

From: candrews5643@comcast.net [mailto:candrews5643@comcast.net]

Sent: Friday, September 01, 2017 3:36 PM

To: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>

Cc: Cindy Andrews <candrews5643@comcast.net>

Subject: Proposed Fire Fee for Venice Residents

Dear MAYOR AND city Council Members,

I am emailing youall to ask that you not vote for or against the proposed Venice fire Fee until the matter has been fully vetted by a citizens stakeholders group. This would be, I think, a very fair way to proceed on behalf of Venice residents especially given the magnitude and importance of such a matter.

Thank you for serving and for your consideration of my request,
Cynthia Andrews, Venice Resident

Sent from XFINITY Connect Mobile App

From: John Holic

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 7:50 PM

To: Diane Guardiano <dguar254@gmail.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Re: Fire Department Tax

Dear Ms. Guardiano,

On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments.

Sincerely,

John Holic

Mayor, City of Venice

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From: Diane Guardiano <dguar254@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 6:46 PM

Subject: Fire Department Tax

To: City Council <citycouncil@venicegov.com>

To the Mayor and City Council

The people of Venice are burden enough with Venice City Taxes among them. We are mainly retired people and cannot afford any more taxes. We don't even have a Venice zip code.

This is Venice Florida not New York City. Our homes are worthless we have them on the market for more than a year because of the already high taxes and now you want to increase it more.

Get responsible with your budget and find another way.

Diane Guardiano
254 Padova Way

From: John Holic
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 7:53 PM
To: ruthwheatley@comcast.net; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>
Cc: Moeckel, John <jcminfl@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Fire fee resolution

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wheatley,
On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments.
Sincerely,
John Holic
Mayor, City of Venice

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From: ruthwheatley@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 6:34 PM
Subject: Fire fee resolution
To: City Council <citycouncil@venicegov.com>
Cc: Moeckel, John <jcminfl@yahoo.com>

I am writing in regard to the Fire fee proposal. There appears to be substantial grey areas as proposed. I feel the City Council should put this on hold and let the stake holder group present their recommendations. Thank you, Shelby and Ruth Wheatley, 197 Treviso Ct., N. Venice, FL

From: John Holic

Sent: Friday, September 01, 2017 9:02 AM

To: Emilio Carlesimo <emiliocc@outlook.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Re: Fire Fee

Dear Mr. Carlesimo,

On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments.

Sincerely,

John Holic

Mayor, City of Venice

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From: Emilio Carlesimo <emiliocc@outlook.com>

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2017 8:34:05 AM

To: City Council

Subject: Fire Fee

Good Morning Mayor Holic,

As a retired firefighter and emergency medical technician, I obviously support a robust emergency response capability. As an experienced Venice city council member, I also understand the realities and constraints our government faces in funding these critical services. Such funding must be collected fairly and equitably.

The current Fire Assessment Fee, as proposed by Mike Burton and Erick van Maissen of Stantec consulting to Venice City Council really misses the mark. If implemented, it will result in excessive charges to both single family and multi-family residences. The charges to single-family homes are based on the value of the structures and extra features (pool, dock, etc.). The value of the land is not included. Condos and most multi-families are being assessed the fire fee based on Just Value which includes the value of the land. This discriminatory approach results in excessive fire assessments to those owners. For example: a 750 sq. ft. condo in a building on the Intracoastal Waterway pays the same amount as a 3,900 sq. ft. single family home far inland. The value of the land for the condos, which often represents a larger share of the total assessed value, is being included in the fire assessment. This disparity is just one of the problems.

The Fire Assessment Fee does address the issue of organizations that don't presently bare costs associated with emergency services.

Currently, emergency services are funded through ad valorem taxation that is controlled under a different set of guidelines. All homeowners are equally represented. With a Fire Assessment Fee, our taxes will remain the

same (or increase) while the fee is collected separately. In some cases, homeowners could face what amounts to a 25% increase.

I feel certain that the Venice City Council members were not adequately informed by the consultants on the unintended consequences put on all home owners. Perhaps correcting these disparities in a fair and equitable manner is enough to support the robust emergency response we have all come to expect. Council has used stakeholder input in resolving these types of issues in the past and was quite effective in setting water, sewer, solid waste and recycling rates.

