

From: DIPOA OFFICE

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 12:02 PM

Subject: D.I.P.O.A.

Dear friends,

The October Board meeting was the most contiguous in years. Dozens of angry members. The Italians have a wonderful word to describe many of the attendees, the word is "gufare", or in English, againstism. In simple terms; to snort, to scoff, to support against, basically to hope for the downfall of another, and that was me and others on the board. Not a pleasant evening.

The crowd was a blend of the those who fought against the West Surf Beach going to the Town and those against the terms of the settlement of the Corps lawsuit. At no time do they offer their solutions as to what they would have done to garner support from our elected officials, who have told us for years that more beach access for their constituents and that the Corps lawsuit has to go away before any significant federal or state assistance can be given. Our position, as well as the Town's, is that coastal restoration is at the top of the list of what needs to happen, and it needs to happen quickly. We were lucky this year with no storms coming into the Gulf, very lucky. We have lost precious years battling others and ourselves in the courts. We are at a tipping point now, and with Dr. Scott Douglas working with us, our Island's future is more promising than ever before.

I'm off my soapbox now.

Our finances have leveled off with expenditures and income almost balancing. The next several months are the slowest for the course, but we are seeing a bit of a trend in winter visitors arriving early. Let's hope we have a mild winter and a steady stream of visitors to our golf course and our Island's many businesses. It is going to be a tough year with gas royalties down. **We urge all our members to pay their membership dues so that our organization can move forward in making our little island a better place to live and visit.**

We had several presentations at our October meeting. Merrill McPhearson, a board member of the Dauphin Island Water and Sewer Authority, reminded us of the history of the DIPOA and the DIW&SA, both of which use to be one. He outlined an ambitious new water processing plant the Authority is planning to build at their site next to our large water tower. Using loans and grants of over \$6M, they will build a reverse osmosis system that is capable of processing water obtained from deep wells that will produce the best water we have ever had here on the island. Merrill also advised us that they will be asking for an update of documents that transferred the Authority from the DIPOA over thirty years ago.

Mel Lucas, President of the Dauphin Island Foundation, briefed us on their activities. The most exciting is that every fourth and fifth grader at the Dauphin Island Elementary school will be receiving a new laptop computer that will be theirs as long as they are in our school, and will take with them as they progress to middle school. Very nice, and what makes our school one of the best elementary schools in Mobile County. He also asked us to seriously consider donating land for the long planned community center. The DIPOA land is located between Town Hall and the water tower on Bienville. I think we all realize that there is a need, and we will take study this request earnestly.

On the legal front, we only have the Corps lawsuit/settlement on our plate. We await the Judge's decision after the Fairness Hearing that occurred on September 15. We are now hoping for a decision before the end of the year, for emails and filings are still flying between the court, our members opposing, and our attorneys. Some members are challenging our board vote, along with Mr. Hartman, to settle the Corps lawsuit. Our legal counsel assures us that our constitution requires a membership vote only when property is conveyed or transferred by deed, not the settlement of a lawsuit, which if my memory serves me well did not have a membership vote to join the lawsuit in the early 2000's.

Last week we surveyed our pocket parks here on the Island coming up with a proposed plan to accomplish long overdue maintenance on these wonderful locations. Audubon Dr. and Forney

Johnson Dr. waterside parks will have bulkhead work and barriers installed. Jeffries Park will have a gravel drive put in to access the kayak launch, and more bulkhead work accomplished to continue the repair to this long overlooked area. Salt Creek Park will be cleaned up and the entrance graveled for another kayak launching area. Lafitte Bay Park, a great area, needs little work, but after conferring with members in this neighborhood, maybe a small craft launching area could be added. We must remember that all these locations were created to give nearby residents who do not own on the water access to the bays on the north side of the island.

I attended a not well publicized presentation on September 28th by Dr Scott Douglas on what his recommendations are for stabilizing our southern shoreline. Basically he dismissed retreat and buyout, as well as hardened structures, recommending beach renourishment and an improved method to bypass sand dredged from the Mobile Outer Bar Channel (MOBC) to the west (i.e., deposit the sand in 15 feet of water instead of 30- to 40-foot depths). He will not rule out protective offshore breakwaters. His two immediate engineering needs involve: (1) conducting a bathymetric survey to determine the quantities of sand that are needed; and (2) conducting a search of nearshore underwater areas to develop an estimate of the volume of suitable sand occurring within a cost-effective distance for transport to the Island's beaches. Discussions will be needed with the Corps to pursue a change in the present dredging and disposal practices for the MOBC dredging operations. In addition, appropriate environmental investigations also need to be initiated. Mayor Jeff Collier stated that a second presentation will be scheduled, and we will let everyone know when this happens.

Two of our board members questioned our legal counsel working with the Town's lobbyist in Washington. We as a community are new to the this lobbying game and we need to work together using every method possible to persuade our elected officials that our little barrier island is important to our state, county and county. We have turned public opinion around concerning Dauphin Island. If we had been doing this at the end of the 90's, we probably would not have had to file a lawsuit against the US Government. If in 2005, and if we had a lobbyist in Washington looking out for our interest, we probably would have been included in on the Mississippi barrier island proposal. Our counsel is connected and if he can open doors and initiate dialog, I am for it. Congressman Bonner, and after the settlement of the West Surf Beach lawsuit late last year, earmarked \$1.5 M for a engineering study of Dauphin Island. Bonner also recently brokered and presided over a meeting between the Governor's office, the Alabama Dept. of Conservation and the Town of Dauphin Island in resolving what is perceived by us to be an imbalance in CIAP/GoMesa funding between Mobile and Baldwin County. Things are happening, and I now feel better for our future more than anytime in the past.

Everyone have a great October.

Respectfully,

William (Bill) Harper
President, Dauphin Island Property Owners Association