

Iris Rollins

From: Office of Commissioner La Rosa
Sent: Monday, August 29, 2022 10:29 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: FW: Septic issues on Little Gasparilla Island

Good morning,

Please place the email below in CORRESPONDENCE-Consumers & Representatives in docket 20200226.

Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: jody furch <jody.furch@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 29, 2022 9:26 AM
To: Office of Commissioner La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>
Cc: jody.furch@gmail.com; dajeli3@gmail.com
Subject: Septic issues on Little Gasparilla Island

Dear Commissioners M.LaRosa, G.Clark, and G.Passidomo

I am writing to you to express my concerns on the state of septic systems and water quality issues on Little Gasparilla Island. I am a resident on LGi and I am a retired scientist and I know a little about water quality issues, and I am also an avid fly fisherman and naturalist, and so environmental issues and ways of improving them has been a lifelong passion. It is well known that sewage pollution is the largest contributor to water quality degradation and one only needs to take a short tour of the island to point out systems that are failing (smell) or are at such a low grade to be under water often during tidal and precipitation events.

We know much has been written concerning EU's attempt to provide sewer services and I will not cover that here, except to say that tearing up streets, crushing tanks, destroying otherwise well maintained and functioning septic systems is an absolute terrible idea. What I do propose, and many islanders also agree, that there is a much better solution than EU. I know some individuals will be/ are also opposed to this for obvious reasons but it still needs consideration if we are honest about environmental care-taking.

BACKGROUND

Our home has what is called an Air Treatment Unit (ATU) septic system. It is essentially a small sewer plant and it is understood to be even more efficient in treating waste than large scale sewage plants that often run at over capacity. It was built in 2009, but also the county requires us to have an operating permit thru the health Department, renewable every two years plus a service contract with a licensed company in our case Martin Septic. This involves two inspections a year and a report issued to Charlotte County Dept of a Health. Our system is also raised so tidal and flooding does not engulf it. It passes with flying colors each time. Many newer homes have systems such as this yet many homes sadly have poorly functioning systems that often sit below high water events.. Worst yet, many homes were built with systems to service 6 persons which are now rented continuously, often with 8,10, oftentimes more individuals.

PROPOSAL

Our proposal is this, that rather destroying working septic systems, many brand new, and many even at homes that do not rent, the county should require every homeowner moving forward, especially those that rent, an operating permit from the County Health Dept (like ours) and a service contract with say Martin (Again like ours) for the example.

All systems will be inspected, pumped when necessary, mandated to upgrade, even rebuilt within a reasonable time if they fail to work properly. In this way the island is preserved from widespread construction from EU and homeowners would have an incentive to care for their systems otherwise face costly rebuilds.

We are not anti renting but experience is that owners who do not rent are especially diligent in caring for their systems but rental properties have their own issues, and Opinion is they might be or should be required to pay an additional environmental fee above their permit fee because renters are not caretakers of these systems. My understanding is the rental properties on LGI is a recent trend especially exasperated after 2008. My long time neighbors have at the same time witnessed a gradual decline in water quality. While this may be coincidental, it's hard to ignore each observation singularly.

In closing. I wish you would at least think about what I am saying here, that there is a solution, painful to some yes, but if we are honest about the current situation, and recognize there is a great deal of science around the effects of sewage pollution, mitigating water pollution issues, that this is the best proposal to achieve the desired result rather than the one championed by EU.

Let me know if you need additional information and especially, If any one of you would like a tour of the island and I would encourage each of you to do so, feel free to reach out and We will provide the necessary accommodations.

Sincerely;
Joseph (Jody) Furch and Nancy Ferioli
9464 Alborado Road (LGI)
609-577-8760

Sent from my iPad