

MINUTES OF THE HUTCHINSON ISLAND PRESERVATION INITIATIVE (HIPI) MEETING

HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022

President Dottie Lanci called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lanci residence. Board members present were Paul Laura, Barbara Seaton, Ralph and Patty Jones, Angela Ratinella, Dr. Wayne Maxson, and John Hodge. Communications Officer Elizabeth Farrar was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Laura moved, seconded by Mr. Hodge, to approve the minutes of the last meeting held April 20, 2022. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: President Lanci introduced Dr. Wayne Maxson the new HIPI Treasurer. Dr. Maxson submitted a detailed bank transaction report for the period August 4, 2021 through May 16, 2022 showing total credits (19) \$1,434.47 and debits (5) \$979.55. Dr. Maxson reported the bank balance as of May 18th of \$2,039.94.

There was a brief discussion of the pending request to the State to forgive a fine levied against HIPI for not filing a tax return prior to 2021. Mr. Flowers, a CPA assisting HIPI with this request and financial guidance, has said we have an extension until September, 2022 for filing this year's return. Dr. Maxson said he will order new checks and use Ginny Sherlock's address since she is HIPI's legal advisor. Also, Dr. Maxson said he will follow up with Mr. Flowers mid-summer on the tax return issue. HIPI is a Not for Profit Corporation and has paid \$248 to the IRS in taxes. The HIPI board is hopeful that with the help of Mr. Flowers, there will be no taxes charged to HIPI in future years.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Membership Officer John Hodge reported that we now have 72 members. Mr. Hodge had circulated an introductory statement he had written describing HIPI and its mission. He explained that he and Ralph Jones had organized the 3rd Martin County Hutchinson Island President's Council meeting which was held May 3rd at the Elliott Museum. HIPI has acted as a facilitator in getting this organization started. This is what prompted Mr. Hodge to write a "standardized" description of HIPI in order that speakers from HIPI attending other organizations' meetings can be consistent when describing HIPI. The next President's Council meeting will be held in August.

President Lanci discussed the importance of HIPI being a member of other environmental groups such as the Guardians of Martin County, Friends of Martin Co., Friends of Everglades, and 1,000 Friends of Florida to name of few. Mr. Laura moved, seconded by Mr. Jones, that HIPI open membership opportunity for environmentally concerned organizations. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT: President Lanci reported that she and Ms. Farrar met with Jim Gorton, Martin Co. Public Works Director regarding Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) for the Island. President Lanci said there are two MSTU's for the Island. Mr. Gorton had reported at the HIPI annual meeting that there is a balance of \$418,000 in the MSTU account for the

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Island and they are looking for resident input on preference on which of two projects the residents would prefer. President Lanci described Project #1 as the SE MacArthur Boulevard Crosswalk. This project creates a pedestrian connection between the House of Refuge and the beach to the County's public dock on the Indian River Lagoon. The project includes striped and signed crosswalk over SE MacArthur Boulevard and a boardwalk connection to the dock; the project also includes speed tables north and south of the crosswalk away from the on-street parking area. The estimated cost of this project is \$365,000. Discussion ensued regarding the existing dangerous blind curve and that this crosswalk would help with safety. However, board members were concerned as to existing limited parking for the House of Refuge. Encouraging possible more visitors to the site creates even more demand on parking and safety for pedestrians crossing the road.

Second project discussed with Mr. Gorton was a proposed River Cove Connector Trail. This would be a walking path from the cove at the bottom of the Stuart Bridge along the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) that would connect with the existing walking path which starts at the Florida Oceanographic Society (FOS) along the IRL. Currently, the existing path can only be accessed through the FOS. The estimated cost for this project is \$75,000. Dr. Maxson asked if this new path would take away from the FOS. The general consensus was it would not.

Mr. Laura moved, seconded by Ms. Seaton, that HIPI support the proposed River Cove Connector Trail. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT: Mr. Laura reported on the monitoring of the two mosquito impoundments, wetlands areas, and the intertidal exchange here at the south end of the IRL compared to the north area where the exchange is far less frequent which impacts the growth of seaweed and grass. Mr. Laura reported there has been a reduction in phosphorous and nitrogen but no return of grass. He reported the "greening effect" of citrus herbicides changed the microbiology on the ground. Plants need bacteria. With the use of Roundup, the microbiology changed. Mr. Laura reported on the Herbicides/1000 Points of Life project and shared a written report from Leesa Souto. This report addresses the question of how much are herbicides effecting the growth of sea grass.

PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL UPDATE: Mr. Hodge reported approximately 6 Presidents attended. No one has volunteered to run this organization therefore, HIPI will continue to facilitate meetings. Next meeting will be in August. No specific date as yet.

MAY NEWSLETTER: President Lanci asked board members to submit their articles as previously assigned at the April meeting to Ms. Farrar. President Lanci said she will follow up with Ms. Farrar on newsletter completion and publication.

AGENDA ITEMS TABLED: Future direction of HIPI; fill board vacancy.

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NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT: The next meeting date was set for Wednesday, June 15th, at 7:00 p.m. to be held at President Lanci's residence.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Patricia L. Jones, Secretary

Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative