MINUTES
BROWARD COUNTY MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION
March 5, 2026, 2:00 PM
Plantation Heritage Park
1100 S Fig Tree Lane
Plantation, FL 33317

I CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM by Chair John Fiore.

II ROLL CALL: Roll was called; a quorum was present.

Members:

Afeefa Abdool-Ghany	Josh Dotoli	Amanda Noon (Teams)
Jerry Baer	John Fiore	Jo Stanley
Cliff Berry	Peter Grady	Clive Taylor
Penny Cutt (Teams)	Julie Greenfield	Barry Webber
	Joseph Martinet (Teams)	

New Member: Chair Fiore welcomed a new member to the MAC. During his introduction, Josh Dotoli said he was very happy to be part of the committee and shared that he has worked in real estate sales and development. Mr. Dotoli stated he is an avid boater, very passionate about the waterways, including issues of safety and pollution. He stated that he wanted to help people enjoy the community's waterways, which he described as a beautiful opportunity available in Fort Lauderdale.

Staff:
Jay Sanford, Staff Liaison, Broward County Parks & Recreation Division
Lisa Totten, Administrative Assistant, Broward County Parks & Recreation Division

Guests:
Matthew Gioielli, Broward Sheriff's Office
Marc Johnson, Fort Lauderdale Police Department
Travis O'Neal, Fort Lauderdale Police Department
Dayna Bhaggan, Fort Lauderdale Police Department
Chris Keating, Hallandale Beach Police Department
Robert O'Neill, Hillsboro Beach Police Department
Paul Creelman, Hillsboro Beach Police Department
Robert Marren, Hollywood Police Department
Christopher Alban, Hollywood Police Department
Bernadette Roelofs, Hollywood Police Department
Chris Oh, Lighthouse Point Police Department
David Turner, Wilton Manors Police Department
Seth Towbis, Pompano Beach Power Squadron
Tom Nolan, Pompano Beach Power Squadron

Robert Knight, Tactical Advantage Consultants
David Johnson, Tactical Advantage Consultants
Robert Franks, Marine Advisory Board, City of Fort Lauderdale
Sabrina Ladd, Broward County Manatee Conservation

III PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

IV APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Peter Grady made a motion to approve the February 5, 2026, meeting minutes and Jo Stanley seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

V CORRESPONDENCE: Jay Sanford reported that Broward County had processed an hours transfer for the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) for their zones, explaining that BSO had requested a 20% transfer of hours and confirming with Sergeant Gioielli that this transfer had been completed. Mr. Sanford also reported that, following a prior discussion, they had submitted letters of support to the FWC for grants related to the West Broward Boat Ramp and the Markham Park West Boat Ramp, explaining that these are two separate freshwater boat ramps located in the western part of the county. He stated that the parks department had already obtained BBIP funding from the county for these projects and was seeking additional FBIP funding in order to make the ramps usable again, and he thanked the committee for supporting the project.

VI OLD BUSINESS: Manatee Weekly Survey: Mr. Sanford reported that almost all manatees had left the area except for 6 resident manatees, so no more manatee flights would be conducted for the remainder of the season, and the count included in the meeting packet represented the final tally for the year. He reported that the peak count reached 320 manatees, which he said was about half of the usual peak, noting that in prior years counts had reached 700–800 manatees in the county.

VII NEW BUSINESS:

Five Minute Presentation of FY 2026–2027 EMLEG Applications by Applicants, Followed by Appointment of MAC Members for EMLEG Reports.

