

ISLAND NEWS

COVERING ISSUES AND EVENTS ON AND AROUND JUPITER ISLAND

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FROM THE JUPITER ISLAND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2017

GUARDIANS OF MARTIN COUNTY OUTLINES ISSUES FOR ADVOCACY

The Guardians of Martin County held their final board meeting of the year in the Island Room in Town Hall on December 13. The group, which serves to educate Martin County residents on environmental issues that are impacting their quality of life, invited all interested parties to attend, and the Island Room was almost filled.

The meeting focused on four areas: stopping All Aboard Florida (AAF), solving the algae bloom problem, a review of the Guardians' "Water Position" paper, and the challenges facing Martin County in the future.

Peter Conze, Guardians' President and Jupiter Island Town Commissioner, introduced the program by telling the audience that the meeting was about what the Guardians have accomplished over the past year and where they might be concentrating their energy in the coming year.

First to speak was Merrill Snyder, the group's Vice President for Communications and a former advertising executive.

"In 2016 we had two primary threats," Mr. Snyder said. "You all know what they were - All Aboard Florida and the algae bloom. Our job was to educate as many people as possible about the issues and their dangers."

Mr. Snyder said both the Guardians and other Martin County citizens have been fighting AAF for several years.

"It's a war not a battle, and it's just beginning," Mr. Snyder said. "All Aboard Florida did a good job on the Martin county media. They have put forth the concept that AAF is a fait accompli and we should no longer fight against the inevitable.

"It has been, and is, our job to break



A group of almost 500 citizens attending a rally to protest All Aboard Florida in late March 2016.

the idea that AAF is a done deal," Mr. Snyder continued. "Our weapons are Facebook, email, and advertisements in the local papers."

Mr. Snyder talked about several ads that have appeared or will be appearing soon. Several of the ads are for radio and are broadcast on the Fort Pierce NPR station, WQCS 88.9 FM. One ad congratulates the Army Corps of Engineers for denying AAF in its request for a permit. A second focuses on the recent judge's ruling against AAF and in favor of Martin and Indian River counties' standing before the court. Another, entitled "Undone," highlights that the AAF project is coming undone (only the route between Miami and West Palm Beach is currently progressing), and that the remainder of the route to Orlando "is disintegrating before our eyes."

"Moving forward we will focus on an important area," Mr. Snyder said. "Our goal is to make the media rethink their call to surrender."

Christine Adams, a Hobe Sound business owner and Guardians board member, talked about some results in the fight against misinformation about AAF.



Signs warning people not to have contact with the waters of our rivers dotted the waterways of Martin County during the critical algae bloom the summer of 2016.

"We had two problems," Ms. Adams explained. "They were the lack of awareness of what AAF was about and what it would do to our quality of life, and all the misinformation that was being spread about the project."

Ms. Adams said there has been an increase in interest in what the Guardians are doing because of the group's presence on Facebook and distribution of the Guardians newsletter. "We have seen a 50% increase in our followers on Facebook," Ms. Adams said. "We have had a high of 9,000 likes on Facebook, and we have 4,000 people signed up for our newsletter, but what's really interesting is that we have seen an 85% rise in interest on Facebook from people in the Miami area. Perhaps not everyone to our south thinks AAF is such a great idea."

Ms. Adams also talked about the Guardians' effort in last summer's algae crisis. "We decided to focus on one person, Governor Scott," she said. "We instituted a letter writing campaign that is still ongoing to demand that he take action. The campaign focuses on two special slogans: 'The muck stops here,' and 'Governor can

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you smell it now?"

Guardians' board member and former Natural Resources Professor at the University of Idaho, Dr. Jay O'Laughlin, outlined the group's recently adopted water position paper entitled, "Florida's future water supply depends on improved surface water management."

"The problem for the State of Florida, and not just our county, is that six million people depend on fresh water here," Dr. O'Laughlin stressed. "Because water is no longer flowing south via the traditional route, the swamp that is the Everglades has been turned into a sugar bowl. The overreaching issue is purchasing land for stormwater storage and reservoirs in the Everglades agricultural area."

Although the position paper is a 10-page detailed analysis of the problem and the solutions, Dr. O'Laughlin says the conclusion is simple: "Buy the land, it's now or never."

Dr. O'Laughlin said that the owners of the land are most importantly Florida Crystal, US Sugar, and the King Ranch.

"We support acquisition," Dr. O'Laughlin said. "The solution is enormous increases in storage both

north and south of Lake Okeechobee. The difficulty is that the state sides with sugar, and the answer to buying the land is always 'no.'"

Finally, Kim Delaney, Director of Strategic Development and Policy at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, spoke about land trends in the Treasure Coast region.

"There is a market that is developing that will change the way we think about land development, and especially transportation issues," Ms. Delaney said. "That market is Millennials, basically 19 to 35 year-olds, and empty nesters. Millennials have shown little interest in driving, and empty nesters want to live in an environment where they can walk to everything. These two markets change our transportation thinking. It increases the potential for other private transportation services like Uber, and it will change our mobility choices. Eventually it will change how much land we will have to dedicate to roads."

Ms. Delaney explained how these trends make Martin County's Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA) more significant. "The CRA's become important as an alternative form of

development," she said. "They settle people where there are already services like water and sewer. They are small, contained communities where people can walk to everything they need. They are what the coming market wants, and it is a much better development model than moving people to the west."

Ms. Delaney said that the future will become a balance between "refill and redevelopment with preservation and a rural lifestyle."

After the presentations, during a public question and comment period, Island resident Nathaniel Reed commented on an issue that is currently important.

"We are currently experiencing the loss of orange groves," Mr. Reed said. "That opens up large agricultural land to development and could become a problem in the near future. To combat this, we need to show the importance of cattle and the cattle industry along the Treasure Coast and look to it as an economic engine that could also keep land out of development."

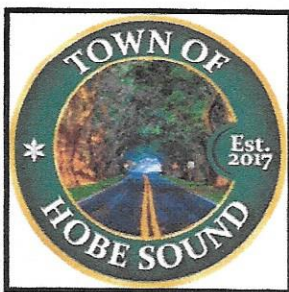
For information about the Guardians of Martin County go to www.theguardiansofmartincounty.com.

JUPITER ISLAND LEARNS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL TOWN OF HOBE SOUND

On December 15, the Jupiter Island Residents Association sponsored a presentation by the Hobe Sound leaders who are hoping their dreams of creating the Town of Hobe Sound will come true in less than a year.

Lifelong Hobe Sound resident Pat Martin and Hobe Sound businessman Mike Ennis told the audience that the idea came out of a desire to "preserve Hobe Sound as it is, and not get mowed over."

According to Mr. Martin and Mr. Ennis, the potential new town would have a Council/Town Manager form of government. It would have five Council members representing five separate districts in the Town. The proposed Town boundaries are Osprey Street to the north, Jonathan Dickin-



A "sneak peak" of what could become the official logo of the Town of Hobe Sound.

son Park to the South, the Intracoastal Waterway on the east, and Martin County's Secondary Urban Services boundary on the west. The proposed area for the Town of Hobe Sound will have a little over 15,000 people and a taxable value of \$2,058,294,690.

Although the town would have a paid Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Clerk, many of

the services would be contracted out. The Town Council would negotiate with Martin County or other jurisdictions for services like fire/rescue, police, and roads. Building Department tasks might also be handled by outsourced personnel.

"We are not developers," Mr. Ennis said. "We want the best for Hobe Sound. Right now we have only one County Commissioner who represents this area. Under the town format, there would be five people who are responsible for the future of the area. One of the biggest factors in incorporating is being able to set your own zoning codes. It is pretty much the only way that we can protect what we have now. We are, and will be, experiencing pressure from both the south and

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(HOBE SOUND, continued)

north for development. We can preserve our community by having local control and self-determination.”

Pat Martin said that the concept of developing a Town of Hobe Sound was decades old. “This idea has been around for a long time,” he recalled. “Every so many years someone brings it up, and in the past, it had just kind of faded away. This time we acted on it.”

That action has led to a potential vote in this year’s Florida legislative session on a bill to incorporate Hobe Sound. The group filed the required paperwork in September 2016. The success of the effort will depend on the support of the Martin County legislative delegation. Leaders of the group have already lobbied all the area’s state representatives and feel the response was positive.

If the bill is passed, the final step

will be taken in November 2017 with a referendum on the ballot to incorporate Hobe Sound into a town. Only those registered voters living within the boundaries of the potential town will be allowed to vote on the referendum.

If the Town of Hobe Sound becomes incorporated, the Town could “annex” areas that are adjacent to it after three months of operation. Those areas might include Poinciana Gardens, Heritage Ridge and Loblolly Pines.

“We have received many inquiries from residents of other areas,” Mr. Ennis said. “We are open to including those areas, but are restricted to how far north and south we can go. There must be a buffer between other cities or towns.”

Mr. Martin and Mr. Ennis said the first question most people ask is, “How will this affect my taxes?”

According to a feasibility study authored by experts in incorporation, creating a Town of Hobe Sound would involve no new taxes or any initial tax increase, as well as no change in service.

Although the feasibility study indicates that taxes would not increase in the first year and that the new town would end the year with a surplus, it does not guarantee that taxes will not increase going forward.

“Taxes and fees currently paid to Martin County will instead go to the newly formed Town of Hobe Sound,” Mr. Ennis said. “Those funds would then be used to pay for the services provided by the Town.”

“None of us knows the future,” Mr. Ennis continued. “But if we are successful in achieving a Town of Hobe Sound, 20 years from now decisions will be made by those living right here. That’s always a plus.”

AGENDA... COVERING SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE JUPITER ISLAND TOWN MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2017.

FIRE RESCUE AGREEMENT WITH MARTIN COUNTY SIGNED

In late December, the Town executed an interlocal agreement that would see Martin County provide 24-hour first responder Advanced Life Support services to the Town.

