

Lisa Smith

From: Office of Commissioner La Rosa
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 5:04 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket Correspondence - 20200226
Attachments: My support for central sewer and why.; Subject Docket# 20200226-SU

Good afternoon!

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

Thank you!

Lisa Smith

From: eu777offices@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 3:36 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Chairman Fay; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Commission Clerk; Office of Commissioner Clark
Subject: My support for central sewer and why.

To whom it may concern-

My wife and I strongly support centralized sewer service for Palm Island. We currently own two vacant lots and are in the process of working with our architect and engineers to obtain a building permit. Based on my recent conversations with my septic engineer and septic drain field contractor, the cost to construct and install a septic system and associated drainfield is as much or more than the projected cost per owner for sewer. In addition to the less expensive cost of public sewer, I think most people would agree that it is overall better for the environment to have a central sewage system versus private drainfield designed to leech waste water into the soil and/or water table. Finally, the next easy to understand benefit of having central sewer is that it frees up our yard area to be used for parking, landscaping, building area and other uses. Installation of a drainfield eats up a significant portion of most lots on the island and renders the area basically unusable. When considering all of these factors cumulatively from the standpoint of all of the vacant lot owners on the island (which will be built out at some point in time) I would suggest that anyone looking at all facts and factors objectively would come to the same conclusion – central sewer is the hands down best solution when compared to septic and drainfield.

The address of our two vacant lots are:

29 North Gulf Blvd. & 461 North Gulf Blvd.

My wife and I are members of PIE and so we have been kept abreast of the PIE leadership position, which from the correspondence we receive leads us to believe they have a strong opposition to the certification and approval of Environmental Utilities(EU) by the PSC as the wastewater service provider for our island. My QuickTake is the opposition is focused on two primary issues –1) EU does not have the financial wherewithal or skill set to effectively be put in charge of the wastewater system for our island, and 2) either the reported cost per owner of roughly \$13,000-\$20,000 is too high, and/or there is no certainty of a guaranteed max price(GMP). I don't believe I have heard anyone object to central sewer service for the island on environmental grounds. Conversely, I suspect that if you asked the question of each owner on the island as to whether central sewer or private individual drain fields are better for the environment and desired the majority of those persons being intellectually honest would choose public sewer. Assuming this to be true, then the major objections that I am aware of are - 1) cost, and 2) the financial wherewithal and skill set of the applicant.

I have no knowledge or basis to form a comment on whether the applicant has the skill set and financial ability or not to provide and bring to completion a sewer system for our island that is as competitive in price as any other applicant. Therefore, I will leave it to the applicant, the facts presented, and the PSC to arrive at a decision on this issue. On the issue of cost, I would say from the perspective of a vacant lot owner in the process of obtaining permits there is no cost disadvantage in having central sewer. In fact, given all of the factors I have outlined above it is in my opinion less expensive to have public sewer than the cost to install private individual systems and the ongoing maintenance associated with each. As far as making arguments that the projected/reported cost for providing sewer service on our island is more expensive on a per homeowner basis than on the mainland is analogous to the proverbial comparison of apples and oranges. The cost to build my home on the island versus to build my same home on the mainland is also apples and oranges. The cost to build my home on the island far exceeds the cost to build on the mainland for many different reasons including the most obvious which is the ferry/barge fees of getting vehicles and equipment from the mainland to the island. Following the same line of linear reasoning, I would certainly expect the cost per unit to provide sewer service on the island to be more than on the mainland. Unfortunately, everything cost more these days. In closing, I would like to say that I certainly understand the viewpoint of the persons that are in opposition to this project. And, to be honest if I had just finished construction of my new home and paying for my new septic and drainfield I might vote with my wallet and be in opposition to the project. Just being honest. With that said, other than cost to existing homeowners, I can't think of any other reason that having sewer service for the island is not in our long-term best interest.

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Lisa Smith

From: Craig Grant <craiggrant2012@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 2:43 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark;
commissionerpassidomo@psc.state.fl.us
Subject: Subject: Docket# 20200226-SU

Dear Florida Public Service Commissioners and whom it may concern,

I am requesting that you deny EU's application for wastewater service on LGI, Don Pedro and Palm Island.

I am not convinced the need for this service is the #1 offender of the polluted water in nearby waters. Please make it a priority to clean up the commercial offenders of putting pollutants into our waterways, especially the rivers that feed into our waterways. I did not request this service to be provided on the island and feel this approach is like throwing a bucket of water on a forest fire with each bucket of water costing about \$20,000. Then for the monthly fee of \$215.00 you get a garden hose to continue fighting the forest fire. Not an effective solution and the owners are being forced to pay dearly for a solution that most owners do not want.

I am concerned about EU's finances to handle a project of this magnitude and technical their expertise. The rates that I have seen proposed are extremely high on an upfront capital expense to the property owners and the proposed monthly rates are ridiculous too. As I understand there are only a few right of ways on the island and securing what is needed could be huge additional costs not addressed in the proposal thus far.

These are only a few of the concerns. I also have a serious concern over the principals in EU. As you all know, they currently offer water service on the island. I question their water infrastructure, having seen exposed pipes running down the middle of the sand paths on the island. (I took pics if you like to see) I've seen golf carts hit their infrastructure numerous times causing major leaks on the island creating ponds and making the paths unpassable. I would think the infrastructure would be better designed and far more protected. Since water is such a precious commodity I assumed it would be a huge priority for them to get it fixed immediately. I was told by one of their representatives that it isn't a huge deal since they get a 7% buffer on the usage vs. billing from Charlotte county. I was also told by the same representative that they would raise their rates by 3% this year because they could. I'm sure it is correct and most utilities would do the increase but showing the insincerity and lack of appreciation was certainly discouraging.

I have been associated with a number private public utilities and they all have performed community involvement and community betterment activities & functions. I have been an owner on the island for over 7 years and have never seen LGI Water do anything for community betterment that didn't involve their personal gain. For example, after hurricane Irma LGI Water used their heavy equipment to help clean the beach debris off Coconut Palm Lane beach access. Not for the island, but for the beach access the principals of LGI Water use for their streets beach access.

The sand road going North & South was cut off a few years back by an unhappy owner. He could do that because many of the sand paths are on private property. Representatives of LGI Water used their equipment to build a new road for island access. Again they offered their heavy equipment and helped with the matter because they needed full access to the island for LGI Water purposes. Hopefully I'm wrong and they have done things for LGI's benefit however I personally haven't seen it.

Only a portion of the island has fire hydrants. Most properties South of Hideaway Bay Beach Club does not have practical access to fire hydrants. That is something I feel should have been addressed when granting LGI Water their utility license as the PSC has required all livable properties on the island to connect to LGI water service. I feel this is something that should be addressed as an good faith ambassador to the island that it serves.

Last year HBBC got into an extremely vulnerable situation regarding their fire sprinkler system and needed an LGI water hook-up for the system. LGI Water seemed to slow roll the fire suppression system connections until LGI Water resolved a request with HBBC. A matter based on a verbal agreement from many years past. The situation was very sketchy and questionable, however HBBC was desperate and really had little choice but come to terms while they were at the mercy of LGI Water.

Again, I would prefer Charlotte County take on a project of this magnitude if it is truly a priority. Therefore please deny EU's application for wastewater services on LGI, Don Pedro and Palm Island.

Sincerely,

Craig Grant
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Little Gasparilla Island
913-314-4146 m