

Antonia Hover

From: Hannah Barker
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 8:42 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket Correspondence
Attachments: Docket # 20200226 Environmental Utilities and Support.); Docket # 20200226-SU;
Docket #20200226-SU Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service; Re
Docket #20200226-SU Proposed sewer project for Little Gasperilla island

Good morning,

Please place the attached emails in Docket No. 20200226.

Hannah E. Branum
Executive Assistant to Commissioner Clark
Florida Public Service Commission
[2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.](#)
[Tallahassee, FL 32399](#)
(850) 413-6004

Antonia Hover

From: Brian Callahan <mrbriancallahan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 3:03 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Clark
Subject: Docket # 20200226 Environmental Utilities and Support. :)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Brian Callahan and I am a full-time resident on Little Gasparilla Island and I support the Sewer project.

I don't believe there is much actual opposition to the idea on the island and I am surprised by the hearings I have recently been made aware of. It seems to me that it is just the same handful of people that seem to still be angry about the water project and they have made it a personal issue with Jack Boyer. I have a personal issue with these few being allowed to stall progress for the majority of us that are in favor. Not to mention the cost of the legal battles that eventually the rest of us have to pay for. Unfortunately sometimes the only wheel that gets attention is the squeaky wheel.

I don't think it takes a lot to understand that sewer is better than septic for the Island and the surrounding environment. I understand no one wants to be told what to do but let's just be honest. Is there one reason EU could not complete the project without success? I have not heard any evidence to suggest otherwise.

I think that with a few exceptions money is what is really motivating the Nay Sayers. Unfortunately it's one of the same reasons not all the septic systems are being maintained as they should be. That and septic is not something most people understand. It's not straight forward like traditional sewer. I suspect that over a period of time the sewer will also likely be cheaper than the cost of properly maintaining and replacing a septic and not everyone understands that.

That brings me to the last thing I want to say. I don't think it is fair to the people that have had to install a new septic systems knowing that sewer is on the way. I believe the right thing to do is to offer some sort of credit or non conforming temporary arrangement during the transition period. I know these things are pretty standard during these kind of projects other places and probably would be here as well but I think that some of the opposition would be different if that was not an issue.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

If you would like to discuss the matter further please feel free to call me.

Brian Callahan
5403530746

Antonia Hover

From: Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:41 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Subject: Docket # 20200226-SU

Dear Commissioners:

On April 21, 2022 the PSC staff is scheduled to make their recommendation with regards to Docket # 20200226-SU.

I wanted to write you to express our position on this matter including factual analysis of the proposal by Environmental Utilities (EU).

We are currently in the process of building a home on Don Pedro Island. It will be located at 611 Bocilla Drive, 33946, which is in the EU service area.

First and foremost, I find it incredibly disconnected, and rather impossible to believe that a “start up, for profit” utility service with absolutely no experience in designing, building, implementing and servicing a sewer utility is even being considered. How is this possible? Imagine if you can, boarding a 747 and being told over the PA system that the pilot that will be operating the aircraft today has never flown anything in his life, has zero experience in aviation and has absolutely no idea how to fly a 747. Would you sit quietly in your seat and just say “oh well, I hope this goes okay?” Or, jump out of your seat and head for the exit?

That is precisely what is happening here. We are all preparing to board our sewer flight with a start-up company with zero experience other than operating a poorly operated insignificant water system on Little Gasparilla Island.

So what drives them (the EU) to want to do this? Profit, plain and simple. At the total and unfettered expense of the property owners in the proposed service area. Not their expense. Ours. They are burdening all of the expenses on the property owners. Further, Charlotte County is mandating that we hook up to the system. I truly feel that this story line is impossible to believe. Yet, here we are.

I also find it unconstitutional to “mandate” that a private property owner shall be required (mandated) to participate in a system operated by a private for profit company. But, that’s something we can let the Attorneys debate.

Based on the handout provide by the EU, the “proposed” cost of implementing the service comes to \$13,280.85 per property owner. That’s just to get our home connected to the service. But, why stop there? The proposed monthly cost is \$256.66 per month based on 4,000 gallons of use. It ratchets up to \$472.48 if you go over the 4,000 gallons. Compared to the current sewer rates provided by Charlotte County (and posted on their website) for the same 4,000 gallon use it would be \$67.22, or over 380% more for the EU’s proposed costs. Granted, the service will be on a barrier island which would likely cost more, but nearly 400% more? Does that sound reasonable to the PSC?

Plus, for every homeowner to be “forced” to pay the EU an additional \$13,280.85 just to initiate service is outrageous. It’s not realistic. This is an egregious assault on our property rights and freedom to choose if we want to use the service or not.

