

SAVE THE HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE MEETING
7:00 p.m. - 06/13/2019
Homosassa Civic Club

President Kapocsi welcomed guests and introduced special guests Mike Lynch and Anthony Pidala, from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning balance	\$9,500.30
Deposits	428.00
Checks/Withdrawals	.00
Ending Balance	\$9,928.30

Minutes:

Minutes were read and approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Rack Cards:

2200 rack cards were given to FWC, Parks and Recreation and Aquatic Services to hand out at various boat ramps and waterways. Mark Edwards of Aquatic Services said the large signs regarding scallop sign disposal will be posted in the Blue Waters. Our thanks to SWFWMD for producing 10,000 racks at no charge.

Outreach:

Public News Service – President Kapocsi co-authored an article re protection of sea grasses. 980,000 folks had the opportunity to read this. Lots of good exposure.

Brad Rimbey made a presentation at the Homosassa Wildlife State Park – huge interest in the health of our springs.

Steve Minguy and Frank Kapocsi recently spoke to members of the Too Far organization. Too Far works on East side of the County. Very good reception; they want to partner with us to protect our rivers.

Phyllis Colvin reported on Ceremony at Lecanto HS where a plaque was presented to Madison Weaver, our future environmentalist. It was hard to make the decision. Lots of good candidates.

Facebook up and running. Encouraged everyone to go to the page and like the page and ask friends to do that also. We will be working on a Homosassa Almanac in September where people can post what they see on the river. Send photos for the FB page.

Update on Minimum Flows and Levels:

Frank attended a SWFWMD meeting re MFLs. People spoke up expressing their concerns but they have their own ideas. After the meeting Frank made the following point to Dr. Hendrick:

- What happened to the SWIM plan which is a conservation and management plan for the river? How does further reduction work in conjunction with that plan?
- Won't withdrawal reduce the velocity of water coming out the spring thus reducing water column drag?
- With reduced drag, won't particles coming into the river drift to the bottom thereby causing additional sedimentation encouraging additional algae (lymbyga)?
- Doesn't additional sedimentation stop light from reaching new or old vegetation?

So how does further reducing the flow of the river protect the river? The very last thing they told me as they walked away was "Mr. Frank, this will not benefit the river". They are caught between a rock and a hard place.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bill Garvin – He sent 3 letters to FWC, Sheriff's Office and the State Troopers asking for a check point for trailers to make sure lights are working at Yulee Sugarmill. Lt. Griffith of FWC said they like the idea and they are talking about it. Lack of personnel is the problem. Also, a new vent which Bill discovered in the Homosassa several years ago is now being called Garvin Spring.

President Karpocsi introduced speakers Mike Lynch and Anthony Pidala, from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southwest district, to members and visitors.

Specifically, they are both in the submerged land and environment resource permitting part of that very large agency. In particular, anything that has to do with construction on or over water that requires permitting. They:

- Make sure projects work within the framework of the rules. They enforce environmental laws. They work with ordinary citizen direction involving construction over water.
- Make sure project has the least amount of impact on the environment.
- Handle single family activities in municipalities – concentrating on projects which involve families – not commercial, (that would be SWFWMD) such as mangrove trimming and docks.
- Construction over a water body and it size depends on which agency a person would have to contact.

They asked the audience if they had any questions re permitting. Questions followed:

Q. - What is the will of our government to get our river cleaned up?

A. We have permitted several projects reducing lymbya and planting grasses. Sea and Shoreline has done a lot of work to get permits to get lymbya removed. (Frank mentioned that Steve Minguy 's Homosassa Restoration Project is waiting on 2

million dollars from the State of Florida. This funding will begin the Homosassa River clean-up. We are very close.

Q. - What about enforcement on our waters? How can we get more law enforcement?

A. Mike recommended that people say something politely to that person breaking laws. Call FWC. Lots of people need to call. Get together, write a letter – telling you are concerned. If no response, call him and tell him. He will call FWC for us. They want people to enjoy the resources. Lots of complaints come into their office. They will give it a shot. They have just so many resources available but they will try.

Q. -Septic tank visibly leaking into the canal, who do I call?

A. Department of Health is who you would call.

Q. - Who do we call when we notice violations in construction in wetlands or over water?

A. email SWerp@floridadep.gov or call their office at 813-470-5777. They try to resolve cases as best/soon as possible. Try to close up complaints within 60 days. Takes time. Make sure to get a complaint ID number so you can refer to it if you need to call again.

Q. – Is there a place along the river to put a porta potty?

A. Depends on who owns property on body of water. Lots of questions here. Does county own property along the river to do this? Not so easy.

Q. - Does FWC post any signs on the water as to fines for defecating in the river.?

A. Probably want to talk to FWC about this.

Q. - Commercial shucking of scallop shells. How do we control this?

A. There are no rules in place. If an ordinary citizen complains and can prove that the amount of shells is extreme, then perhaps they can follow up on it. They will need specifics. How many shells? Also, if a dock is being used on the water to make money, it should require a lease of some kind. Again, no rules in place as of now.

Frank mentioned that we need to approach the BOCC with our questions. It is important that we go in large numbers in order to get changes.

Meeting ended with everyone agreeing that it is an ongoing problem and challenge..

Submitted by Iris Rose, Secretary

