

Antonia Hover

From: Antonia Hover on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 8:21 AM
To: 'leerobertsdpt@gmail.com'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: FW: Docket #20200226-SU
Attachments: Clerk of the Commission PSC letter January 2022.docx

Good Morning, William Lee Roberts.

We will be placing the comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20200226, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Thank you!

Toni Hover
Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
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From: leerobertsdpt@gmail.com <leerobertsdpt@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 23, 2022 11:27 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: Docket #20200226-SU

Please find attached a letter requesting that the PSC deny EU's request for a central sewer project on Little Gasparilla Island.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

William Lee Roberts

SUBJECT: Docket #20200226-SU

Dear Clerk of the Commission:

My name is Lee Roberts and I own a home at 8302 Little Gasparilla Island. I write this letter in opposition to the central sewer system proposed by Jack Boyer via Environmental Utilities (EU). I ask the Public Service Commission to deny EU's application for wastewater service.

My opposition is based on many issues. My family has owned our residence since 1985. We greatly enjoy the "old Florida" feel of the island. Unfortunately, Jack Boyer has tried to edge out that feel in preference to his desire to monetarily benefit from the citizens on the island. Several years ago, Mr. Boyer was able to convince the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners to change their own planning document for future safe growth in the county in favor of Mr. Boyer and Gasparilla Water Utility. After that decision, the PSC awarded Mr. Boyer the highest water meter (base) rates in the entire state of Florida by almost double the nearest rate for another utility. Public counsel at that time advised against doing this.

We are now forced to work with EU trying to put in a sewer system on the island. Mr. Boyer has never installed a sewer system and based on his previous installment issues with water, I am very concerned. I noted in a letter earlier this year that I observed Mr. Boyer digging a new service line between 2 properties that on the books does not show an easement. Mr. Boyer took offense to my comment and called on my personal cell phone at work to tell me that he had permission from the owners. Interestingly, both lots which he went between were owned by the same couple and if they ever decide to build or sell, that water line will be in their way. Mr. Boyer does not have eminent domain and cannot go wherever he wants. Mr. Boyer's current proposal to run a line at the back of my property will not work. There is no easement back there, and the owner of that adjoining property will, no doubt, not find that acceptable. He has already sued one of my neighbors for merely cutting back a tree leaning over his property.

I question the need for the proposed service as well. Mr. Boyer has had some of his friends on the island pushing the theory that the Charlotte Harbor "could" have increased algae counts based on an article that examined the water quality in the Indian River Basin on the east coast of Florida. First, even the most high quality peer reviewed scientific study cannot be taken out of the context with which it was completed. That region of the Indian River Basin, per the most recent census, has about 1.5 million residents, which is nowhere near the number of people who hold residence off LGI. Higher population centers clearly have greater environmental impact but the current data does not indicate that specific runoff from LGI has contributed to any change in algae in the Harbor. Second, the fact that this comparison from an article based on a study from a different part of Florida is even being brought up, with differing population size, resources and general environmental characteristics is dishonest.

In addition to his questionable installation practices and dishonest PR campaign, the fees he is proposing, both start up and monthly, are absolutely unfathomably high. Mr. Boyer, in conversations with our home owners association, has stated that hook up fees will be between \$13 and \$30K with the expectation that this would be paid up front, in full, by the homeowner. This is an astronomical amount of money to expect homeowners to pay for a project up front, especially one that many of us oppose. This ridiculous start up cost isn't the only exorbitant

financial expectation of the homeowners. The proposed base rate for the sewer is \$100, and that is if the system is completely unused. The average monthly bill for a homeowner on Little Gasparilla Island for water and sewer if this proposal is approved will be \$178.78. That rate is more than double what other utility providers are charging. For example, just across the bay in Englewood, the average homeowner bill for both water and sewer is \$48. How can this be considered fair and equitable to homeowners? It simply cannot.

Additional costs are now being discussed that will lead to further financial hardship for the homeowners. The system proposed by EU requires a separate electric panel, installed by a licensed electrician at the expense of the owner to power the pump. There is discussion about the homeowner needing a generator for the system in the event of power disruption. Add to that the cost of tree/brush removal to access the septic area as well as the cost to bring in someone to crush and fill the septic tank. The actual start up costs for this project could cost upwards of \$40k.

For me personally, having the past experiences with Mr. Boyer that I have had, I am most concerned about the lack of oversight for this project. It is my understanding that there will be no "contract" and no single point of general oversight. Even with highway projects, there are bonds set up to protect the public from someone walking away from a project. EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install sewer. There is no performance bond required, and we have no single point of recourse in the event of cost overruns or project failure.

Little Gasparilla Island is a beautiful place that many people have grown up calling home. It is retreat from the hustle and bustle of most other beaches in Florida. For a long time, it was an affordable place to own a home and vacation. My kids grew up visiting here. They learned to fish, swim, star gaze and find shark teeth. My grandkids are starting to do the same. If this new requirement passes, our family will not be able to afford the new system and will likely have to sell, as will other people who have called this place home for decades.

With all of these concerns, I ask the PSC to deny EU's proposed central sewer system.

Thank you for your time.

William Lee Roberts

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