Broward County: Mr. Sanford explained that each year Broward County applies for training money to be included with the grants for partner agencies, typically funding 3 officers per agency at $1,000 per officer to attend training offered by Tactical Advantage Consultants (TAC). He stated that because BSO covers 6 zones, they receive an additional $3,000 in training funds. For the current year, he said TAC is providing a basic class in the first week of May, and his request to the MAC was to consider training funds for next year to support an advanced class. He encouraged agencies that have boat handlers, or officers they plan to use as boat handlers, to use the training money already in their grants to send them to the class, noting that it is beneficial for preventing damage to boats. Mr. Sanford also mentioned that because every agency can send someone, the training gives marine officers a chance to meet counterparts from neighboring agencies, so when a single-boat agency calls for help they are being assisted by someone they already know who has gone through the same training. Mr. Sanford concluded by encouraging

the agencies again to use the money, explaining that if they do not, the funds are placed back into the budget.

Bob Knight, President of TAC, introduced himself and said the classroom portion of the upcoming basic TAC training class would be held at the Lighthouse Point Fire Department. He noted that TAC has been in existence for approximately 40 years and has been working with this grant program for around 14 to 15 years. Mr. Knight explained that this year's course would consist of classroom instruction at the fire department followed by boat tactics, and he described it as the basic class, with an advanced class planned for the following year. He emphasized that the class is popular, fills up quickly, and encouraged those present to register as soon as they could.

Peter Grady volunteered to review Broward County's application and meet with Mr. Sanford.

Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO): In his presentation on behalf of BSO, Sergeant Matthew Gioielli introduced himself as the marine unit supervisor and explained that his unit operates throughout the Intracoastal Waterway and the Everglades, covering the Everglades zones, freshwater canals, and the areas of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Pompano, Deerfield, and Dania Beach. He stated that BSO was requesting the same hours and the same zones as the previous year, with no request for additional equipment. Sergeant Gioielli noted that the only change they are seeking is an increase in the hourly rate, to $54 per hour. He said the reason for that request was that many of his deputies were starting to choose other details and overtime opportunities because, unlike some agencies, BSO cannot pay overtime at the higher detail rate; once all associated funds, fees, and retirement-related deductions are taken out, the deputies end up making significantly less than they can earn on other overtime or detail assignments, and this disparity has been affecting participation in the program.

Julie Greenfield volunteered to review BSO's application.

City of Fort Lauderdale: Sergeant Travis O'Neal introduced himself as the supervisor for Fort Lauderdale's marine operations and stated that the city was requesting the same support as in the past few years. He explained that for the previous year and the half-year before that, the unit had been understaffed, and in the past year overtime had been stopped mid-year across the agency. He reported that the current year was positive because the unit was now fully staffed, with one officer still in training and another who had just graduated and was expected to be fully ready within the next couple of weeks, at which point they would be fully staffed and fully ready to operate. In response to a question from Mr. Sanford, he specified that their staffing level was 7 marine officers plus himself, and added that there were also 3 previous marine officers who remained qualified to work EMLEG details; those former full-time marine officers now worked in a more sporadic manner depending on their other duties, with one of them identified as a consistent participant. Mr. Sanford noted that last year they only used 48% of their hours, and Sergeant O'Neal concluded that, compared to the prior year, the current year was looking more promising for Fort Lauderdale's marine operations.

Joseph Martinet volunteered to review Fort Lauderdale's application.

City of Hallandale Beach: Officer Chris Keating introduced himself as working the Hallandale Beach marine unit boat on weekends after having retired from the department and returning about three weeks prior to the meeting. He stated that the boat had not been fully staffed for the past year and a half to two years due to manpower and other issues, and that he had been rehired to help address those gaps, so he expected to be out on the water much more. He added that, because of short staffing, overtime opportunities elsewhere had paid around double the rate. He explained that Hallandale Beach was requesting the same hours as before and that, in the past, those hours had been used as needed, but manpower issues—similar to what other agencies had experienced—had been a factor. In response to a question from Julie Greenfield, he said that nights would also be covered, clarifying that he was not the only officer working and that he would handle most weekends while 5 other officers would work aggressive hours at night.

Amanda Noon volunteered to review Hallandale Beach's application.

