

Dear Cecil,

This is a response to the mass email you sent out yesterday 8/31 to all Island Park residents -- Lee County citizens who were trapped for days and lost their homes due to severe flooding that occurred a year ago due to a lack of upkeep and maintenance of our County's canals and drainage system. We are looking for solutions, not rebukes from the Chairman of our highest Governmental entity. Please let me clarify some errors in your letter:

YOUR MISINFORMATION:

Island Park Citizens.org meets often. All meetings are advertised and open to the public; you don't have to be "invited." The information you claim I "have not passed on" (which are your Staff's replies to my email inquiries) have all been posted to our Face Book Page previously, please look there. The subject of our last meeting on 8/25/18 was the Ten Mile Canal Community Group's report (<https://tmccg.org>) that you and your Staff have had for weeks but have not responded to. We have asked for your help, described our problems, attended County Commission meetings. You have not been responsive. You are not voting or working on a solution for our community. You have not been "working with us." You say you have been making speeches about "the County's flood prevention efforts (with very positive outcomes)" -- who have these speeches been to? You or your staff are not responsive to us, the Ten Mile Canal group, or the media. You've attached a list of paper-pushing dates from your Staff -- but as of our one-year anniversary 8/26/18 of the Floods, you have not even cleaned-out the Hurricane Irma debris in Ten Mile Canal. This complete lack of action, attention or results is our complaint.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

The subject of our last IPC meeting Sat 8/25 was Ted Ehrlich's Ten Mile Canal Group report that was provided to your Staff in early July. This report points out several important issues -- The Ten Mile Canal is essential for drainage from 70 square miles of land. The Ten Mile Canal drainage system is unfinished and has not been maintained. The disproportionate flooding damage Island Park incurred in Aug and Sept 2017 is a direct result of the "funnel" effect at the bottom of this unfinished canal system. Yet you continue to permit development that relies on this structure. You have received several letters from FEMA over decades stating that your water calculations used for this permitting are incorrect. You have "opted-out" of the South Florida Water Management District's governance and assistance -- you say the County can do this yourself -- but you have no Staff or County resources dedicated to these issues. You have no "upwater" pre-storm procedures; no maintenance plan in-place; and have ignored Ten Mile Canal for decades. This was a man-made disaster for Island Park that could have been avoided.

Cecil, please read the report and then step-up and help us. The Ten Mile Canal Group report includes six (6) solutions you can start working on immediately: complete it, maintain it, reassume SFWMD, divert water, modify permitting, and holdback/regulate upwater outflows especially when storms are coming. We want your help, we welcome it. This is life-or-death to my neighbors and our Community.

I know it is easy to attack me personally. This email you sent out yesterday went to hundreds of Island Park residents using the County's website database, and took hours of Staff time and County resources to put together. Couldn't you just have worked on our issues instead? Couldn't you just have reached out to us? Couldn't you have just made any attempt to resolve these issues, rather than attacking us by means of a disgruntled email from the Chairman of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners?

Lisa Absher
Island Park Citizens.org

FIGHT THE FLOODS!!

ISLAND PARK CITIZENS Mission Statement: This is a group for those affected by the Island Park Neighborhood Floods on 8/26 and 9/10/2017. Our purpose is to pressure Lee County for a SOLUTION to these floods and better water management for our neighborhood – and to be a central source of information between Lee County, other Agencies, and the Citizens of Island Park.

TEN MILE CANAL: 70 square miles of water goes into a funnel, then into an unfinished canal, that has been ignored for 40 years, and disproportionately threatens the Island Park community.

On Fri, Aug 31, 2018 at 4:58 PM Dist2, Cecil Pendergrass <dist2@leegov.com> wrote:

Dear Island Park Residents,

I am Cecil Pendergrass, Chairman of the Lee Board of County Commission, District 2. As a flood victim myself, I am fully aware of your hardship and the crisis that was felt in your community last year during the heavy rain event in late August and Hurricane Irma that soon followed. I am truly sorry.

I have been involved since these extreme rain events hit Lee County by communicating with the residents, working with Lee County staff in various departments and in the County Manager's office, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and the six municipalities within the County. As Chairman and Board member of the County Commission, my highest responsibility remains within my vote during our Board meetings. I have voted and approved the necessary studies and projects proposed to improve your community, and all of Lee County, so that we never have to address another flood crisis as we did last year.

Unfortunately, it has been brought to my attention from other Island Park residents, that your spokesperson, Lisa Absher, has taken it upon herself to hold a meeting this past weekend regarding very important issues in your community. This concerns me as Chairman of the Board of County Commission, who has the responsibility and authority to approve policy decisions on County projects, as I was not invited.

I have been afforded the opportunity to speak to many communities and groups throughout the County, especially some Island Park residents, specifically discussing the County's flood prevention efforts (and with very positive outcome). It is most disheartening that Ms. Absher has failed to include me, one of your Lee County representatives, in her discussion.

As I did not learn of this meeting until the very last minute from other residents, I was unable to attend due to prior commitments that same day. What is most alarming is that not only was Ms. Absher reluctant to invite me to this seemingly informational meeting covering County issues, but also she

chose to invite some individuals that have no knowledge, direct involvement or authority over County projects and initiatives. The flooding tragedy that you and your neighbors experienced should not be politicized. As one of your elected County Commissioners, I will always work to protect your community and all of Lee County.

I was also informed that Lisa relayed to some residents that the County has not responded to the bids for the Ten Mile Canal Sediment Removal being done in the area. Please see the below timeline, which refutes Ms. Absher's claim.

- 6/25/18 Received approved agreement from NRCS (necessary for review of the County's project bid specifications)
- 6/25/18 Kick-off meeting with NRCS staff in order to define process
- 6/26/18 Submitted bid specifications and plans to NRCS for review
- Numerous iterations ensued, with multiple interactions between NRCS and the County's vendor and staff
- 7/29/18 Advertised project for bid prior to final approval of bid specs; County decided to proceed with advertisement even though we did not have official final approval from NRCS because only small details were outstanding.
- 7/30/18 Received final approval of the bid document

Phase 3 portion of the Board's plan for flood-mitigation plans involves a study to determine long-term flood improvement projects. We selected a joint team in Aim Engineering and Johnson Engineering to conduct this Phase 3. Detailed scope of work and contract negotiations have been underway to ensure the needs of the community are addressed. Concurrently, Lee County staff has been meeting with their counterparts in the surrounding cities and SFWMD to include their concerns and issues into the planned effort. Also included in the plan, is a large database of citizen input collected from the County's online flood questionnaire. There will be further opportunities for public participation as we progress, with an anticipating for this fall.

In order to show you that your County government is in fact responsive, please see the attachments which include email correspondence of this information being shared with Ms. Absher. Unfortunately, she, as your spokesperson, is not passing it onto you. Please also know, when emailing two or more County Commissioners, as Ms. Absher continued to do, the Florida Sunshine Law prohibits our office from responding directly to one another.

I stand supportive of your community and will continue to vote for County projects that reduce water flows to your area. I believe you and your fellow citizens throughout Lee County have elected me to represent you and to make policy decisions with your best interest in mind. I will continue that philosophy and work with you. Please feel free to contact my office directly at dist2@leegov.com or 239-533-2227 for factual and up-to-date information. We will resolve these issues by working together!

Have a safe and Happy Labor Day,

Commissioner Cecil L Pendergrass, Chairman

Lee County Board of County Commissioners District 2

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Please note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from County Employees and officials regarding County business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communication may be subject to public disclosure.

Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.