

**Hutchinson Island Preservation Initiative  
Board of Directors Meeting  
June 12, 2019  
Dottie Lanci's home**

**Directors Present:** Elizabeth Farrar, Jim Foley, Erica Garwood, Dottie Lanci, Paul Laura  
**By Proxy:** Todd Berwick to Erica Garwood, Hilarie Davis to Dottie Lanci, John Hodge to Jim Foley, Patty Jones to Erica Garwood, Ralph Jones to Jim Foley  
**Guests:** Sue Foley, former board member

**1. Ms. Lanci called the meeting to order at 12:15.** A quorum was verified. Ms. Farrar was asked to take minutes of the meeting in the stead of Ms. Jones, Secretary of the Board, who could not attend.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2019 MEETING OF THE HIPI Board of Directors**

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Davis emailed to state that she left the April 27 meeting at 11:00, which is not reflected in the minutes. She stated that a quorum would not have existed after her departure and seemed to suggest that any discussion after her departure was invalid.

**MOTION MS. LANCI:** *To table approval of the April 27, 2019 minutes until the Board has clarification from Ms. Davis regarding a discrepancy in the minutes as written.*

**SECOND MR. LAURA**

**MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. REVIEW MISSION OF HIPI**

Mr. Foley summarized the prior discussions and rationale for the April 27 decision for HIPI not to take a position on the Hutchinson Island Coalition (HIC) Phase 3 Drainage Project at or near the entrance to the Hutchinson Island Pantry/gas station. Mr. Foley stated that all directors present on April 27, except Ms. Davis, agreed that it was inappropriate for HIPI to take a position on the project because the county didn't need our approval and most importantly because HIPI does not speak for all island residents and should not have a voice in how all island property owners' tax dollars are spent.

Mr. Laura concurred and stated that HIPI currently doesn't have enough members or enough island property owners' email addresses to be able to poll enough residents to be able to make any kind of determination on what Hutchinson Island Special MSTU taxpayers might think about the tax or any project the MSTU would pay for. He suggested HIPI should focus on its mission to inform and disseminate information.

**MOTION MS. GARWOOD:** *HIPI not take a position on the HIC Phase 3 Drainage Project.*

**SECOND MR. LAURA**

AYE: Farrar, Foley, Garwood, Lanci, Laura

AYE by Proxy: Berwick, Hodge, Jones, Jones

ABSTAIN: Davis by proxy

**MOTION CARRIES**

A lengthy discussion followed about HIPI having taken a position on the A1A lighting plan and the Florida Oceanographic (FOS) tower. Ms. Lanci noted neither of those projects involved MSTU funds, and that we provided information about those projects and increase awareness. Mr. Laura stressed that a key difference in our taking a position on those issues was HIPI's ability to speak with the decision-makers and do our due diligence by also learning and disseminating the FDOT/HIC and FOS points of view. He pointed out that because of our efforts, FDOT and FOS altered their plans before any final action was taken. By getting information to the community, more people had an opportunity to contact the decision-makers, which is in line with what we set out to do.

Ms. Garwood stressed that HIPI cannot tackle every issue that may be of interest to every Board member. She cautioned that board members should bring all issues/projects to the HIPI Board for discussion about the appropriateness for our group.

A discussion followed about how the HIPI BOD should choose the issues on which it does take a position. The consensus is that the focus should always be on the mission.

Mr. Foley said the HIPI BOD would need to use its best judgment to make decisions or may want to refine our mission statement to guide HIPI's decision-making.

Mr. Laura said in the future HIPI should be able to get information to island residents and get feedback for guidance. All agreed that HIPI is not there yet.

Ms. Garwood stressed that any issue on which HIPI takes a position should be an issue that has considerable support from the board and should not be a closely contested issue or one favored strongly by only a few board members.

Ms. Farrar asked the Board to consider writing vision statements and/or Board policies that would help guide how the Board makes decisions. She asked that the drafting of that language occur when more Board members were physically present so more voices would be included in that discussion.

The Board agreed that one of the primary reasons HIPI was formed was to address a lack of publicly available information. HIPI should continue to obtain and disseminate information as a primary goal.

Ms. Farrar said she is careful not to editorialize or otherwise comment on information she posts on HIPI's website and social media, allowing the public to form their own opinions about the information. Any commentary from one Board member could be seen as HIPI taking a position, so she asked other the Board members to be careful to do the same.

Mr. Laura said he is always careful when he speaks publicly not to speak as a representative of HIPI, unless there has been a prior agreement to do so. He suggested other Board members be cautious about doing the same.

Mr. Foley said that we should grow our membership as a way to have more contacts and ways of disseminating information to the community.