Town of Hillsboro Beach: Chief Robert O'Neill introduced himself as the Chief of the Hillsboro Beach Police Department, and said he was presenting on behalf of the town, noting that this was his first time at the committee meeting. He introduced Officer Paul Creelman as the agency's first full-time marine unit officer and explained that Hillsboro Beach has 3.2 miles of Intracoastal Waterway to the west and, to the south, the Hillsboro Inlet, which keeps the department very busy. He stated that Officer Creelman had been a strong addition to their presence on the water and to their mission of promoting boating safety. Chief O'Neill described how Officer Creelman created and uses a QR code during vessel stops that links directly to the FWC website and shows examples of speed zones, such as idle speed and slow speed, as part of an effort to educate boaters on proper speed-zone compliance. He said that the hours they were requesting remained the same as previously and mentioned that the department had experienced some staffing issues in the past year but that those issues were now behind them. He concluded by expressing appreciation for being part of the program and for everything EMLEG had done for Hillsboro Beach over the years, stating he did not think they could manage without that support.

John Fiore volunteered to review Hillsboro Beach's application.

City of Hollywood: Officer Rob Marren from the Hollywood Police Department marine unit stated that he and Officer Chris Alban are the two full-time marine officers, supported by nearly two dozen additional officers certified as boat operators, many of whom are graduates of the TAC school. He said Hollywood covers Zones VII and VIII, reported that they had fully used their hours in the last fiscal year, and requested the same number of hours again, along with 3 additional TAC school training slots. He described their fleet as consisting of two 29-foot Fluid patrol boats, a 30-foot Intrepid that had just come back into service after being wrapped, and a 21-foot Fluid RIB used to access the C-10 canal and low-bridge areas, and he emphasized their intention to use the requested hours to have as many officers as possible on the water to interact with the boating public and promote safety. In response to a question from Mr. Sanford, he reported that operations in Zone VII were going well, with over 1,400 contacts, some citations, and several hundred patrols recorded there by the end of the previous month. He explained that boats heading south from the port fall under Hollywood's responsibility while those heading north fall under Fort Lauderdale's. Officer Marren discussed the City of Hollywood's requested funding for two sets of night vision devices for use on night patrols, joint operations, regular

patrols, and aggressive EMLEG operations, noting that the equipment might help them catch offenders such as GPS thieves at night; when asked, he confirmed this was a roughly $20,000 purchase and that the devices would be the same helmet-mounted model previously provided to BSO. Finally, he corrected the application to reflect that Officer Alban had since obtained a six-pack license at FLETC and that he himself had completed a 100-ton Captain's license course, stating that the paperwork submitted did not capture these recent accomplishments.

Josh Dotoli volunteered to review Hollywood's application.

City of Lighthouse Point: Operations Commander Chris Oh on behalf of Lighthouse Point Police Department, explained that the department patrols about 18 miles of waterway in Zone II using a single 29-foot Fluid patrol boat operated by approximately 14 part-time boat operators, with plans to train 3 additional operators in the coming year through TAC training funded by requested officer training slots. He stated that Lighthouse Point was requesting similar numbers of hours as in previous years, including support to staff weekend patrols and nighttime aggressive patrols in which two officers go out on random evenings during the week to provide a visible presence that is not typically seen. He said their primary objective on the water is to enhance boater safety through education and, when necessary, enforcement, and that they pride themselves on contacting the public and reinforcing marine regulations and laws.

Jo Stanley volunteered to review Lighthouse Point's application.

City of Wilton Manors: Sergeant David Turner of Wilton Manors Police Department stated that Wilton Manors is an island city of two square miles surrounded by canals and that the department was requesting the same number of hours as in prior years, noting they had used 100% of their hours over the past three years and had requested a 20% swap to reach 332 hours instead of the previous 284 in the grant paperwork. Sergeant Turner stated that, in addition to the hours, they were requesting funding for a new motor for their boat, explaining that the existing motor was 8 years old and approaching 3,000 hours, and that although it was running perfectly and receiving proper maintenance, the request was intended as a preemptive measure to avoid future problems that could prevent them from fulfilling grant obligations. In response to Mr. Sanford's question, he confirmed that if they received funding they would replace the current motor rather than waiting for it to fail, that the old motor would be sent to auction, and that the replacement they were seeking was a four-stroke motor.

