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RECORDS AND REPORTING

David Marcus
16136 Harbar Oaks Drive
Montverde Fl 34756
June 27, 1998 RI
(407) 469-3799

Brad Martin
Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Fl 32399-0870

References:

Lake Utilities Services, Inc. - Docket No. 960444-WU
Order No. PSC-98-0683-AS-WU

Subject: Service Deficiencies - Harbar Oaks and Four Lakes Subdivisions

Mr. Martin:

I had contacted you and others at the Public Service Commission when Lake Utilities Services, Inc. submitted their recent rate increase request. At that time our Subdivisions had been receiving very poor service from the Utility company. We had always had low water pressure and GPM flow. The well, situated at the lowest part of the subdivision, frequently had shut down causing water to run out of our lines. We rarely were notified by the Utility company this had occurred. They obviously knew but did not want to go on record that their system failed. The homeowners knew because when the faucets were turned on, we had air in our lines. Most homeowners did not realize that this was a health hazard. The Utility company knew. Complaints to the Utility company were fruitless. It was only after homeowners started calling the PSC that the "Boil Water" notices started to appear.

When I received notice of the rate increase request, and realized it was a 4-5X increase for our subdivision, I was furious. I reviewed the proposal at the public library and spoke with many people at the PSC to make certain they realized what the company was asking. I spoke with no fewer than 8 PSC employees and found them all to be very competent, courteous and helpful. I spoke to so many people that it got back to the President of Lake Utilities Services. He called me to find out what my problems were. I reiterated my problems with their service, low Pressure, low GPM, unreliable pump, water being drained from our houses. We discussed new pumps, backup pumps, backup generators, larger capacity wells, and check valves. He made it clear that if it cost money, it wouldn't happen, but he would love to get together and "TALK" with the neighbors. He eventually offered to put a check valve on "MY" house. When I said the problem was a neighborhood problem and all the houses should have one, he said no. It appeared to me that he was trying to

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placate "Me", and "Me" alone (there is a word for this), because I had been calling the PSC and making his life difficult.

It is over 1 year later. My water rates have DOUBLED (\$.81 to \$1.60). The water pressure and flow is probably below legal limits. I had to ask 3 times to get someone from the Utility company to tell me what "my water pressure is and my gallons per minute flow rate is". On the third try they sent someone to my house. The card said "Low Pressure was due to excess irrigation due to heat". Obviously, that did not answer the question. I had checked my GPM last year and it was then 20 GPM, it is now 6 GPM. (50 seconds to fill a 5 gallon bucket with no other water in the house on.) I don't know about pressure. I do know that my sprinkler system was designed for 12-14 GPM and it will not work properly. It takes forever to take a shower, fill a tub or sink. The Utility company refuses to acknowledge the problem or that there is any cure. I believe that the problems we are experiencing are more related to insufficient plant, equipment and facilities. They choose to blame the customer for their poor service.

A neighbor also had been asking about the current pressure and flow and got the same answer "pressure loss is due to excess watering". Again, the Utility company would not go on record as to how bad it is. My neighbor spoke with the Utility company representative and inquired about the well system. She was told that there are actually 2 wells but one has recently been condemned. (That might explain the drop in service). When she asked about what backup they had, she was told that the still used the other (condemned) well.

I am confused and concerned. This Utility company has set a precedence for not acting in good faith in the past. At this point I don't know if I could trust any pressure/GPM reading they would give me. Our rates have doubled, which as was clearly stated in their rate proposal, was solely to increase their profit margin. I know that we have a small well, but they are required to provide a safe, reliable, adequate service. If we are to pay the same rates as the larger, highly capitalized, interconnected connected well systems then we should get the same reliable, safe water at a sufficient pressure and GPM flow. If they need to drill another well, or put in check valves on ALL houses or get backup equipment, they must do it. Same rate, same service. We only want what is fair and reasonable and not to be ignored.

Please keep me informed of the status of this complaint.

David Marcus

CC: Marshall Willis
Tim Vaccaro
Brad Martin
Jack Shreve