Ms. Lanci suggested we move forward in organizing regular meetings of HOA presidents, similar to the President's Council of South Hutchinson Island in St. Lucie County. Ms. Garwood expressed concern that creating and maintaining a HOA president's council did not align with HIPI's mission to preserve and protect Hutchinson Island. Mr. Foley, Mr. Laura, and Ms. Farrar acknowledged her concerns, but voiced their opinion that the creation of this group would allow HIPI a way to regularly be in contact with the correct president at every HOA, thereby fulfilling our mission to get information

to as many people as possible on the island. Getting and maintaining correct contact information for all island property owners is too difficult. Maintaining that information for the HOA presidents was within reach.

The group consensus was that HIPI would remain the moderator of the group and organize the meetings, ensuring HIPI always had a place at the table.

Mr. Laura suggested that HIPI create a spreadsheet of all HOAs, presidents, contact info and date of elections, so HIPI would always be able to keep current records of each HOA's officers.

Ms. Farrar said she has a list and map from the county of all HOAs and POAs on Hutchinson Island. She agreed to create the spreadsheet and send it to the BOD. The board would divide the HOAs among them and contact each to get the information needed on the sheet. From there, Ralph Jones, as president of HIPI could initiate the first meeting in the fall. Elliott Museum has offered to host meetings.

Mr. Laura said the president of the President's Council of South Hutchinson Island, Charles Grande, also is a member of the Rivers Coalition. Mr. Laura agreed to contact Mr. Grande to ask if he were available to meet with members of the HIPI BOD before or after the Rivers Coalition meeting on June 27 at 11:00 to discuss how the St. Lucie Council operates. Ms. Farrar agreed to circulate to the BOD a list of questions discussed at today's HIPI meeting for all to see and amend before the proposed June 27 meeting with Mr. Grande. Mr. Laura will notify all of a meeting time and place and ask for volunteers to attend as available.

*See Addendum 1 for draft of questions for Charles Grande.*

#### **4. HUTCHINSON ISLAND SPECIAL MSTU**

Based on her understanding, Ms. Farrar gave a brief history of the Hutchinson Island MSTU from ~1980 forward.

Mr. Foley repeated sentiments expressed by others at this and earlier HIPI BOPD meetings that HIPI does not speak for everyone. He continued that at formation, HIPI agreed it was important to distinguish itself from the former group (Hutchinson Island Coalition) that said it represented everyone. Our goal/our mission is to get information and get it to everyone on the island.

Ms. Farrar said she struggles the ethics of how the MSTU was doubled. Mr. Foley acknowledged her concern and agreed it is nice to know there is money there in the event something is needed on the island.

Citing a lack of information on public opinion to guide HIPI, Mr. Laura stated that he does not think HIPI is prepared to take a position on the MSTU.

**MOTION MR. LAURA:** *HIPI should continue to learn about the Hutchinson Island Special MSTU and should not take a position because we do not have adequate input or means to get adequate input from the community.*

**SECOND MR. FOLEY**

**MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Laura asked if we know what will happen to the MSTU funds—how will they be used? He suggested Ms. Farrar as the communications officer for HIPI email Taryn Kryzda, the county manager, for details, as District 1 Commissioner has not been very forthcoming with information. The BOD agreed that Ms. Farrar would contact the county for information about the MSTU and any planned projects and ask for a liaison or point of contact for ongoing communication about the Hutchinson Island Special MSTU and any MSTU projects. HIPI should put any information we get on our website and social media platforms to keep all residents informed and give all an opportunity for feedback, as that is part of our mission.

## **5. POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS**

Mr. Foley discussed the impetus for the April 27 decision to be proactive about something. He cited the negative press HIPI received from TCPalm columnist Gil Smart and former Stuart City Commissioner Ed Campenni, the latter calling HIPI members elitists in his blog. The concern was that HIPI would be seen only as a group that opposes things, so the intent was to do something positive that reflected our mission.

Ms. Farrar gave a summary of the discussion on April 27 plan to try to place more monofilament recycling containers on Hutchinson Island and to contact Publix to partner on an education campaign to limit plastic bag usage on the island. Mr. Foley discussed his conversations with the treasure Coast Surfrider Foundation and said they were most interested in partnering with us on any project: beach clean-up, plastic bags, fishing line, etc.

A discussion followed on the public perception of HIPI and if the BOD should even be concerned with a couple of articles. Some feel the public has a very positive perception of HIPI as a watchdog group.

Mr. Laura described a meeting he had requested with Ed Campenni to address the misinformation in Mr. Campenni's blog. Mr. Laura said he went through the FOS situation point by point, noting that FOS had never reached out to the community to explain its position and had known their planned tower did not meet ordinances for six months prior to asking for a variance to the LDR. Mr. Laura told Mr. Campenni that he had met with Mark Perry, Allen Herskowitz (FOS Board president) and other members of the FOS Board, and that other members of HIPI had met or talked with Mark Perry and/or current and former members of the FOS Board. Some FOS board members, major donors and volunteers were unaware of the planned tower height and were surprised and disappointed to learn the truth. Perry and Hersowitz brushed off any concern about the tower height and thought they could just the LDR changed without a problem. Mr. Campenni was receptive to Mr. Laura's information and surprised by the actual course of events. Mr. Campenni's blog reaches 16,000 and might be a useful tool for sharing information in the future.

TCPalm article on Ed Campenni referenced by Ms. Farrar:

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/news/local/shaping-our-future/2018/03/09/stuart-commissioner-tom-campenni-resigns-after-allegedly-threatening-city-manager/410036002/>

Ms. Garwood said that these one-on-one meetings were the best strategy for handling misinformation or negative press about HIPI and cautioned that HIPI should not respond publicly or formally to every critic. Instead, we should remain focused on our mission.

Mr. Laura asked about plastic straws, as Palm Beach County has already taken a position and the City of Stuart may soon follow. He also reminded the Board that the Surfrider Foundation already has a program to try to eliminate plastic straws.

Ms. Farrar said that the group decided to focus on fishing line and plastic bag education as those were smaller scale, so more doable for our limited group. They also were specific to our island in terms of preserving and protecting the mangroves and the marine life. We had opted not to focus on straws because so many other groups had and because there were so few restaurants on the island in Martin County.

Mr. Laura suggested the group also consider taking a position on glyphosate, as Martin County will begin phasing out its use. The City of Stuart already bans its use. He said biosolids also are an issue affecting development.

Ms. Garwood concurred that there already is much information available about plastic straws and the environment and suggested that there are other more island-specific issues we might want to consider tackling, such as turtle-friendly light education. She suggested we stay focused on the mission and consider creating a way to prioritize issues we choose to address to make sure our efforts are impactful.

**MOTION MR. FOLEY:** *HIPi should not take a position or be proactive on any issue until we have more Board members present for discussion.*

**SECOND MS. LANCI**

**MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY**

## **6. BOCC and MPO MEETINGS**

Ms. Lanci said she would send an email with the dates and times of the meetings through September and ask for volunteers to attend each.

She encouraged everyone to do their part to attend meetings, so that we have any pertinent information from the BOCC and MPO meetings to share on our website and social media. She said she hoped those Board members who are not in Stuart during the summer will do their part when they return in the fall, as attending those meetings should be all board members' responsibility.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Farrar asked the Board if HIPi should send a newsletter during the summer. The Board agreed that one should be sent to all email addresses on file. Possible topics to include: FOS tower, Lake O updates-include webinars info, glyphosate, Travel and Leisure and Sun Sentinel articles, HB 7103, treatment facility in St Lucie, possible new bridge in St Lucie. Ms. Farrar will send a draft to BOD for feedback before emailing.

## **8. SUMMER MEETING DATE**

The Board chose not to set a date for its next meeting.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION MS. LANCI:** *ADJOURN*

**SECOND MR. FOLEY**

**MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 2:01.**

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**ADDENDUM 1**

**QUESTIONS FOR CHARLES GRANDE**

1. When did the President's Council of St. Lucie County (PCSLC) form?
2. Did a realtor organize the first meeting? Is that person still involved? In what role?
3. Where do you meet?
4. How often do you meet?
5. Do you have bylaws and/or policies?
6. Officers? How elected?
7. How do you track when each HOA gets a new president and how does that work with officer elections for PCSLC?
8. Who determines meeting date/time?
9. Who sets agenda?
10. Committees?
  - a. How are they established?
  - b. What do they do/general operating guidelines?
11. What topics do you generally discuss?
12. How/where are records kept?
13. Do you take a position on issues?
14. Do the HOA presidents have a formal understanding with their HOA to represent them on issues outside the operation of their HOA?
15. Do you have a newsletter or email that goes to all property owners represented by the HOA presidents?
16. Do you keep a list of trustworthy vendors and circulate the information?
  - a. Just to HOAs?
  - b. To homeowners?
17. Provide any other resources?
  - a. To HOAs?
  - b. To homeowners?
18. Could someone from HIPI attend your next meeting as a guest to observe?
19. With possible shared interests, can we create a loose working and cooperative relationship?
  - a. Best way to do that?
  - b. Possible Liaisons
20. Is PCSLC part of the group considering forming its own municipality?

OTHER QUESTIONS MAY BE ADDED BY HIPI BOD AFTER REVIEW