Cliff Berry volunteered to review Wilton Manors' application.

Pompano Beach Power Squadron: Commander Seth Towbis of the Pompano Beach Power and Sail Squadron explained that the squadron offers an 8-hour, in-person public boating course several times a year, aiming to provide an enthusiastic live presentation that teaches participants about safety on the water and how to operate their boats legally, noting that the course is nationally approved and has recently incorporated many new Florida-specific questions and topics. He said they have received repeated requests for an on-the-water component so students can see aids to navigation, anchoring, and passing through bridges in real conditions, and he described a planned ride-along program in which 4 to 6 students at a time would be taken out on a rental boat to observe these concepts in practice, without operating the boat themselves due to

national organization insurance limitations. Mr. Towbis stated that they had arranged a discount with a local rental company and were requesting assistance to cover the boat rental, estimated at a little more than $5,600, as well as continued funding for online and newspaper advertising that has been very effective in attracting students. He described the new on-the-water element as an innovation supported by long-standing grant assistance from the county that has provided significant energy and value to their safe-boating efforts.

Jerry Baer volunteered to review Pompano Beach Power Squadron's application.

VIII CHAIR'S REPORT: During the Chair's Report, John Fiore reminded the committee that the Waterway Cleanup would take place that coming weekend and said participants could go online to choose where they wanted to help, describing it as a fun way to clean the waterways. Chair Fiore inquired if there were any remaining spots on the boat, and Mr. Sanford stated that he had 2 spots left on the boat, explained that they would be launching from Holland Park, and invited people to come pick-up trash, adding that participants would receive a T-shirt but needed to register with the Marine Industries Association online to get it. Mr. Sanford noted that he was choosing Holland Park because he knew where trash tended to accumulate—specifically in the South Lake corner—and said they would meet there at about 8:45 a.m., launch around 9:00 a.m., and that he would bring nets and trash bags.

IX DANIA BEACH MAB REPORT: NONE

X HOLLYWOOD MAB REPORT: NONE

XI POMPANO BEACH MAB REPORT: NONE

XII MAB REPORTS: During comments from the city of Fort Lauderdale's marine advisory board, Robert Franks reported that there would be a meeting that evening at 6:00 p.m. with the Coast Guard in attendance to address congestion on the New River. He said the issue was getting a lot of traction and explained that the meeting's focus would be to determine what the navigational fairway in the river should be, review applicable codes, and develop ways to address the congestion problem.

XIII LIAISON'S REPORT: Mr. Sanford noted that the attendance clock resets in January and that members who miss 3 consecutive meetings, or 4 meetings in a year, are automatically removed. He noted, however, that remote attendance counts toward attendance requirements. Mr. Sanford recapped that the MAC meets at 2:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, 8 times a year. He commented that the state legislature was actively addressing anchoring issues and referred members to news articles about actions already occurring in Palm Beach County, saying that in Broward County they try to proceed in a rational way, recognizing that efforts to address problematic vessels can also impact responsible boaters. Mr. Sanford then described conditions at the mooring field, noting that many 40-foot catamarans were using it, that these vessels are often high-value boats, and that reports from users indicated the field was functioning as intended, with boaters generally quiet by the start of quiet hours and few complaints from neighbors. He said the dual-point mooring system had not caused problems and that boaters appreciated that their vessels stayed in place rather than swinging, even if initial use could be

challenging, and he added that their support boat is available to help position vessels when needed.

XIV MAC MEMBER COMMENTS: NONE

XV ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM by Chair Fiore.