The consultants even failed to “fence” the fees for emergency services use only, essentially making this assessment appear, to some, to be a discretionary slush fund for council with no accountability to taxpayers.

Emilio Carlesimo

PS: Not necessary to respond.

Emilio

Home: 941-484-3111

Cell: 941-525-7934

From: Jerry Jasper [mailto:jjaspernc@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 11:12 AM

To: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>

Cc: Lori Stelzer <LStelzer@Venicegov.com>; Edward Lavalley <ELavalley@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Fire Fee & Stakeholders Group

Mayor and City Council Members,

Your decision on September 7 should not be a matter of whether or not to pass a Fire Fee but to make certain that you and the citizens of Venice have a clear understanding as to what this fee does and does not do as well as how it individually affects the various types of property owners living within the City of Venice. For example, the consultant recently suggested changes to make the fee "fairer" to owners of certain types of structures to only learn later that the proposed fix is in itself, flawed. There are many other examples of misunderstandings and yes, misstatements, which need to be fully vetted. I submit that even you, as Mayor and City Council Members, are not completely clear on all the details on how this Fire Fee would affect our residents. Until you are totally comfortable this Resolution treats all property owners fairly and equitably, it should not be passed.

Hopefully, on September 7, you will establish a Stakeholders Group which will consist of homeowners affected in different ways by the Fee, i.e. those living in condos, mobile home parks, established neighborhoods such as those on the Island and in newer developments like those found in northeast Venice. **This is a good thing.** This Group should have the latitude to look at how best to fund the fire department.

The second thing that will no doubt be considered at this meeting is the passing of the Fire Fee Resolution but the "recovery" amount be reduced from the proposed 50% to something less such as 10%, 20% or 25%, letting the Stakeholders Group "tweak" the Resolution over the coming year. **This is a bad thing.** It's not the "50% recovery" number that's the problem. It's the process. Whether the assessment is 10% or 50%, the Fire Fee Resolution as presently written is flawed and needs to be thoroughly scrutinized before it is in any way imposed on the citizens of Venice.

In summary, please take the time to get it right. Contrary to the feelings of some, the City is not "broke" and can easily withstand another year of general fund financing of the Fire Department, especially if the millage rate remains at its present 3.6 mils.

Sincerely,

Jerry Jasper
130 Burano Ct.
North Venice, FL

From: Fred [mailto:fbaughman15@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 11:29 AM
To: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>
Cc: elavalee@venicegov.com
Subject: Fire Fee

I am writing in response to the proposed Fire Fee. This fee was not properly vetted and presented to the Citizens of Venice. A thorough study of fire department funding needs to be done and involve representatives from all stake holder groups. Until that is accomplished any idea of a fire Fee should be put on HOLD. I would be willing to serve on any group you organize.

Fred Baughman
305 Martellago Drive
North Venice, FL 34275
781-424-7360

From: John Moeckel [mailto:jcminfl@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 1:16 PM

To: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>; Edward Lavalley <ELavalley@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Re: Venice Fire Fee

Dear Mayor Holic and City Council,

I understand that city council will meet on September 7 to make some decisions on how to proceed with the Fire Fee.

I would like to encourage you to put the Fire Fee on hold and create the Stakeholder Group that has been discussed. After a fully vetted study by this group then I believe a better decision can be made by you and one that would be embraced by the majority of Venice citizens.

I believe the Fee Fire as presently written is flawed and needs to be thoroughly scrutinized before it is in any way imposed on Venice citizens. Simply reducing the percentage of recovery and tweaking is not the answer.

Again, thank you for your kind consideration.

John Moeckel, Citizen of Venice.

From: LEWIS PERRY [mailto:lperry45@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 12:12 PM
To: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>
Subject: Fire Fee

Dear Council Members,

My wife and I reside at 317 Montelluna Dr., N. Venice since 2004.

We would like the Council to establish a Stakeholders Group of homeowners that are affected in different ways by the Fire Fee, to conduct a study and come back with recommendations to the Council.

Our second request , would be to put on hold any vote regarding the recovery amount percentages until the Stakeholder Group has submitted their recommendations.

This is a very important issue to all of us and there is no need to push forward on it until all voices are heard.

Thank you for all the time and effort you all do in seeing that Venice maintains it's " Welcome to Paradise " reputation with sound fiscal management.

