

MINUTES OF THE HUTCHINSON ISLAND PRESERVATION INITIATIVE, INC.

MEETING HELD SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019

The Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative, Inc. (HIPI) held a meeting on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Lanci residence, 1931 N.E. Ocean Boulevard. HIPI board members present were Ralph Jones, President, Dottie Lanci, Vice President, Jim Foley, Treasurer, Patty Jones, Secretary, Elizabeth Farrar and Hilarie Davis, External Communications Officers, Sue Foley, Director, Erica Garland, Director, Jayne Belcher, Director and Barbara Seaton, Director.

Mr. Joe Banfi was in attendance as a guest speaker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Lanci moved, seconded by Ms. Garwood, to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2019 meeting as presented. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.

CHALLENGE BY FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC TO CHANGE THE 40 FT BUILDING HEIGHT

LIMITATION IN MARTIN COUNTY: Ms. Lanci reported that the Florida Oceanographic is planning to build a \$6,500,000. three story Ocean Eco Center with an observation platform at 39 ft. The observation platform will have a railing and roof system that will exceed the 40 ft. building height limitation. Ms. Lanci said she attended the March 26th meeting of the County Board when the Board was stopped by the attorney from adopting a revision to the land development regulations for building height. The attorney instructed the amendment would have to be considered at a public hearing for public comment before the board could vote on the issue.

Mr. Joe Banfi explained that Martin County established a planning department by hiring him in 1972. Mr. Banfi said at that time, there were very few residents on south Hutchinson Island. Most of the land was zoned for commercial or business use which would have allowed tens of thousands of units. The elected officials at the time, considered Hutchinson Island the “crown jewel of Martin County”. The County Board took the bold step to rezone most of the property to low density residential and restrict the building height to 40 ft. to allow the vista of the ocean views to be enjoyed and not blocked. On the ocean side of the Island, they did take the dune into account and allowed the buildings to have the first 10 ft. from the ground up to be used since the dune would block any view in that first 10 ft. The 40 ft. height restriction started after the first 10 ft. on the ocean side of the Island. However, the 10 ft. additional building height was not allowed on the river side of the island since there is no dune to obscure the water view.

Mr. Banfi cautioned that if the County Board allows the exception to increase the building height for the Florida Oceanographic it will set a precedent that can be used for all of Martin County. Mr. Banfi said that he knows Mark Perry well. Mr. Banfi had actually lobbied for the County to acquire the FOS land.

The question is, do residents of Martin County want to maintain the 40 ft. building height limitation. A discussion ensued that HIPI should make a position statement that represents

only the HIPI board's opinion. It was agreed that Ms. Davis should poll the membership for their opinion.

Martin County is saying that the increase in height limitation would be couched in language that allows exceptions only for public service property owned by the County. Ms. Lanci reported she had attended a LPA (Land Planning Agency) meeting where Nicki VanVonno was recommending abolishment of the LPA which provides an opportunity for vetting of issues and receiving public input prior to being submitted to the County Board for consideration. Ms. Lanci reported that Ginny Sherlock is concerned that the County is trying to get around the existing code regulations. It was noted that the LPA meets the first and third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., at the County building in the County board room.

Paul Laura and Maggie Hurchalla are concerned about Comprehensive Plan changes made in 2017 when the County assured residents the height limitation would not be an issue for change. Now, after one election cycle, the building height limitation is up again for consideration.

(At 10:00 a.m. Barbara Seaton had to leave due to a previous commitment.)

Ms. Farrar moved, seconded by Ms. Lanci, to put together an action plan to maintain the 40 ft. building height limitation. Send the action plan to all that includes the HOA's, single family homes, HIPI members, placing it on our website; get it to Gil Smart and all the conservation groups including the Guardians and Autobahn Society. The main land should be included. It should also be emailed to the County Administrator and County Attorney. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Banfi stated the County Board members should know that it will be political suicide if they support and approve this change.

Ms. Davis asked if the issue of sustainability can be raised to oppose this building height request. Is the proposed building a LEADS, green construction techniques, approved facility?

Mr. Banfi was of the opinion that the building is most likely energy efficient and possibly LEADS qualified but he didn't think this would be an argument to fight increasing the building height limitation of 40 ft.

Jim and Sue Foley said they would be out of town from April 9th to the 15th. Mr. Foley suggested that we begin a grass roots movement with a petition drive opposing the change to the Martin County building height limitation of 40 ft., similar to the efforts we made regarding the proposed street lights for Ocean Boulevard.

Mr. Banfi suggested that HIPI not name FOS in the petitions but simply emphasize this would affect all of Martin County if changed.

It was agreed we should find a place to hold a HIPI meeting sometime over the next few weeks to address this issue. Ms. Farrar said she would contact Rob Steele of the Elliott. Joneses would do the same to seek a meeting room.

Ms. Garwood moved, seconded by Ms. Davis to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m. Upon voice vote the motion carried.

Minutes Prepared by Patricia L. Jones, Secretary

Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative, Inc.

April 10, 2019