

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes January 8, 2024

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, January 8, 2024, in the Downtown Library Auditorium, 101 W Flagler. Sign in sheets are attached.

Miami River Commission (MRC) Policy Committee Members and/or Designees attending:

Horacio Stuart Aguirre, Chairman, Appointed by the Governor
Jim Murley, Vice Chairman, designee for Miami-Dade County Mayor Cava
Megan Kelly, designee for City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Theodora Long, Neighborhood Representative appointed by Board of County Commissioners
Eileen Broton, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Alvaro Coradin, designee for Sara Babun appointed by Miami-Dade County
Bruce Brown, Miami River Marine Group
John Michael Cornell, designee for Luis Garcia
Spencer Crowley, Member at Large Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Neal Schafers, designee for the Downtown Development Authority
Philip Everingham, designee for the Marine Council

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

I) Chair's Report - MRC Chairman Aguirre provided the following report:

The MRC unanimously adopted their December public meeting minutes.

Happy New Year. The Miami River Commission's 2023 Annual Report is before you. I thank all of our incredible volunteer board members for their time and commitment to the Miami River District which has made all the MRC's accomplishments possible.

The free 25th Annual Miami Riverday will be held April 6, 2024, 1-6 PM, Lummus Park, 250 NW North River Drive, featuring free boat rides, live music, environmental education, historic reenactors, children's activities, food and drinks. Sponsorships are available with Brett. In addition, advertisements are available for the 21st Annual Miami River Map and Guide.

Theodora Long distributed a letter from the Florida Department of State regarding the "Grove Park Historic District".

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley, Voluntary Improvement Plan (VIP) Report: The Miami River Commission has been actively assisting the efforts of the City, County, State, and private sector to clean up the Miami River District. In addition to the maintenance professionals the MRC pays daily to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping, pressure washing, vac truck, street sweeper and Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel services along the Miami River, the MRC thanks the Hands on Miami volunteers for picking up garbage along the Miami River In Curtis Park on December 17.

II) Presentation Regarding Food Rescue US' Participation with Miami River Restaurant

Ellen Bowen, Executive Director of Food Rescue US, distributed handouts and presented a power point summary of Food Rescue US. The following is an excerpt from one of the handouts:

“If you are like most food providers then you have inevitable food surplus. The question is what to do with it. **DONATING YOUR FOOD IS NOT ONLY EASY, IT'S BENEFICIAL.** Donating any amount of food saves your business money, benefits our planet, and helps feed your neighbors in need. Am I protected from liability? Yes. The Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, passed by Congress in 1996, protects food donors and the agencies that distribute the donated food to those in need. The bill was written to encourage the donation of food and protects food produce that meets all quality and labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations even though the product may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions

Food Rescue US- South Florida

- Since 2018, the South Florida location of national 501c3 non-profit, Food Rescue US has rescued unsold, unused food from a variety of donors including hotels, restaurants, markets, events, sports stadiums and convention centers, and delivered to social service agencies and shelters.
- The Federal Bill Emerson Law allows for any donations made in good faith to be free of liability for the donor. Congress recently passed the Food Donation Improvement Act making food donation every easier.
- **With over 40% of all food wasted and 1 in 5 going to bed hungry, this program not only reduces food waste and feeds the food insecure, but also helps the environment by keeping food from landfills where decomposing food produces more methane gas than auto emissions. COP26 just designated food waste as the #1 cause of climate change.**
- Since 2018, over 7.7 million lbs. of usable food was rescued, with over 90,000 lbs. rescued at last year's Formula 1 Grand Prix at Hard Rock Stadium.
- Our over 200 major food donors include hotels, like The Fontainebleau, Ritz Carlton, 1 Hotel and Loews Miami Beach, the Miami Beach Convention Center, DRVPINK and Hard Rock Stadiums and local restaurants Yardbird, Mila, Red Rooster Overtown, Café La Trova, Sugarcane, Kiki of the River and Red Steak South Beach.

- We are currently also rescuing at local markets including a number of Whole Foods, Trader Joes , Sprouts and recently opened Plum Market.
- Using our proprietary web based App technology, all donations are recorded and tracked and direct transferred to over 80 local shelters and soup kitchens like Kristi House, Buddy System Community Refrigerators, Cosac Shelters, Broward Partnership, Broward Outreach, Village FREEdge Pantry, Camillus House, Chapman Partnership, Coconut Grove Crisis Food Pantry, Miami Rescue Mission and Lotus House.
- With an all volunteer team of rescuers that number over 1200, we direct deliver the donated food within a 5 miles radius of donor location and do not take to warehouse to be sorted and shipped out of the community elsewhere in Florida. Donors always know where the food will be delivered and the community served.

For more information, contact Ellen Bowen @ellen@foodrescue.us and visit our website at <https://foodrescue.us/site/food-rescue-us-south-florida/>

Currently Kiki's on the River participates. Considering the number of riverfront restaurants, hotels, and homeless, perhaps more Miami River District establishments will participate in the program which benefits both the needy and the natural environment.

III) Informational Presentation Regarding the Florida Inland Navigation District's Commercial / Industrial Waterway Access Initiative

Spencer Crowley, Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), distributed copies of FIND's Commercial / Industrial Waterway Access Initiative – Miami-Dade County Inventory Summary" and a 5 minutes video. Currently getting access to the water for needed commercial and industrial projects like seawall construction etc is getting very difficult, which therefore increases the project costs for mobilization and demobilization. Therefore, FIND is now providing grant funding to support needed access to the waterways for commercial and industrial projects.

IV) Subcommittees

The Miami River Commission's Urban infill and Greenways Subcommittee's December 20 public meeting minutes were distributed.

The Miami River Commission's Stormwater Subcommittee's December 6 public meeting minutes were distributed.

V) New Business - The public meeting adjourned.

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Miami-Dade County Library, 101 W Flagler ST

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
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Spencer Crowley	FIND	305 982 5549	ts Crowley@aicw.org
James Murray	MDC/OOP	786 719 9155	James.Murray@miamidade.gov
Horacio Stuart Aguirre	MRC	Chairman	

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