Respectfully

Lewis and Pamela Perry

317 Montelluna Dr.

From: John Holic

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 1:59 PM

To: Delores <pdglatz@aol.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Re: Proposed Fire Fee

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Glatz,

On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments. Just to set the record straight, City Hall was just recently re-roofed and the roofing company was back out today to address the issues.

Sincerely,

John Holic

Mayor, City of Venice

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From: Delores <pdglatz@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 12:45 PM

Subject: Proposed Fire Fee

To: City Council <citycouncil@venicegov.com>

To all council members,

We have attended almost all of the public comment meetings as well as committee meetings on the proposed fire fee. We have also spoken at a public hearing to address concerns with the planned implementation. Based on the latest meeting and the comments of council, we would like to voice our support in not imposing a residential fire fee.

There have been enough issues brought out about the methodology of the fee and how it would be imposed to show that it is not an equitable fee. There are concerns with the condos in the area, land values on and off the island, and the significant burden this would be placed on the taxpayers of the city. The fee would also be non ad valorem and would not be deductible for tax purposes increasing the burden to taxpayers. It was also stated the fee was a way to stabilize revenues as values change from year to year. Based on our own property tax record from Sarasota, it shows the value on the buildings and structures of our property also change yearly, both up and down. It appears the methodology used does not really address this issue.

It has become evident in the discussions that the city has not properly accounted for city assets and provided reserve funds for replacement and improvements, yet still has spent money on numerous special studies and consultants, funded the trolley, and used general funds for issues other than support of the city departments and their current needs to provide ongoing services to the taxpayers. The leaks in city hall during the latest meeting indicate the fire and police facilities are not the only ones not receiving due maintenance. We understand that many of the depreciation issues have been addressed and are now in the current budgeting process. We also understand the city is pursuing impact fees on new development which could flow to fire and police services. We agree with Mr. Cautero that the city should not implement a fee at the present time and should implement a citizens committee to further address these issues. We would disagree with comments by Mr. McKeon that we need to do something now and change it later. Based on the majority of residents who have spoken out against this fee, we

feel this would be a mistake on the part of the city and create more ill will between the residents and council.

We believe the services should continue to be funded out of the general fund and that the city should be required to live within the constraints of a budget as do all of the taxpayers. We would much rather see a mileage increase to the general fund instead of setting up special fees. Today's discussion is about a fire fee but one suspects discussions about a police fee will not be far behind. We have to admit that our faith in council's ability to budget and live within the budget is in question.

Thank you for service and willingness to hear our thought and concerns.

Paul and Delores Glatz
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

FIRE ASSESMENT FEE

Re: City of Venice Letter dated July 20, 2017

Firstly, I am wondering why this Public Hearing is on a weekday at 9AM and not in the evening, when most residence cannot attend since they have to work.

Secondly, the letter is all legalese and a bit hard to comprehend, can someone put it into simpler terms and language?

Thirdly, all of the charts and figures appear to be creative accounting, it would be helpful for someone in the city's accounting dept. to put the figures into more understandable order.

The following is regarding statements, questions, etc. contained in the above noted letter from the City

- Para. #1 sentence #1 Says "The City of Venice (the "City") then goes further stating "against certain real property located within the city limits". Nokomis is not within the "city limits" so is it exempt?
- Explain the two tier apportionment, the document is a bit confusing.
- Is the fee based on "parcels" and "structures" or both?
- The chart shows proposed assessments which I cannot figure out then the next para. Says "the maximum annual fire protection assessment for the above parcel for Fiscal year 2018 is \$257.46, what about the parcel and how is that computed? It appears to be creative accounting.
- How is the maximum amount after 2018 computed which is double the 2017 amount?
- Why will it be imposed covertly "without further notice" the public should be advised?
- Why are the city expenses included in administering and collecting the assessment, since the County Tax Collector is collecting the fee and there is no more administration required than there are now?
- FAQ #1 If the city didn't have a dedicated funding source how was the fire dept. funded?
- FAQ #4 More creative accounting regarding the .5000 mill property tax reduction please explain. Trim Notice: Now assessment is called tax. What is Mill going to be based on Market Value or Assessed Value? If fire assessments not adopted Council "may consider adopting an operating millage at a rate of", what is the difference between adopting and adopting?
- FAQ # 6 Back to Tier1 and Tier 2 Is a single base rate (Tier 1) and replacement cost (Tier2) added together? Why now does it say "replacement cost" and not assessed or market value as it previously did?
- FAQ # 11 What is the percentage of the discount?
- FAQ #13 Why are the governmental agencies exempt especially the state and Federal if they are in the city limits, don't they receive the same fire protection? What are "other Properties"?