Our home will be built soon. We will likely pay anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to install our entirely up to code septic system. Charlotte County will permit and inspect the system. We will have to meet certain requirements to accomplish this in an environmentally sound way. The system will need to be inspected as well. That is part of our island life and we accept it. We don't want to add nutrients to the water any more than any other island residents. But, to "require us" to then dig up and remove this brand new system a year from now leaves us speechless. Is the EU going to compensate us for the cost of not only removing our system, but the cost to install it? Keep in mind, we are doing everything by the book. This same scenario would be playing out island wide and the costs could be in the millions to decommission and remove septic systems. More costs, and more money, to burden the property owners.

No part of the EU's proposal addresses the costs to the property owners. Every homeowner on the island could be "mandated" to spend \$25,000-\$35,000 just to comply with this proposal. I expect there to be court battles with regards to this if it is approved. It's inevitable.

To continue with my objections, what happens if there is a failure of the system? Does the EU have enough cash reserves to handle an environmental catastrophe? Do they have the crews and equipment to address a failure caused by a storm, pipe break, or failure of the system due to negligence or the improper installation of the system? Or, is it their plan to simply pass on ALL of the costs to the property owners — in a similar fashion as their current proposal? The PSC needs to address these real concerns.

I think I speak for many islanders that we all want to protect our water quality. But all the issues currently present in our waterways are NOT due to septic systems, but rather the releases from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee river. It's been documented and proven and a known issue by the State of Florida, Environmentalists and the Federal Government, including the Army Corp of Engineers. There is no crises being caused by the properties on the chain of island in the EU's proposed service area. None. Zero. In fact, many of the homes are only occupied seasonally or sporadically throughout the year. The EU wants to create a crises where none exists.

The bottom line is that the EU's proposal is all about generating a profit for the stakeholders in the company. Nothing else — all at the expense of the property owners who choose to live on this very special chain of barrier islands. As a Florida resident, and native of the great State of Florida, I respectfully plead with the PSC to deny this application.

Regards,

Dale & Julie Novak
611 Bocilla Drive
Placida, FL 33946
dnovak@novakcreative.net
920.664.1088

Antonia Hover

From: Jennifer Aulsebrook <jennifersue_12@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2022 1:45 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Subject: Docket #20200226-SU: Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service

Good Afternoon Commissioners LaRosa, Clark, Passidomo and Clerk of the Commission,

We (John and Jennifer Aulsebrook) are writing to you as the property owners within the proposed service area (Don Pedro/Knight Islands) contained in the application from Environmental Utilities, LLC [EU] for central sewer for Docket No. 20200226-SU. We hereby firmly object to the EU's application for certificate to provide wastewater service in our service area. Our rationale for this objection is as follows:

- **Ethical Practices:**

- On January 5, 2021, the PSC made a decision to deny the EU's motion to bifurcate for temporary waiver of Rule 25-30.033(1)(p) and (q). While we are grateful for this decision, we find this initial filing incredibly disturbing as it would have allowed the EU to move forward without fully informing the homeowners of the impact this project. This unintegral business strategy, conducted at the beginning of this application, gives us great concern about the EU's ability to complete this project ethically and fairly. Furthermore, with this initial behavior, this leads us to believe the continued maintenance and service will also be conducted in this manner.

- **Financial Burden, impacting Health:**

- As stakeholders in the proposed service area, it is important to have all the relevant information regarding the proposed central sewer including the connection fees. In January 2022, we have been provided a Rate Case Overview, which indicates the sewer lateral installation and main extension charges will be \$13,221. This rate sheet does not disclose the additional fees for: Electric (the system pump requires a separate electric panel), Generator (homeowners will need a generator to keep the system running during an outage to avoid sewage back-up), Landscaping / Hardscaping around the septic area, and Septic Removal. These additional expenses (all at the homeowners expense) can and will add up, incurring a great burden for us. Additionally, there is concern for other, unexpected fees not listed here; therefore, we still do not feel we have been informed on the **full** financial impact of this project.

- The residential service bill for 4,000 gallons of usage will be \$256.66/month. This is almost triple the amount a homeowner would have to pay on the mainland. We have also been informed that the EU will incorporate increases at a maximum and where possible. We have never paid this much for sewer service in our life and this will have detrimental impact to our finances. We find it absolutely abhorrent that these fees are even being considered, further outlining the EUs ability to conduct themselves in an ethical manner.

- For this section, I will convey our situation in 1st person: While I do not typically share financial and/or health situations outwardly, I feel it's best to provide this information in this sensitive situation. My husband suffered a heart attack as a result of extreme stress. He and I both suffer from osteoarthritis in our spines, as well as, other health issues. We made the conscious decision to sell our home in Colorado and move to the island, strictly for our health and well-being. This island is a healing place for us, quite literally. Unfortunately, my husband is no longer able to work; therefore, we have only one income that is fixed and no wiggle room for exorbitant budget items such as a sewer system. Quite simply, we absolutely cannot afford the expense of the initial start-up, nor can we afford the atypically high monthly service bill. We are also not able to get a loan (it's absolutely not an option). For us, the approval of this sewer system would financially devastate us. This is utter honesty and without exaggeration. We would have to consider moving away from the island, which would, in fact, impact our overall health. The alternative to moving away from the island would be for me to obtain a second job, which would also impact overall health. The ramifications of this decision are vast and I am sharing this to give you a sense of who we are as people and what this could mean for our future. There are often assumptions made about the islanders...that we are wealthy and can frivolously afford things like this without a problem. I'm writing this to inform you that is absolutely **not** the case with us...and that is not the case for many of us (as I have been made aware). In complete vulnerability, we are two humans, trying to care for our health and well-being, counting our pennies along the way so we may have the necessary blessings that this healing island provides. For us, this island carries incredible meaning and importance to our livelihood.

- **Purpose:**

- We have a perfectly working septic system that follows the Charlotte County requirements for maintenance. It is in excellent condition and we (like all islanders) are required to follow our Operating Permit and Maintenance Agreement required by state law and provisioned through the Florida Health Department. We fully adhere to the operating permit/required maintenance, including but not limited to, conducting bi-annual inspections, septic pumping as required within the specified timeframes, ensuring a fully functional aerator with alarms, mitigating root growth, ensuring the drain field has proper vegetation, blower and air filter cleaning, etc. There is absolutely no consideration for homeowners that have a well-maintained, functional, environmentally-safe septic system to be grandfathered. Additionally, we have not heard adequate rationale for the need to replace our existing septic system with a sewer line.

- **Environmental Concerns:**

- We have conducted thorough research on both septic and sewer systems. We have serious concerns with the environmental impact of the installation, operating, and maintenance of a sewer system. As we understand it, in terms of the environment, our controlled and highly maintained septic system does not have the impact on the environment that a sewer system does. We are incredibly concerned about the wastewater that could potentially enter our ocean (as has been seen time and time again with many sewer systems). Additionally, this could have a high impact on our ecological system, including but not limited to, our protected Sea Turtles, Gopher Tortoises and Birds.

In summary, any potential project with regard to sewer installation would impact us immensely and would be devastating to our finances, our overall health, and the environment; therefore, we are formally and respectfully requesting that the PSC deny the EU's application for wastewater service.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John and Jennifer Aulsebrook

aulsebrook@comcast.net

jennifersue_12@yahoo.com

Antonia Hover

From: Randy Simmons <simmonsrandy77@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 11:22 PM
To: Randy Simmons
Cc: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Subject: Re: Docket #20200226-SU Proposed sewer project for Little Gasperilla island

As a follow up to this e-mail with concerns stated in regards to the proposed sewer system I would like to reiterate the fact that Jack Boyer and EU has not secured any easements necessary for crossing my property at 8230 Little Gasparilla Island, this was stated on the hearing February 8th 51 minutes into the hearing and it is absolutely FALSE he has not compensated property owners for the necessary access to allow him to put in the proposed sewer system. I will be contacting my attorney to follow up on recourse and for being compensated if the proposed system is approved. I felt that the Public service commission and the county commissioner should be aware of this falsehood

Any questions or concerns concerning this matter you can call me at 813-310-5125 thank you very much
Randy Simmons

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 19, 2022, at 2:31 PM, Randy Simmons <simmonsrandy77@gmail.com> wrote:

Commissioners and Clerk of the public service commission,

My name is Randy Simmons, I am a current owner of 8230 little Gasperilla Island, I am sending you this email in opposition to the proposed sewer project and Formally requesting that the PSC deny EUs request for waste water service. There are many reasons for this request .below are just a few. Not a comprehensive list

1. EU has not Secured/ Purchases the necessary right of way for the project as a portion of my property would be necessary to complete the project EU DOES NOT HAVE RIGHT OF WAY to install infrastructure needed for this project.
- 2.I currently my property has a well functioning septic system that is a very low to NO impact to the environment and don't feel that this project is justified, additionally if it were to go through I feel I should be grandfathered in and not required to hook up to the system at the proposed exorbitant cost.
3. It has not been determined that EU has the financial ability to handle such a project and I feel that this project should be performed by Charlotte County to ensure system is up to standards if we are forced to go on a sewer system.
- 4 it is in question rather EU has the technical expertise to perform the construction and oversight of a project such as this SINCE THEY HAVE ZERO experience and have not Installed a system anywhere else comparatively. Additionally I don't feel that EU can provide a system that is affordable to the owners of property on Little Gasparilla island.

Thank you for you consideration in these matters as I request that the proposal be denied
Randy Simmons
E-mail simmonsrandy77@gmail.com
Cell 812-310-4125