

Biscayne Bay Commission Minutes
Nov. 30, 2022
9 a.m.

Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus and GoToWebinar

General subject matter considered: The Biscayne Bay Commission met to review and discuss plans to address water quality impairments as well as the priority projects and financial resources that could address these plans.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Noah Valenstein	Chair	Present
Adam Blalock	Vice-Chair	Present
Danielle Cohen Higgins	Commission Member	Present
Tim Meerbott	Commission Member	Not Present
Scott Wagner	Commission Member	Present
Dr. Thomas Reinert	Commission Member	Not Present
Spencer Crowley III	Commission Member	Present

Welcome and Introduction

Jon Moore from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Southeast District welcomes the room and asks all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Jon informs the audience that the meeting is being recorded, a copy of the agenda is available for in-person and virtual attendees, and that public comments are due by Dec. 6, 2022, and can be emailed to BBCommission@FloridaDEP.gov. Jon thanks Florida International University for hosting.

Commission Procedural Items

Chair Valenstein takes roll call and requests a motion to approve minutes from the commission meeting on July 27, 2022. Commission Member Danielle Cohen Higgins makes this motion, and Commission Member Spencer Crowley III seconds; all are in favor.

Chair Valenstein acknowledges the robust conversations from the previous meeting and the desire for more discussion on water quality. Chair Valenstein welcomes new Commission Member Scott Wagner and reviews the agenda for the day, including the hold of all discussion until after the public comment.

Miami-Dade County Update on DEP Grants

An overview of the six tasks under the Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement grant – ranging from water quality characterization and modeling to stormwater and wastewater and infrastructure to restoration – is provided by Pamela Sweeney, Senior Scientist in the Water Resources Section at Miami Dade County's Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources Division of Environmental Management.

Pamela Sweeney also discussed other grant funding that the county is pursuing for education, debris removal, etc.

Following the presentation, commission members discussed the following:

- Reporting requirements of project status.
- Ensuring project diversity and oversight of grant funding.

- Appreciation for commitment of local agencies and need for additional funding.
- Deadlines for expenditure of grant funding.
- Deliverables on specific tasks. The need for actionable tasks from reports and analysis in order to develop capital projects list.
- Policy, cost and funding for septic-to-sewer conversions, retrofits and lateral connections.

Public Comments

Public comments are opened and led by Jon Moore. Each commenter is limited to three minutes.

- In-person commenters: Rachel Streitfeld and Laura Reynolds.
- Virtual commenter: Emilio Lopez.

Public comment period includes the following topics:

- Highlighted the recently approved \$60 million stormwater bond funding for North Bay Village.
- Participation in the Coastal Mayor Forum.
- Require the Florida Department of Transportation’s Project Development and Environment procedure to include the study of water circulation, water quality and environmental analysis for the low-level bridges replacement project in North Bay Village.
- Education on septic to sewer, pollution, land use, and preservation (no net loss) of wetlands.

Commission Discussion

Commission Member Crowley started the discussion by commenting on the litter entering the bay, suggesting that grates on storm inlets may help address this, in addition to increased education. Crowley commented further that this measure would include regular maintenance and upkeep to prevent street flooding.

Commission Member Crowley also led a discussion on stormwater treatment areas being implemented statewide.

Commented [BS1]: Implemented?

Commission Member Wagner discussed a potential rule change being considered to require additional controls on land-owners and special districts that are discharging water into canals.

Commissioner Cohen Higgins emphasized her support for the efforts by the county.

Commission Discussion on Homework and Report

Mollie Sinnott, Southeast Regional Administrator of DEP’s Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, advised the commission on their homework and the upcoming semi-annual report. DEP will be requesting regular updates on the 166 projects from 24 communities and partners to include in the report as well as any new projects.

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Chair Valenstein makes closing remarks and reminds commission members to look at funding resources along with assigned homework. Chair Valenstein motions to adjourn and all are in favor.