

My name is Elizabeth Ferrer. My family has owned a condo on Hutchinson Island since 1978. The property has been in my name since 2010.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the Hutchinson Island MSTU.

Hutchinson Island Residents pay two MSTUs: one that began in 1989 to help the county pay for beach renourishment. The second began in 2012 to pay for the Hutchinson Island Coalition's master plans for the island.

Not knowing anything about the Coalition, I searched the internet for information, but to find out who they are and what they do, I had to comb through public records and emails.

While searching, I found an email that left me dismayed. On July 5, 2011, Jim Hudson, on behalf of a new volunteer group on the island, emailed the commission asking for the millage of the Hutchinson Island MSTU to DOUBLE, so the entire island population would "participate" in their planned enhancements to make Hutchinson Island the most beautiful in Florida.

Jim Hudson then emailed the first draft of the Hutchinson Island Coalition's plans on September 12, 2011. The next day, the Commission voted to approve the MSTU increase to pay for the Coalition's plans. Before anyone could have had time to read the plan or ask any questions.

Every year since, \$100,500 of island tax dollars goes to what the Coalition calls "THEIR MSTU account" and pays for their plans for the island. Plans all island residents are forced to pay for, but most have never seen.

The many residents who spoke at the June MPO meeting made it clear that the Hutchinson Island Coalition has misrepresented its mandate and authority. And, to make matters worse, the Coalition's Executive Steering Committee is neither balanced nor representative of the island. HALF of the Committee's members live at IRP and Suntime Condos and ONE-THIRD represent 5 of the 12 businesses on the island.

The reality is that many island residents have never heard of the Coalition and there's almost no way to get any information about them.

But, Mr. Hudson would have everyone believe that folks just don't care enough to get involved. Recent events have shown that island residents are more than willing to be involved when it's something they care about. I think it's time to consider that residents aren't involved with the Coalition because they either didn't know about it or because they didn't agree with it.

Before island residents are subjected to an MSTU to pay for the Coalition's plans, I urge this commission to ensure that all island residents are fully informed and have the opportunity to be heard. Until that happens, I ask you to remove the island MSTU that pays for the Coalition's plans ~~for the island.~~

7/16/18

Public (wiswesser)

Good morning, Commissioners.

My name is Jim Wiswesser, and I am a 14-year resident of Hutchinson Island.

In the interest of public trust, we offer the following motion for your consideration:

That the District 1 Special Hutchinson Island MSTU millage rate be reduced in the proposed fiscal year 2019 budget to a level that supports beach renourishment and the maintenance of currently completed projects, and that future spending be specifically identified by project and presented to taxpayers for their consideration.

Thank you.

7/16/18
Public (Garwood)

July 14, 2018

To the Members of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners:

My name is John Garwood. I have been a property owner on Hutchinson Island for over 20 years, and a permanent resident of Hutchinson Island for the past 10 years. Thank you for your service, and for allowing me the opportunity to have these comments entered into the record.

At the BOCC Budget Workshop in July 2011, the District 1 Commissioner introduced a proposal to increase taxes on the residents of Hutchinson Island through the MSTU process to fund beautification and improvement projects on Hutchinson Island. He stated that he had been approached by a group of residents who were seeking funds for future projects. He further stated that this group was not organized, but they would complete that process sometime in the fall of 2011. He requested doubling the millage rate for island residents in that fiscal year to provide funds for these individuals to organize and begin planning for improvements. He assured the Commission that this group would thoroughly disseminate the decision of the Commission to island residents, and ensure that taxpayers were on board with planning and implementation of all projects. Based on these nebulous assurances, the Commission approved the increase. This is akin to giving your child his allowance, and then insisting he clean up his room.

Thus was born the so-called Hutchinson Island Coalition led by one Jim Hudson and his self appointed Steering Committee. As evidenced by the recent controversy concerning roadway lighting on A1A, the Hutchinson Island Coalition never organized...never engaged in due diligence in communicating with island residents...was accountable to no one...and falsely presented itself to county policy making bodies as the representative voice of Hutchinson Island residents.

The MSTU tax increase unilaterally imposed on Hutchinson Island residents has continued since 2011, and the millage rate has steadily increased in all but one year since its inception. This is the worst example of taxation without representation since the Boston Tea Party. This Special MSTU assessment has been the personal piggy bank of Jim Hudson, the now discredited Hutchinson Island Coalition, and the District One Commissioner. Over the years, little if any effort to solicit input from the majority of residents was ever initiated, while our taxpayer dollars were channeled to satisfy the personal priorities of the Hutchinson Island Coalition.

Residents could and should have been more diligent in the decisions of our elected officials. Public trust, however, dictates that our elected officials diligently represent the best interests of *all* their constituents, not the interests of a self-appointed, select group. I respectfully request that the Special Hutchinson Island MSTU millage rate be reduced in the upcoming budget to a level that supports beach renourishment and maintenance of completed projects, and that future spending be specifically identified by project and presented to taxpayers for their consideration. MSTU's are discretionary funds dedicated to the geographic areas serving those who pay the tax. As such, the public deserves every opportunity to have their voices heard.

Thank you.

7/16/18

Public (Laura)

BOCC Budget Meeting

1. At a BOCC meeting last month, we discussed the concern of installing a proposed 50+ lights in the Jensen Beach Parking Lot.
2. At that meeting, we were reminded by the District 1 Commissioner that the proposed lighting was a replacement for damage that occurred during the 2004 hurricanes.
3. We have spoken to the Parks and Rec dept who verified that the Commissioner was correct; that lighting was lost during the hurricanes.
4. We asked..... how many lights were lost and response in writing was that 6 light poles were lost. So, in summary, we are not just replacing 6 lights....6 lights!!
5. During the MPO meeting, many of you experienced the reaction of all conservation/environmental groups and many Martin County residents to 382 lights to be installed along A1A.
6. If you couple that request + the additional proposed 50+ lights in the JB Parking lot, that is a lot of additional lighting; more than 2.0MM lumens of light
7. Another curious fact that has been brought up as a rationale for the parking lot lighting is concerns of crime. Yet there does not appear concern on any other Martin County HI beach parking.....where no lighting is proposed. Why is that??
8. We propose to continue to move forward with cameras that have ability to record nighttime activity as indicated by the Parks and Recs Dept.
9. Again, we remind the Commissioners that many Martin County residents, not only HI residents want to participate in this discussion. Any lighting discussion should include them in an official county meeting; not some unrecognized organization.
10. Based on the rxn of the A1A MPO lighting meeting, all Martin County residents are very protective of our beaches and take seriously to protect the Turtle nesting and hatchlings on our island. The addition of 50+ lights is not in-line with this concern. The 0-7 vote by MPO which includes commissioner Smith opposing the A1A lighting further supports this contention.
11. The outpouring at the MPO who opposed lighting for A1A **during a workday** should be noted. On behalf of all Martin County residents and Conservation/Environmental groups who are not represented today, we propose a motion to the BOCC:
"No money be allocated for the proposed JB Parking lot without a discussion at a BOCC meeting that is announced well in advance to provide input to the Commissioners. This includes any MSTU, discretionary district 1 or Parks & Rec funds".

PAUL LAURIA