

## **DeLeon Springs Merchants Association Minutes, September 14, 2010**

**Present:** Rose & Len Litwineic, Sharon Tinaya, Jim McRae, Andy Natal, Laura Strawn, Tom Maier, Dick & Tammy Schuler, Don Malmborg, Mickey Hiatt, Bob Brooks, Bob Ford, Christine & Steve Hirsh, Elicia Hester & Lori Leveille & Jim Mitchell from Suntrust Bank.

Introductions, minutes from August 2010 meeting and treasurer's report accepted as written.

PACE program cleanup scheduled for October 23, beginning at DeLeon Springs State Park.

Royal Rangers Boy Scout cleanup is this Saturday, leave your cash donation on table after meeting.

**Membership Committee:** Sharon has a new form for businesses to join us. She will be going door to door.

**Projects:** Bob F. wants to find a location on Hwy 17 for a yard sale. Don wants to buy a laptop for presentations.

**New Business:** GUEST SPEAKER-Jim Ailes from City of DeLand Utilities. Could we get a water or sewer system in downtown DeLeon Springs?

Local water/sewer tie-in is at intersection of Hwy 17 & 15-A, three miles from DS. He estimates we need a 12" water main and approx. 12 hydrants. We are in the City of DeLand Utility district by agreement with Volusia Co. CDBG grants are a possible funding source.

If we created a taxing district, it would be prorated out 10 years on tax bill. Quickest could be done is 18 months. There is an existing treatment plant at the elementary school but it is at capacity. Difficulty with building our own plant disposing of waste and also keeping up with EPA rules.

For water from City of DeLand, typical single family home bill is \$30-\$40/month for water and sewer. We could put in our own water system, or the county could provide us with a water system. Costs determined by how many businesses participate and how big our district is. St John's River Water Management District is making it more difficult to pump water, and the more you use the more expensive it gets per gallon.

Property values would go up, but insurance costs would go down because of water availability for fire suppression. Also unknown septic/well repair and maintenance costs would go away, to be replaced by a monthly fee.

Amy Munizzi reported on her research at Astor where they formed the Astor Water Assn. They were very encouraging that we could make a system affordable through available grants and loans (for example USDA Rural Devt, which provides loans only, no grants). Grant funding would mean individual costs for hook-up costs (not installation) could be cut from approx \$4000 to approx \$1200; this amount could be prorated over a period of years. No Residential Property would be forced to hook up their property but we would need enough businesses to connect to make it worth building at a size able to meet future needs. If businesses sold along the line, the new owners would have the option of joining the line, but they would not get the discounts afforded by the initial grants. Fanning Springs and High Springs just went through this process as well. The State is less likely to support individual systems and grants are more available to those communities willing to connect to an already existing supplier.

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Legislative changes are scheduled to be implemented in January 2011 which will bring more regulation and much higher costs for existing septic tank owners. Jim McRae from the health dept said the rules are not finished yet, but the inspections would most likely be done by septic repair companies who would recommend the steps necessary for systems to pass, and all systems would be inspected on a five year cycle indefinitely.

Ecological impact of septic systems on the springs is unknown as it takes 28 years for groundwater to boil up through DeLeon Springs. Gemini Springs is now closed because of water pollution from septic tanks and development. The impact of DeLeon Springs SP closing due to pollution by septic tanks would be devastating to DS. The economic impact of the park is estimated at >\$8Million/year, 174 jobs. Commercial aspect is that many properties along the highway will fall into disrepair/disuse as they cannot comply with current codes for well/septic placements and drainfield requirements.

Agreed to form a committee to research plans: Amy, Don, Dick, Laura, others who want to join.

Meeting adjourned a little after 11:00. Next meeting October 12, 2010.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Strawn  
Secretary, DeLeon Springs Merchants Association