I would appreciate the following information so I can see why the assessment is required"

1. Last year's fire protection budget and expenditures
2. Salaries
3. Broken down general operating costs
4. New operating cost with new assessment funding.
5. Vehicle depreciation

Gerard Viverito
204 Alfero Way
Nokomis FL 34275

EMAIL: Rev 308@AOL.COM



W. VENICE
[Handwritten diagram of a rectangle with an 'X' inside and an arrow pointing to it with the text 'LAWYER DR']

CITY OF VENICE
401 W. Venice Avenue Venice, FL. 34285
(941) 486-2626 Fax (941) 480-3031

July 20, 2017



VIVERITO GERARD
VIVERITO MARCIA
204 ALFERO WAY *S-1197/T-3
NOKOMIS, FL 34275-3344

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER IMPOSITION AND COLLECTION OF
FIRE PROTECTION SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS
****THIS IS NOT A BILL******

CITY OF VENICE PARCEL NO.: 0391030080
204 ALFERO WAY NOKOMIS, FL 34275

Dear Property Owner:

The City of Venice (the "City") is in the process of establishing a supplemental dedicated funding source for the provision of fire protection services and facilities through the imposition of non-ad valorem assessments, sometimes referred to as special assessments, against certain real property located within the City limits. The special assessments, if approved by the City Council, will be allocated among assessable tax parcels according to a two tiered methodology pursuant to which a portion of the costs attributable to the City's continual readiness to provide fire protection services will be shared equally among all tax parcels on a per parcel basis (Tier 1), and a portion of the remaining costs will be allocated in accordance with the value of improvements or structures associated with each parcel (Tier 2).

A public hearing will be held at 9:00 a.m. on August 21, 2017 in City Council Chambers at City Hall, 401 W. Venice Avenue, Venice, Florida 34285, to receive public comment on the proposed special assessments. All affected property owners have a right to appear at the hearing and to file written objections with the City within twenty days of this notice. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at the hearing, such person will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be made. Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at (941) 882-7390.

The total annual fire protection assessment revenue to be collected within the City for Fiscal Year 2018 is estimated to be \$4,210,000. The amount of the annual fire assessment imposed against each property is based on a two-tiered apportionment method whereby a portion of the City's annual fire department budget is allocated equally among all parcels on a per parcel

basis (Tier 1) and the remaining portion of the budget to be funded through the assessment is apportioned based on the value of structures on each parcel (Tier 2), measured in increments of \$5,000 each of which comprise an equivalent benefit unit ("EBU"). Undeveloped property is not subject to Tier 2. Information concerning the amount of the assessment proposed for the above-referenced parcel is included below.

Benefit Tier	Assessment Unit	Applicable to	Maximum Rate for FY 2018	Maximum Potential Rate for each fiscal year thereafter	Assessment Units for this Parcel
Tier 1	Per Parcel	All Parcels – Improved and Unimproved	\$93.92 Per Parcel	\$187.84 Per Parcel	1
Tier 2	Per \$5,000 of Structure Value, rounded down to nearest \$5,000 (EBU)	Improved Parcels	\$4.81 Per EBU	\$9.63 Per EBU	34

The maximum annual fire protection assessment for the above parcel for Fiscal Year 2018 is \$257.46. For fiscal years after 2018, the maximum annual fire protection assessment which may be imposed without further notice is \$515.26.

The special assessment is an annual assessment which will continue from year to year. For Fiscal Year 2018 and each year thereafter, the assessment will be collected by the Sarasota County Tax Collector pursuant to the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, commencing in November, 2017. The annual assessment amount will include expenses incurred by the City in administering and collecting the assessment including fees imposed by the County property appraiser and tax collector, and will be adjusted as necessary to account for any statutory discounts which are necessitated when employing the efficiencies of collecting the assessments annually on the same bill as property taxes. Florida law provides that failure to pay the assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the assessed property which may result in a loss of title. Unless proper steps are initiated in a court of competent jurisdiction to secure relief within 20 days from the date of City Council action at the above hearing (including the method of apportionment, the rate of assessment and the imposition of assessments), such action shall be the final adjudication of the issues presented.

