

August 21, 2018

A meeting of the Corkscrew Island Neighborhood Association (CINA) took place at the Corkscrew Sanctuary meeting room on Tuesday, August 21, 2018. Thirteen members were in attendance, plus a guest speaker from North Collier Fire, Becky Bronsdon, Chief Financial Officer.

1) Pledge of Allegiance

President Bill McDaniel opened the meeting at 7 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Presentation by North Collier Fire District

President Bill McDaniel introduced Ms. Becky Bronsdon, Chief Financial Officer of North Collier Fire District, who was a last minute guest to appear on the agenda. Ms. Bronsdon gave a 30 minute presentation on the recommended fire service fee. Many questions were asked and Ms. Bronsdon did an excellent job answering questions. Among other complicated issues, she explained how between 60% and 70% of the calls coming into the fire district are medically related and have nothing to do with fire protection. Consultants were hired to determine the cost of sending first responders. She explained that the reason for the fee, in part, was the fire district had to go 3.5 million dollars in debt to replace fire trucks and equipment, and they never had to do that before. Also, the total cost of the new fire station on Livingston Road cost about 300 million dollars, which was not paid by property tax. She discussed millage rates, policies, how the government works, exemptions, types of structures, and more. The President interjected that the fire district is an independent elected taxing district outside of your county commissioner. You can vote your fire board out and new ones in, and in fact three of them are coming up for election in November. The question was asked, "Why do the wealthy pay less on this fire tax/fee?" She said that it is based on the cost to provide the first responder, that's all. That's why you keep the property tax component, so people who have a more valuable house pay more on that end. The cost of the first responder is the same, no matter where you live and how much your house is worth. We send the same number of fire trucks and the same number of people on a first response for a residential structure fire. It was a very interesting discussion for which we thank Ms Bronsdon for responding to all our questions.

3) Approval of June Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting on June 19, 2018, were sent by email prior to the meeting, and a few copies were passed around at this meeting. The June minutes were approved and seconded unanimously.

4) New Taxation Issue - Storm Water Assessment

President Bill introduced what is officially called the "Non-ad valorem Storm Water Assessment. It's a fee, the President said, "and it's the first time I ever saw 'fee' spelled 'tax'. He gave a history of how this assessment (fee) developed and was passed into ordinance. Bill explained that he voted against it and went public with his opposition last fall. He proposed two alternative methods for the County to take care of the 120 million dollars of sub-surface infrastructure deficit that has been created over the past 10 years, but he met with resistance. Questions, answers, comments and discussions included details in this enlightened conversation which went on for an hour or more. It was a very good presentation by our County Commissioner, Bill McDaniel, who gives us an inside perspective on how County government works. Thank you Bill, for all of your hard work on our behalf. We appreciate you. At the end of the discussion, a motion was made that CINA write a letter to the board of county commissioners to express that we oppose this fee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

5) Discussion of Issues on the ballot

A lively discussion took place of issues on the ballot in the upcoming County election on August 28th.

6) Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm.