

SAVE THE HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE MEETING
7:00 p.m. - 09/12/2019
Homosassa Civic Club

President Kapocsi welcomed everyone and guest speaker from FWC, Taylor Dluzniewski,

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning balance	\$9,168.02
Deposits	302.34
Checks/Withdrawals	.00
Ending Balance	\$9,469.36

Motion was made by Terry Green and seconded by President Kapocsi not to read the treasurer's report and minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ron Hobbs spoke to members on the subject of boat ramp fees. According to Chronicle articles and the BOCC website, the current proposal calls for:

- A payment kiosk at all four boat ramps which are Ft. Island Trail, Ft. Island Gulf Beach, MacRae's and Hernando Beach.
- \$20 daily fee for motorized vessels and \$5 for non motorized.
- Hiring of two employees and a truck
- County estimates fees will generate \$400,000 with a net of \$260,000 the first year and \$31,000 the next year
- Discounts will cut into that amount but don't know how much
- BOCC hopes to have it in place by October 1st and ticket fees to begin by February 1, 2020.
- Monies to go for boat ramp improvements

Ron's argument is how does this improve the parking situation which is largely the main problem at these ramps. The county has funds in its current budget but has spent only \$6,600 on all four of the ramps from October 2018 to date.

Discussion followed and these points were made:

- We pay taxes, shouldn't boat ramps be free for us?
- BOCC does very little for Old Homosassa - will we see a dime of this money? The BOCC has made it very apparent they don't want to invest any money into Homosassa
- Tourism Development Committee encourages tourism but does not contribute monies from bed tax into our community.
- Dixie Hollis is encouraging boat ramp near the power plant and for some reason, the county supports this project. Why?

There will be community meeting on September 24th at 10 a.m. at the Old Homosassa Civic Club. Commissioner Jeff Kinnard has agreed to be present and answer any questions. Everyone was encouraged to attend.

There is a petition going around for anyone that is against the fees. The petition was in the building and mentioned to those present.

Matt Spriggs, a member who resides in Pinellas County, spoke to say he has made 500 key fobs available advertising the Alliance. We will be giving these fobs away at the Seafood Festival. He praised the work of the Alliance and is encouraging others to join our organization; spreading the word about our efforts to clean up and preserve our waters.

Kathy Green introduced the audience to Natalia Donaldson. She is a girl scout working on her Gold Award (comparable to Eagle Scout Award). Her project is called the Scalloping Destination Project. Her experiments center on how scallop shells do not break down in water, how long does it take, especially the blue water. She will have a booth at the Arts and Crafts Festival to try to educate the general public about her concerns.

OLD BUSINESS:

Homosassa Restoration Project

Steve Minguy stated that after three years, many trips to Tallahassee, and a lot of hard work, they have finally been awarded \$2,000,000 for the project to begin. Money came from a DEP grant - the Springs Fund – a fund which puts money aside for springs restoration. Because the manatee season is upon us, work will begin in February. As long as the State Wildlife park agrees, fencing and signs will go up at Fish Bowl and Halls River Rd. for the disposal of the lynghya. Main River and canal is where they will begin.

Sewer Project

Progressing along Garcia in Old Homosassa.

Membershi Fees:

Board of director's meeting was held recently. Have been looking at a budget for the HRA. With 120 members' dues, we do not have enough funds to pay for expenses which are insurance (\$1156), newsletter (\$1022), leaving us with little funds for website fees, refreshments, scholarships. Cannot count on donations. Time to raise membership fees. Increase in membership fees: \$20 single member, \$30 family. We are considering corporate sponsorships. Decal was presented as a fundraiser. Hopefully all members will purchase a decal for \$5, and \$50 for corporate sponsorship. Two kinds: Generic and proud to be a sponsor decals. We have ordered additional shirts will be sold at the Seafood Festival and also some tote bags will be available at the Festival.

Crime Watch in Old Homosassa:

Kathy Clark, head of Crime Watch asked for help regarding drivers needed to drive the Crime Watch car. Operates through the Sheriff's Department. Maximum 4 hours a day, any day during daylight. Drivers are needed. Not enough volunteers. Spread the word. Rosey suggested that Kathy make a presentation at the next Civic Club meeting which is Oct. 7.

Speaker Presentation:

Taylor Dluzniewski, FWC biological scientist. Her presentation was seasonal changes in fish communities in the Homosassa River, focusing on the differences in the summer and winter fish communities.

The project consisted of tagging fish in the Homosassa River, both externally and internally. They are trying to ascertain why fish migrate to certain areas. They know fish migrate from the gulf and come here like the manatees. Has the system changed rapidly enough to make a difference? Working with USGS, they are looking at canals and tributaries because these have been ignored. They will be tracking species interactions. What is going on the winter months with these fish? They are checking the quality of these backwaters and whether fish can live there. Do we need to clean these waters to protect the species? What is happening in these backwater systems? They tagged 20 snook, 20 grey snappers and 20 large mouth bass. If someone catches one of these fish, the tags give information as to call the FWC and let them know where the fish were caught. Hopefully they will return the fish to the water. If they don't then they hope even if the fish die, they will see the internal tag and will call FWC. Signs have been put at the boat ramps so people are aware of the ongoing project.

Next Guest Speaker

Florida Representative Ralph Mussollo will be the guest speaker at the October 10th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Iris Rose, Secretary