair.

Dr. Ribotsky also asked if it would be possible to place a restriction on Bahia Mar regarding boat size. Chair Witten clarified that the Board is only charged with reviewing the subject parcel. Attorney Dunckel added that Code is structured to permit 30% projection into the waterway on each side, leaving 40% in the center. It was pointed out that the boats docked at the subject property will remain the same size while the dock configuration will change.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 10-4 (Mr. Coburn, Mr. Franks, Mr. Lynch, and Dr. Ribotsky dissenting).

Mr. Mitchell asked if Board members are permitted to visit the sites for which waivers are requested. Chair Witten confirmed that this is allowed.

## **XII. Dock Waiver – 309 Sunset Drive / The Hogan Group LLC**

Lisa McConnell, representing the Applicant, explained that the request is from a five-unit condominium building on Sunset Lake which wishes to repair and/or replace dilapidated dock structures, including finger piers. There are no navigational issues at the site. The greatest proposed distance requested by the waiver is 12 ft. for a total of 37 ft. from the property line to the outside of the mooring piles. The slips are 14 ft. wide.

Ms. McConnell confirmed that the request would replace the same configuration as currently exists. The site includes a nonconforming existing structure. Mr. Cuba confirmed that the replacement will be within the same footprint.

Ms. McConnell further clarified that environmental approvals have already been obtained from regulatory agencies.

Chair Witten asked if the Applicant had received letters of support. Ms. McConnell replied that while she did not submit letters of support, there have been no letters of objection.

**Motion** made by Mr. Swindell, seconded by Mr. Lynch, to approve. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed unanimously (14-0).

**XIII. Communication from the Bridge – Marco Aguilera / Chief Waterways Officer**

Mr. Aguilera reported that the City's second mangrove planting will be held on September 13, 2025 at Coontie Hatchee Park. This planting is made possible with the assistance of the Coastal Conservation Association. He encouraged the members to participate in the planting, which will begin at 8 a.m.

Approval of the grant agreement funding the City's pump-out boat will be on the October 7, 2025 City Commission Agenda.

Mr. Aguilera continued that his office is working to prepare a welcome brochure for the City's waterways, as the amended Anchoring Ordinance is expected to keep vessels on the move. The Marine Unit will make contact with new boaters anchored in the area and provide them with the brochure and other information, including channel 9 use, bridge closure times, pump-out locations, and the requirements of the Anchoring Ordinance.

A Waterway Noise Ordinance will take effect on September 28, 2025. Music may not be audible more than 25 ft. away from the vessels where it originates.

The revised Anchoring Ordinance was passed by the City Commission upon first reading. It will be presented for second reading at the September 16, 2025 Commission meeting.

In light of the recent jet ski accident, City Commissioner Ben Sorensen has assembled a small working group, including the Fire and Police Chiefs as well as the City Manager, to explore options to improve waterway safety. A vessel traffic study was performed by the Police Department, with the results to be shared once they are available.

There is ongoing consideration of an electric Police boat, which will need to go through the procurement process although it would be considered on a trial basis. Mr. Aguilera was not certain whether the trial would occur before or after the Boat Show. The intent is to determine whether this technology should be considered for future use. A 126 ft. boat would cost approximately \$450,000. Chair Witten noted that an electric boat would likely be paid for through grant funds.

Mr. Aguilera continued that water quality testing continues, and a plan is being prepared to address cleanup on the North Fork of the New River, where tests have failed. There are several contributing factors in that area, the majority of which are not in Fort Lauderdale. The City's Urban Forester will help to identify invasive species along the riverbanks so they can be replaced with native plants, and the Aquatic Control Group will be active in the area as well. Another step will be the fencing of lots on the riverbank where homeless individuals may congregate.

Mr. Aguilera noted that several commercial properties located upstream from Fort Lauderdale contribute to this concern, and advised that many of these properties are accruing fines. He has spoken to FDEP to make them aware of the situation, and advised that it may be necessary to reach out to the city of Lauderdale or to Broward County to request that they take further action.

Mr. Morley asked if there is water quality monitoring in the subject area. Mr. Aguilera confirmed that there is waterway testing at Sweeting Park which has indicated the presence of fecal bacteria. Broward County tests for more contaminants than the City, but their ambient waterway quality testing only occurs on a quarterly basis. The City plans to identify five additional testing locations in the fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget, as well as source tracking. Waterway testing results are available on the City's website and are updated weekly.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the North Fork area has been dredged, as this could address buildup of fecal material. Chair Witten suggested that the Board invite Dr. Nancy Gassman of the Public Works Department to attend a subsequent meeting and provide additional data.

#### **XIV. Old / New Business – New River GIS Mapping & Navigation Update from Captain Bob Franks**

Mr. Franks recalled that one of the MAB's duties is regulation of boat docking in the New River and ensuring public navigable waterways. He pointed out that the marine industry employs over 144,000 individuals in Broward County and has a significant impact on the local economy.

The New River is regulated by the City beginning at markers 10 and 12, while the Intracoastal Waterway is regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is empowered to federalize regulation of the New River upon request. Mr. Franks noted that barges and other large vessels regularly travel the New River for utility and construction purposes.

Docks may extend up to 25 ft. into the waterway from property lines without a waiver. They may not exceed 30% of the width of the waterway with moored vessels. Mr. Franks showed slides of different areas on the river including property lines, the waterway's navigable channel, the 25 ft. measurement from property lines, and the 30% limit of the waterway. He reviewed various locations on this area of the waterway, pointing out that the navigable channel is being squeezed at some points.

Mr. Franks noted possible special navigation areas which are regularly traveled by large vessels and may need more channel space. He recalled that in 2023, there were discussions of a potential moratorium on waivers in some areas of the New River. Although the moratorium was ultimately not approved by the City Commission, there have been no further requests for waivers in some portions of the river.

Additional materials addressing navigability on the New River include a 2024 bathymetric survey, videos of large vessels on narrow portions of the river, and the Coast Guard's re-confirmation that the New River is not federally regulated upriver from the mile markers noted earlier. The City Attorney's Office has clarified that widths on the waterway are based upon property lines. A geographic information systems (GIS) map was created in 2025 to clarify the navigable channel.

Mr. Franks also reviewed the following:

- Dock mooring permits are based on recorded property lines
- The maximum extension allowed without a waiver is 25 ft.
- The maximum extension allowed for docked vessels is 30% of the waterway width
- While the Coast Guard does not regulate the New River, it can become involved if the City cannot resolve navigation issues
- Large vessel traffic and navigation challenges are increasing

Mr. Franks concluded that the City will need to focus on data-driven problem-solving, including identification of key questions, collection of stakeholder concerns, development and recommendation of clear actionable options to the City Commission, and prioritization of a balance of safety, commercial, residential, and industry needs.

It was asked whether the City might be able to adopt a resolution identifying specific choke points rather than addressing them one at a time. This would allow residents to know which areas are concerns in advance of waiver applications. Mr. Franks noted that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommends channel widths for vessels of certain sizes, which can be applied to the river; however, these parameters will not be appropriate for all portions of the river due to varying widths. There are some areas where the permitted 25 ft. extension may be too much to accommodate vessels of certain sizes.

Chair Witten advised that he hoped the presentation would make its way to the City Commission for consideration.

## **XV. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 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.]