

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 2:35 PM
To: 'Terrie Weibley'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon Teresa Weibley,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Best regards,

Charlie Smith II

Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
850-413-6770

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From: Terrie Weibley <tweibley1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 1:36 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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April 23, 2024

Commissioners,

We are permanent residents of Little Gasparilla Island, Placida, FL, a boat-only bridgeless island. Our names are Richard and Teresa Weibley. We live here 24/7. This old-Florida paradise requires wise leadership for the protection of the fragile environment and in particular, the marine, land and bird life that is dependent on its unique features. Our water certainly is affected by sewage, but not ordinarily from the septic systems on the island. Islanders form a real neighborhood, and when a septic system seems to be acting up, neighbors swiftly report it to the County. We do not tolerate desecration of our land and especially, surrounding waters. Please consider this letter as a request that you deny EU's application for wastewater service. We object to EU's application for several reasons; (1) It is a solution searching for a problem on LGI, (2) Statistics in the proposal lack validity, particularly since the STUDY experts have never actually been on the island to validate that there is a problem (p. 9, Dr. Lapointe report attached to PSC application), and (3) EU is not capable of installing a sewage system on this island.

Unfortunately, as you know, the sewage leaks in our vitally important Gulf and Charlotte estuary waters come from surrounding counties and their sewage system leaks/overflows. It is *curious and alarming* how often they fail during heavy rain events. A well-accepted maxim is that when a county reports a sewage spill, the amount is actually logarithmically increased. 10,000 gallons reported is really 100,000, and so on. These "spills" are a diabolical way to reset the overburdened sewage systems due to an aging, poorly maintained infrastructure and unprecedented growth. This would be a wonderful place to redirect funds; to correct the real source of sewage pollution in our state. For instance, our own Charlotte County's Englewood sewer system notoriously failed for *weeks* after Hurricane Ian. Residents deposited their solid bathroom waste in backyard holes dug for that purpose and lived like a third world country. Sewage backed up into nearby homes when someone dared to flush. In the proposed system for LGI, solids would still *remain on island*, and each home would still be required to own and maintain a septic tank for collection of solids!

What happened on Little Gasparilla Island after Hurricane Ian? When residents ultimately could locate seaworthy boats and fuel and return to their homes within a few days - they were without electricity for weeks - but despite the high water table, septic tanks did not fail. Notably, they are not dependent on electricity and therefore, they performed well. This would never again be true if the proposed sewer system were enacted here. And that is the second point. Incredibly, the need for a sewer system did not consider the small population, limited number of full-time residents, and primarily weekend use by other owners. These calculations of water usage, flow, flushing, etc., would reveal a very different picture. Further, given the effects of Hurricane Ian, many homes have experienced turnover in terms of sales. In each case, the septic systems must be inspected, and many have been replaced. It is possible that we have the most minimal septic impact of ANY PLACE in Charlotte County that you could possibly survey. However, an *accurate survey* would require on-site examination of the island!

Please do not be tempted to think that Environmental Utilities, LLC, would be able to troubleshoot/repair/maintain the system. We offer as exhibits the attached photographs which illustrate the current lack of diligence with a simple water meter. We received an allegedly "read" meter bill for the usual three month time frame on March 6, 2024 from Gasparilla Water Utility. It was several hundred dollars above the average charge for our home. We had no leaks, no endlessly running toilets, no dripping faucets. Further, we irrigate our garden using cistern-captured rainwater. We had not had company for more than an overnight stay, so this bill seemed unusual. We checked the meter ourselves. Please see first photo below to understand how unlikely it was that the meter had actually been read. It was covered with dried debris. Sparing you many details of contact and lack of response, we read the meter ourselves after removing debris, reported it in writing and after repeated requests, received a new bill that was lower by \$188. This is a minor example of the common lack of attention our water service receives. Given the LGWU history among residents here, it is impossible to imagine that the proposed sewer system would be maintained and managed in a responsible way with all its complexities.

We do propose something that might reassure the PSC about the quality and nature of our current septic systems on Little Gasparilla Island. Our need is rather simple; a mainland-based boat ramp for barge transport of pump-out trucks. This ramp accessibility challenge is the primary hold-up to servicing our septic systems efficiently. Island Contractor Bruce Woithe and the company of Martin Septic have both been reliable partners in maintaining our septic systems. We applaud them. Come and see. We invite you to our home, and to our dock. Heck, we'll even gladly serve you lunch. We want you to see both the old Florida beauty and fragility of this totally private land. We want you to walk or golf cart (remember, we don't have cars here), around the island. It would be a privilege to pick you up at Eldred's Marina by boat and host you. Please contact us and we will be happy to arrange this. You who signed on to serve the public, please hear us and deny this Application for Original Certificate of Authorization.

Sincerely,
Teresa Weibley

Richard Weibley, MD
9782 Little Gasparilla Island



