

CANAL UPDATE – posted May 10, 2008

Quick update. I met with Rose Ferlita and several of the Hillsborough County attorneys this past Wednesday. Thanks to all of you for trusting me as a representative, as they would have never allowed a citizen in this preliminary meeting if they thought there would be a crowd.

The first step, in our quest to have a canal maintenance program in Hillsborough County, is an Ordinance to allow the creation of one or more MSBUs must be approved by the BOCC. By being at the meeting this past Wednesday I was able to voice our concerns about this process and suggest ways to make it easier to accomplish.

The county attorney has drafted a starting point for the Ordinance, and I will review and comment, then have a follow up meeting. I will be happy to share this with you, once I confirm we are going in the right direction.

The next step is for me to ask the BOCC to vote to make this Ordinance law, and that should happen late this month. Stay tuned, I may need supporters.

MSBU issues I am dealing with include what properties are included area by area. How do project areas join? What voting percentage is needed? How will MSBU fees be apportioned to each property?

Once the MSBU Ordinance is accepted, we will need a petition drive to actually get the MSBU formed. This will mean real work for us to do.

Once the MSBU is formed we can actually discuss projects, real costs, government grants, and certainly our desire for Hillsborough County to pay their fair share.

No monies are being asked for at this time, or in the near future. What we are asking for currently from the County Commission is the right to organize into a group, perform cost studies, file for permits, ask for federal and state grants, and finally go back to the canal property owners with a budget to vote on, hopefully at under a few hundred dollars per home, per year, on average.

This will be complex, frustrating and a slow process. But, it is the ONLY way to dredging.

Remember, I am acting as your representative, but not as the final policy maker. At each step, I will ask for your input, then seek a compromise if needed, because if we are not united, the BOCC will use our divisions to stop progress and kill the process dead. It is hard to preach patience after seeing this go on for over 12 years, but we either do it the slow way, or it never gets done. I hope you trust me on this, because I do not want each of you to face the decade of frustration I have faced.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Best wishes,
jack