



P.O. Box 4561

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338

www.middleriverterrace.org

MIDDLE RIVER TERRACE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION INC.

General Meeting

THURSDAY May 12, 2016, at 6:00 p.m.

MRT Park Pavilion

General Meeting Called to Order: 6:02 p.m. by President Laura Croscenco.

Approval of the Agenda: Charles Scheller, seconded by Jonathan May

Approval of the Minutes dated March 17, 2016: Colleen Lockwood, seconded by Jonathan May

OFFICERS REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of 3/31/16	\$6,325.62
New Members	75.00
Donation for Warshaw Party	200.00
Reimburse Steve Stahl for expenses	-154.29

FP&L	-10.62
Balance as of 4/30/16	<u>\$6,435.71</u>

Police Report:

Officer Zack Baro presented the February and March statistics.

- Feb Residential Burglary 5
- Mar Residential Burglary 4
- Feb Vehicle Burglary 6
- Mar Vehicle Burglary 1
- Feb Auto Theft 1
- Mar Auto Theft 3
- Feb Robbery 1
- Mar Robbery 1

Officer Baro reported that there was a 20% reduction in crime from February. He was asked if drug arrests count in these figures. He replied that only Part 1 felony crimes are included. He noted that, in addition to bikes, boat and boating equipment thefts have increased.

GYR Report

Joann Block, MRTNA GYR rep, reported she will be working at the City Beach Party event for GYR points.

By-Law Committee Report

A meeting will be scheduled at a later date to review and revise the by-laws. For now, they will be changed to reflect the new time, 6 pm, for the monthly General Meeting. They also need to be changed to indicate the new meeting location. The Police Substation will no

longer have a meeting room. Colleen Lockwood will request a key to the Annie Beck house so that the meetings can be held there. Luis Castillo, SMRCA President, who joined this meeting, said he was just given a key to the house at the Central City Alliance meeting he was attending at the Annie Beck House prior to joining the MRTNA meeting tonight.

OLD BUSINESS:

Two guests from the City of Fort Lauderdale, Kirk Buffington, Director of Finance, and Arnette Torrence, Revenue Collection Supervisor Treasurer, responded to concerns about extremely fluctuating water usage indicated on City Municipal Service bills. A resident gave the example that her bill was usually for 1-2 units a month and then it jumped to 8-10 units with no change in water usage. Mr. Buffington recommended looking for possible hidden leaks in the line and water faucets. It could also be a bad meter. Call the City to test the meter (\$16 charge for first test) and if necessary have it replaced (additional charge for new meter). The City bills 55,000 accounts per month and yes, sometimes you get an estimated bill. There is an automatic 5% rate increase every year. He recommended calling Miss Torrence so she could discuss your specific account. Her number is 954-828-5148.

The next two guests from the City of Fort Lauderdale, Jorge Martinez, Code Compliance Officer, and Wilson Quintero, Sr. Code Compliance Officer responded to multiple concerns about things that detract from the appearance ("blight") and safety of MRT. Some of the problems mentioned by residents were multiple family units with driveways that need to be replaced, potholes, visible overflowing trash container behind store on Dixie Highway and NE 13th St., graffiti, and other neighborhood issues. Mr. Martinez replied they have been training 4 new inspectors who start responding on Monday, May 16th. He also said that they can only cite violations visible from the street and if there is a no trespassing sign, they can't go on the property. All material in

carts or for bulk pick-up may only be put out 24 hours before the scheduled pick-up day, . Construction material may be out until the project is completed. When residents see a code violation, they should call the code violation office at **954-828-6520** or e-mail Mr Martinez at jomartinez@fortlauderdale.gov He distributed a Code Violation packet that included a fact sheet on Common Code Violations, a Property Maintenance Checklist and a flow chart of the Code Inspection Process. If you go to: www.fortlauderdale.gov/departments/code-compliance you will be able to find this information on-line.

Another guest, Mr. John Brettino, District 7 Community Liaison from Broward County Commissioner Tim Ryan's office, announced that Commissioner Ryan is starting a newsletter. MRT is in District 7, his district.

President Laura Croscenco opened the discussion about how MRT is seen as a dumping ground for social service organizations and how that needs to stop. MRT already has more than most neighborhoods and now a new organization is being financed by the City to create a center for troubled teenagers. MRT is asking for transparency as to how the City selects social service organizations to support in MRT neighborhood and accountability as to how they spend the funding. MRTNA is looking to the City to finance projects that benefit the residents of MRT. Most of the social service programs in MRT bring in consumers from all over Broward. Some of these are Sober Homes, H.O.M.E.S (which recently bought additional property on N.E. 17th Court) for young people aging out of the Foster Care system Rehab centers, churches, healthy living for parents and children, HOPE for homeless families and others.

One suggestion was turning the pavilion in MRT Park, where this meeting was being held. Into a community center for the neighborhood. It was also pointed out that the pavilion was not clean and was missing 2 or 3 bench tables that were there previously. Laura also mentioned the loss of the million dollar funding that was supposed to be for adding the property to the south of MRT Park to the Park. Mr. Bretino explained that the County works with the City to rank projects from

most important to least. Money not spent on a project goes to the next eligible project on the list, which would not necessarily be in the same neighborhood.

SMRCA's problems with Crescent House were mentioned. SMRCA's president, Luis Castillo, reported that they were still trying to get the place closed down because of all of the crime it brings into the neighborhood.

President Laura Croscenco also brought up the issue of removing lanes on NE 4th Avenue. MRTNA is concerned about safety issues in the area around Fort Lauderdale High School. The City is doing a reanalysis study for NE 4th Avenue and looking at other options to provide bike lanes. MRTNA will be asking that the study show how reducing lanes will make the street safer for students walking and biking and for parents in cars picking up students, emergency vehicles and evacuations. Fort Lauderdale High School should be speaking up for the students, teachers and parents on this lane reduction issue. They should also be looking at increased fire and liability insurance costs because of the impact of the lane removal. The Public and the School Board should have access to the revised study when it is done.

The President announced that Fort Lauderdale Care Day was a success. Steve Stahl and the other volunteers did a good job and this effort will be helpful if MRTNA asks for City grants in the future.

Next meeting will include nominations for Officers and Board Members for MRTNA. The next Board of Directors meeting is Monday, June 13, at 5:30 pm and the General Meeting is Thursday, June 16 at 6 pm. The location of the meetings is TBD.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joann Block, filling in for Jan Palmer, Secretary

Guest Contacts, : www.fortlauderdale.gov

Kirk W. Buffington, Director of Finance

kbuffington@fortlauderdale.gov Tel: 954-828-5164 Fax: 954-828- 5168 cell:
954-608-7455

Arnette Torrence, Revenue Collection Supervisor Treasury,

arnettet@fortlauderdale.gov Tel. 954-828-5148 Fax. 954-828-5880

Jorge Martinez Code Compliance Officer, Department of

Sustainable Development jomartinez@fortlauderdale.gov

Tel 954-828-5685 Fax 954-828-5222 If you know it, include case #

Wilson Quintero, Sr. Code Compliance Officer, Department of

Sustainable Development wquintero@fortlauderdale.gov Tel-954-828-5880 Fax
954-828-5222

Contact: www.broward.org

John Bertino, **Community Liaison for District 7, Commissioner Tim Ryan**

johnbertino@broward.org Tel 954-357-7007

Fax 954-357-5707

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