

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # **301-2015**

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: July 20, 2015

SUBJECT: **Operation Dingy Sweep**



Background

As a result of many complaints that have been received by the City about “derelict” and smaller type vessels that have been attached, docked or affixed to City property, the Miami Beach City Commission recently enacted ordinance 66-151. This ordinance prohibits the launching, hauling and docking of unauthorized vessels at City property. On Saturday, July 18, 2015 the aforementioned ordinance became enforceable.

One of the challenges to enforcing this ordinance was that the City had no vessel towing vendor in place for the removal of these small vessels that were affixed to City property. To correct this, earlier in July a temporary vessel towing service was identified and hired by the City.

Enforcement of this ordinance is the shared responsibility of the City’s Code Enforcement Department and the Police Department.

Code Compliance officers may civilly cite persons they observe embarking or disembarking from a vessel that is illegally affixed to public property in violation of this ordinance. In addition, Code Compliance officers may summon Sea Tow (our current vessel towing vendor) to remove the illegally docked vessel if no person is there to claim it as an owner.

The Police Department is the main entity of the City that will be enforcing this ordinance because the Department’s Marine Patrol Unit has the capacity to observe these violations from the waterway and readily take enforcement action. The Police Department may also cite violators and order immediate tows of offending boats.

Our Early Enforcement – “Operation Dinghy Sweep”

On the mornings of Wednesday, July 15, 2015 and Thursday, July 16, 2015 Sea Tow began posting “tow away zone” signs at locations that Marine Patrol identified as nuisance locations. Nuisance locations are areas within our jurisdiction where many of these small vessels had previously been observed affixed or docked at City property. The sign postings allowed vessel owners ample time to move their vessels before the ordinance became effective. After the posting of these signs, a majority of the illegally docked vessels were quickly relocated.

Operation Dinghy Sweep

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On Saturday, July 18th, 2015, employees of the Police Department's Marine Patrol Unit, Crime Scene Investigations Section, Code Compliance and Sea Tow embarked on a mission dubbed "Operation Dinghy Sweep" to locate, cite and/or tow illegally docked vessels in violation of this ordinance.

Eight vessels were towed and one misdemeanor arrest was made for an individual who was seen defacing one of the recently installed "tow away zone" signs. An additional two vessels were identified as derelict vessels affixed to private property, and these will be removed in the coming weeks.. One person was found living on an illegally docked vessel along the 2500 block of Collins Avenue and was paying the owner monthly rent to reside there.

Part of the Marine Patrol's daily activity going forward will be to enforce this ordinance. Having a vessel tow vendor in place was critical to the success of the July 18 operation. As of today, the Miami Beach Police Department is the only law enforcement agency within Miami-Dade County who has contracted with a vessel towing company. Attached is a picture of a Sea Tow vessel and operator preparing to tow three derelict vessels from a city sea wall during Operation Dinghy Sweep on July 18.



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