

May 12, 2018 Meeting Minutes of Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative

The first meeting of the property owners opposed to the Martin County Planning Organization (MPO) approved “decorative” lighting and sidewalk project met at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Dottie Lanci, 1931 N.E. Ocean Blvd. The following individuals were in attendance; Dottie Lanci, Jim Wiswesser, John Garwood, Erica Garwood, Frank Caputo, Todd Berwick, John Hodge, Andy Campbell, Sue Foley, Jim Foley, Linda Whalen, Donna Melzer, Gail Florin, Ed Tully, Hilarie Davis, Carol Berkema, Ralph Jones, and Patty Jones. The sign in sheet, copy attached, did not include addresses but did include phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Each attendee introduced themselves.

BACKGROUND ON LIGHTING PROJECT: Ralph Jones, President of Suntide HOA, gave the history of the lighting project which has been spearheaded by a small, self-appointed group named the Hutchinson Island Coalition (HIC) which Ralph explained that he and his wife, Patty, have been a part of since its inception in 2012. The man that started HIC is Jim Hudson of Suntide Condominium. There was an open house at the Marriott in 2013 suggesting ten beautification and safety improvements for the south end of Hutchinson Island in Martin County that did not include lighting.

Since that time the HIC was able to push through a Strategic Plan for the Island which included lighting. It was approved by the MPO and the County Commissioners based on the HIC’s claim that it was heavily supported by the residents of Hutchinson Island which was not true.

RESIDENTS HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF PROJECT: Jim Foley of Hutchinson House said he had no knowledge of this project. He offered to submit a list of HOA presidents on the Island. Everyone agreed this is needed in order to get information to residents. Jim also stated the needs of the Island are very different than the rest of Martin County.

John Garwood of Buttonwood stated he is President of his HOA. John said he polled all 21 of the unit owners in Buttonwood and they are adamantly opposed to this project which they knew nothing about.

John Hodge of Beachwood Villas stated he wants shared decision making based on data. He stated the data should not be based on what the constituents want.

Everyone in the meeting expressed great concern that they had no idea about the project until reading it in the Stuart News or receiving a flyer in their mailbox or on their car. It was stated that there are residents north of Beachwood Villas that are not aware of this and others that need to be informed.

EXPLANATION OF FUNDING: Andy Campbell of Suntime, as a former State of New Jersey transportation department accountant and auditor, explained that he researched the funding for this project on the web. He also explained the genesis of “planning organizations” appointed to recommend public transportation improvement projects for the local areas. Andy explained the project is a priority #6 and FDOT is funding the project with state funds, with no local share contribution for construction. It was stated, however, by Pat Jones, that the County entered into an intergovernmental agreement with FDOT to reimbursement FDOT \$291.35 per lamp pole for energy and maintenance annually, which is approximately \$111,000 annually from the County based on 382 light poles planned.

NAME OF GROUP AND WEBSITE: It was agreed that this group would establish the name of “Island Preservation Initiative”. Hilarie Davis agreed to develop a website on WIKI. WIKI requires four letters for the acronym. We, therefore, agreed on Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative (HIPI).

FACEBOOK: Carol Berkema suggested that we should place something on facebook as well. It was discussed that she would place reference to the website on facebook and visa versa. It was anticipated that Hilarie and Carol would work this out together.

MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION ALLIANCE: It was agreed that most residents of the project area and beyond are not aware of the approved project which is scheduled to go to bid in December, 2018 with construction proposed in 2019. Dottie and Donna Melzer, former County Commissioner, are active with a group called the Martin County Conservation Alliance which meets on May 23rd. They will request that this organization gets involved. Also, the **Lagerhead Marine Life**

Center was mentioned as an organization to contact and get involved. Jim Foley may have been the person that mentioned this.

HIPI OBJECTIVE: It was agreed the objective of this group of property owners would be to stop this project; No Lights, No additional Sidewalk.

PASS PETITIONS TO OPPOSE PROJECT: Todd Berwick, President of Beachwood Villas, said we need an information sheet and petitions signed. He said he would ask the manager of Publix if we could set-up in front of their entrance on the Island to inform residents of the project and get petitions signed. It was agreed by Ralph that he would work with Todd to develop docs for information and petitions. It was agreed this information would be sent to everyone at the meeting. Each attendee agreed to pass petitions and get signatures a.s.a.p.

NEXT HIPI MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, MAY 29TH, HOWEVER, NO TIME WAS SET.

NEXT MPO MEETING IS MONDAY, JUNE 18TH, AT 9:00 A.M. AT THE COUNTY ADM. BUILDING AT 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Minutes by Patty Jones, Suntide Condominium

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