

Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
September 8, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Dottie Lanci, Paul Laura, Hilarie Davis, Sue Foley, Jim Foley, Elizabeth Farrar
Members Absent: John Hodge, Barbara Seaton
Joined at 8:00 ET: Ralph Jones, Patty Jones

Ms. Lanci called the meeting to order at 7:02.

Mr. Laura made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 2021 board meeting. Mr. Foley seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Davis, Treasurer, reported that HIPI has a \$1625.02. One new member paid on August 4. That money is not included in the current bank balance. That membership brings our roster to 84 members. Nine members have paid membership dues online since January 1.

Ms. Lanci discussed her concerns with additional membership recruiting given the ongoing COVID threat.

Ms. Farrar made the motion that HIPI table additional in-person membership recruiting efforts until COVID-19 is no longer a danger. Ms. Lanci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Foley provided an update on the President's Council of Martin County. At the Board's request Ms. Farrar had emailed Deputy Martin County Administrator Don Donaldson to ask if he would address the Council or provide the name of the best person to address the group on the County's planned changes in response to the Sunrise condo collapse. Mr. Donaldson indicated that he is available to talk to the president's council at any time, and the County will not change its policies or requirements in response to the Sunrise disaster.

Mr. Foley reported that Ms. Farrar had emailed the members of the President's Council asking for any objections to their contact information being included in a directory to be shared with our presidents. No objections were received. Mr. Foley asked Ms. Farrar to prepare a directory for distribution.

Mr. Foley noted that some of the President's Council representatives were not comfortable using Zoom. Ms. Farrar confirmed that future Zoom meetings could be scheduled to allow members to participate on the phone. Mr. Foley stated that he would prefer to schedule in-person meetings as soon as more people return for the season. Board members agreed an outdoor meeting space would be preferable. Mr. Laura agreed to contact Langford Park for costs and general availability. Ms. Davis will contact the Riverbend Condominium Association. Ms. Farrar will contact the Elliott Museum and Stuart Beach/Café.

Ms. Farrar discussed the e-commerce changes to the existing HIPI website. Ms. Farrar noted that she had attended a one-hour webinar and a 30-minute one-on-one meeting with the new e-commerce provider and is confident that the e-commerce changes that will be implemented on September 1 will not work for HIPI. The Board agreed to move ahead, as previously approved, pending the outcome of the e-commerce research, with the creation of a new Wix website and the use of PayPal for e-commerce.

Mr. Foley made the motion that the board allow Ms. Farrar to choose the new domain name. Ms. Farrar said she would prefer the Board to make that decision and amended Mr. Foley's motion that she would send a list of possible domain names to the Board with a Board vote needed within 3 days of receipt of email. Ms. Foley seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Farrar requested clarification from the Board regarding style and format of the new website. Mr. Laura said he'd like the website to be attractive and really draw people in. Ms. Foley asked for a very professional-looking website. Ms. Davis asked that current news be highlighted on the home page. All members agreed that a glossy website with a clean, simple home page is preferable to the format we currently have.

Mr. Laura provided an update on the current environmental issues:

1. Lake O is currently at 14.72', which is believed to be an ok level as long as we don't have any major storms that would necessitate discharges.
2. Sugar farmers have sued the Army Corps over the EAA reservoir. They want to make sure they have adequate water. The Corps says the reservoir will be built. Mr. Laura said the reservoir is too small, but it is a good start. He said the money for the reservoir has been allocated and a contract may be awarded soon.
3. Seagrass initiative: TCPalm recently published an article about large areas of seagrass loss in the IRL. Mr. Laura stated that environmental groups are trying to work with Reps. Mast (Martin Co) and Posey (Brevard Co) to try to get federal grants to help bring back the seagrass beds. Mr. Laura noted that the turbulence of the Indian River can make it difficult for new sea grass to anchor. He said 4 sites in Martin County have been selected for replanting. The groups are waiting for approval from Martin County.

The FDOT Safety Study for A1A from the Jensen Beach Roundabout to Hutchinson Shores should be available in October and will be presented to the Martin MPO on October 25. Mr. Laura and Ms. Farrar have requested copies of that study. Ms. Lanci said she will speak at the September and October MPO meetings. Ms. Jones said she would also try to attend the September meeting. Ms. Lanci said she had contacted Environmental Associates in Jensen Beach, the group that is contracted by the County to manage turtle nesting on Hutchinson Island. She said that group was not aware of that a safety study was being conducting or that additional lighting on the island was being considered. Ms. Lanci gave Environmental Associates the contact info for the FDOT engineer in charge of the study. Mr. Laura said he has a good relationship with Stuart Commissioner Merritt Matheson who is on the Martin MPO and stated that Mr. Matheson has answered his questions openly and honestly.

If the MPO votes on October 25 to ask FDOT to install lights on that stretch of A1A, the Board asked Ms. Farrar to email Commissioner Smith and MPO administrator Beth Beltran requesting a detailed plan for communicating with Hutchinson Island residents about the planned installation of additional lighting.

Ms. Farrar reported that after 2 months and 3 emails she had finally received a response to her email to Commissioner Smith asking why he had asked for Jim Harp to be included on the original email to FDOT requesting the safety study. The eventual answer was that Mr. Harp was included accidentally.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Jones noted the recent addition of an additional set of FPL poles and asked both poles would remain. He noted the high number of poles on the island, including large concrete power poles with old, wooded power poles left behind them. *Mr. Foley agreed that the newly added poles are an eyesore and made a motion that Mr. Jones contact FPL to ask about the plan for the extra poles. Ms. Farrar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.* The Board concurred that the issue of extra poles should be included in the next newsletter. Ms. Jones agreed to send Ms. Farrar photographs.

Ms. Jones asked if HIPI has ever submitted a tax return. Mr. Foley said that while he was treasurer, he prepared a financial report and sent it to HIPI's attorney and ex-officio board member Ginny Sherlock. Mr. Laura stated that he believes no tax returns are required to be submitted if the organization does not meet the income threshold. Ms. Jones indicated that she had received an email from Ginny Sherlock that stated that nonprofits must submit tax returns. Ms. Davis stated that she just did a quick search and found that "charitable organizations must file a 990 on the 15th day of the 5th month of the close of the nonprofit's fiscal year."

Ms. Farrar made a motion that Ms. Davis should contact a CPA for guidance, follow the advice of that CPA and file any forms necessary required by IRS. Mr. Laura seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board voted to hold the next meeting via Zoom on October 6 at 7:00 ET.

Ms. Farrar made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed unaninously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.