Under the agreement, the County will supply one Firefighter Paramedic at the Jupiter Island Public Safety facility.

The agreement calls for provided services to include emergency medical response, firefighting response, training programs, and stand-by at special events and emergency medical services related to promoting health and safety within the Jupiter Island community.

The total estimated cost to the Town for one year is \$744,207. That amount is equal to the pro-rate share for the municipal boundaries of the Town (2.7 square miles). Currently the Town is 6.4% of the total budgeted response area of Martin County Fire

Rescue Station 32 (Hobe Sound). The annual payment will be calculated based upon the actual station operating cost multiplied by 6.4%.

The new contract begins on October 1, 2017. The cost for the year 2017-2018 will be broken down into four quarterly payments of approximately \$186,000 each.

The agreement is for five years with the option of a two-year renewal at the end of the term. At the end of each fiscal year, the County will notify the Town of the actual costs incurred. If the actual costs are less than the estimated costs paid by the Town, the County will pay the difference. If the actual costs are greater than the estimated costs for the year, the Town will pay the difference.

The contract stipulates that in no event will the payments by the Town increase more than ten percent of the annual costs.

TOWN ELECTION SET FOR MARCH 21

The Town of Jupiter Island will hold its election for Town Commission on March 21, 2017. The two seats that may be contested are currently held by Mayor Whitney Pidot and Town Commissioner Barry Hall. Both terms are for four years.

At the January 14 Town Commission meeting, both Mayor Pidot and Commissioner Hall announced that they would seek re-election.

The qualifying period to run for the two seats is February 16 through March 1. Interested candidates should contact Town Clerk Gwen Carlisle by phone at 772-545-0103 or in person at Town Hall. Candidates must be Jupiter Island residents and Martin County registered voters.

Polling will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Town Hall. Voters may also vote by mail beginning March 2. A Vote by Mail ballot may be picked up at Town Hall.

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT ACHIEVES ACCREDITATION

Public Safety Director Robert Garlo announced at the January 14 Town Meeting that the Town's Public Safety Department has once again received accreditation from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. The Commission establishes standards and strives to improve the ability of law enforcement agencies to deliver professional public safety services. The accreditation process is conducted every three years, and the Town received its first accreditation status three years ago.

In December, a team of assessors from the Commission conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Public Safety Department. They examined and audited all the Department's policies, procedures and practices. In addition, they verified compliance with hundreds of standards, including readiness, response, training, equipment efficacy, and weapon proficiency.

"I am in the fortunate position of intimately understanding Jupiter Island Public Safety Department's intricate system of security and protection," Chief Garlo said. "From our

technological advances in security and motion detection to our patrolling of the Intracoastal, to the simple fact that our sworn officers are triple-certified as police, firefighters, and EMT's, our system succeeds because of the dedicated law enforcement professionals upholding it. It is a great privilege to serve alongside them."

Town Manager Gene Rauth said that the process is extremely demanding.

"What happens here is an outside body of expert reviewers conduct a forensic examination of every aspect of the department," Town Manager Rauth said. "That's why earning Accreditation is such a highly-touted achievement. It gives everyone - residents and officers alike - the peace of mind that the highest standards of safety and security are being adhered to."

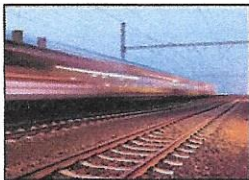
Finally, Mayor Whitney Pidot said that the process gives residents a greater understanding of the excellence of the performance of the Town's Public Safety Department. "Town residents know from their day-to-day interactions with our Public Safety Department how dedicated and considerate these fine professionals

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

The constant mantra of law enforcement agencies is "see something, say something." At the January 14 Town Meeting, Public Safety Director Robert Garlo reported that the adage was perfectly demonstrated on Jupiter Island.

"Recently, we had an incident that involved some men cutting coconuts from a tree," Chief Garlo said. "That doesn't sound like a big problem, but a resident saw them and didn't recognize the men or the van so the resident called it in to us. We were able to stop the van as they were leaving the Island and found that the driver was wanted in Broward County. The individual was taken into custody and eventually removed to Broward.

"Who knows what the motivation was?" Chief Garlo asked. "They could have just wanted some coconuts, or they could have been casing the situation as a preliminary to some criminal activity. The point is that because someone 'saw something and said something,' we were able to stop any potential criminal activity and, in addition, help out another law enforcement agency."



STOP THE TRAIN! SAVE THE DATE!
WHEN... January 31, 5 to 6 pm
WHERE.. Island Room, Town Hall



On January 31, the CARE organization (Citizens Against Rail Expansion) will be coming to Town Hall to inform Jupiter Island residents on the latest developments in the fight to prevent 30 high-speed trains and 30 four-mile-long freight trains daily, so close to the Island, running from West Palm to Orlando.

Coming to the Island Room will be Steve Ryan, CARE's Washington lawyer and lobbyist, and Brent Hanlon, President of CARE

The meeting is sponsored by the Jupiter Island Residents Association.



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