

Canal Advisory Committee Update

As of: Wednesday, October 05, 2005

Next Meeting: East Bay H.S. 6:30 PM
Probably November 16th, but the date is not certain yet

FROM: Brian Rayle PHONE: 641 3366

Hello All,

First of all I would like to ask that if any of you know others that should be added to this "Master" email list please let me know the email address. It is currently only reaching a small portion of those effected by Apollo Beach canal matters.

Quick Review:

The County's "No dredging" policy is likely to change due to mounting citizen pressure, such as by us, but most notably by a strong, dedicated group called "Save Our Canals" (SOcS). While most membership is currently from canal areas in the airport region of the county their goals match well with ours and I suggest you join. You can find a membership form (just \$10) at:

<http://www.HCSaveourcanals.org>

While the Board Of County Commissioners (BOCC) seems finally ready to do something, they voted for a study in order understand the magnitude of the problems, sources of the problems, and cost of solutions. They called for a Citizens Advisory Committee to be formed and a study to be performed by a Consultant (\$280,000). Completion of the study and the committee's work is scheduled for 18 months.

The study is also being used to gather base information on pollution as opposed to sedimentation per se. I think we are relatively OK here now (some arsenic from fertilizers) but upstream development may change that. The SOcS group has good reasons to suspect their canals are very dangerous.

Our commissioner, Kathy Castor pushed hard (repeatedly) to get a line item in the budget committed to canal restoration. \$500,000 was finally passed. Not to be spent right now though, really money set aside, and with a fuzzy stipulation involving damage caused by the County or stemming from County property. But it is a significant step forward and shows the BOCC now has a willingness to act and spend.

Citizens Advisory Committee Status:

There have been 3 monthly meetings of the Citizens Advisory Committee, which also has members from governmental and regulatory groups.

By BOCC mandate we were to quickly come back to them with funding options, and they have pretty much said some sort of Self Taxation must be on the list. We have created a list that also includes things like boater assessments, grants, and such and it is now in the hands of our committee moderator to formalize for further review.

As the Apollo Beach representative I have taken information from the original representative, Stephanie Flatt, who had conducted a meeting here to get a grip on local needs. Then I did some scouting and visitations in likely areas.

Our Apollo Beach Problems:

Actually, considering the miles of canals in Apollo Beach there seems to be few areas with severe problems now.

- ***Re-occurring Arterial Blockage*** - clogged channels near Tampa Bay. Two primary spots.

- ***Canals used as major stormwater drainage.*** These include Masters Canal starting at the golf course clubhouse. Flamingo Canal has less of a problem in the residentially zoned areas, I think because of previous dredging, but sediment present near route 41 is posed to move in from some big storm event.

On the north side of Apollo Beach Boulevard, the Caribbean mobile home park receives stormwater drainage and needs dredging, but they have self-funded it already. In the distant future, as problems re-occur, they may want assistance from any available program.

The next thing for you:

There will be two public meetings in the county. The one near us will be at East Bay H.S. 6:30 PM, probably November 16th but the date is not certain yet. This is a chance to talk with those involved as well as point out problem areas on maps. A survey to help determine problems and causes will be available there and apparently on line.

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