If there is a mistake on this notice, it will be corrected. If you have any questions regarding your fire protection assessment, please contact the Finance Department at (941) 882-7421, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

*******DO NOT SEND PAYMENT - THIS IS NOT A BILL*******



CITY OF VENICE FIRE ASSESSMENT FISCAL YEAR 2018 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The information in this document has been prepared to answer some of the questions property owners may have regarding the City's proposed fire assessment program.

1. What is the purpose of the proposed fire assessment?

The fire assessment will be used to pay costs and expenses incurred by the City each year in providing fire protection services, facilities, and programs. For the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2017 ("Fiscal Year 2018"), the City is considering funding 50% of its fire protection costs with proceeds of the fire assessment. The balance of costs will be paid with General Fund revenues. The City has never had a dedicated funding source to pay for fire protection services and facilities and replacement of aging Fire Department equipment, vehicles and stations. The assessment would provide the necessary funding to enhance the department's overall level of service to properties in the City.

2. Why is the City considering the creation of a fire assessment?

The fire assessment program will provide the City of Venice:

- a) A more diversified revenue base for the City's governmental activities,
- b) A dedicated revenue stream for Fire Department operating expenses, capital acquisition, and replacement costs,
- c) The ability to assess properties currently exempt from ad valorem taxes which do not contribute to the cost of providing fire services,
- d) A way to free up General Fund and One-Cent Sales Taxes revenues for other needed projects, and
- e) A revenue source that is less vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy than the city's ad valorem taxes.

3. Do other governments have a "Fire Assessment Program" to fund fire service?

Yes. Fire services are funded through assessment programs in many cities and counties throughout Florida.

4. Will my ad valorem property taxes go down in equal proportion to the fire assessment?

No, considering the need for additional funds dedicated for Fire Department expenses, an equal reduction in property taxes would not provide the needed additional funds. However, the City is considering a partial offset to the ad valorem millage of a .5000 mill reduction combined with a 50% fire cost recovery assessment.

In June 2017, the City Council determined the preliminary maximum operating millage rate of 3.6000 for the upcoming fiscal year 2018, or \$3.60 per \$1,000 of assessed value on each City parcel. However, in the budget workshop on June 29, 2017, the City Council indicated their intent to consider lowering the operating millage rate by .5000 to 3.1000 if the proposed fire protection assessments are adopted as contemplated.

TRIM Notice Information:

- In August-September, all property owners in the City will receive the annual "Notice of Proposed Property Taxes" also called a TRIM notice (Truth-in-Millage) from the Sarasota County Property Appraiser. This notice includes the proposed taxes to be assessed by each taxing authority, dates of public hearings and Market Value and Assessed Value of your property. This TRIM notice will include the preliminary 3.6000 maximum millage rate for the City of Venice. However,
 - If the fire protection assessments are adopted, City Council may consider adopting an operating millage rate of 3.1000 (subject to final approval by City Council at its budget hearings set for September 13 and September 27, 2017, both beginning at 5:01 p.m).
 - If the fire protection assessments are not adopted, City Council may consider adopting an operating millage rate of 3.6000 (subject to final approval by City Council at its budget hearings set for September 13 and September 27, 2017, both beginning at 5:01 p.m).

5. How will the City address the Fire Department's capital needs?

- If the fire assessment is approved the capital needs are incorporated within the Fire Department's budget.
- If the fire assessment is not approved the Fire Department will compete with other departments' capital needs appropriated within the One-Cent Sales Tax Fund.

6. How is the fire assessment calculated for each property?

The methodology currently under consideration by the City apportions costs to properties based on the concept of availability for response. Under this methodology all parcels, improved and unimproved, pay a single base rate (Tier 1). All developed properties would also pay a second charge proportional to the replacement cost of the structure, which is determined by the Sarasota County Property Appraiser (Tier 2). Structure value is defined as the sum total of Building and Extra Feature Values as prepared by the Property Appraiser. This is considered to be the most uniform and cost efficient method to establish the replacement cost.

In order to fund 50% of the Fire Department budget through the fire assessment for Fiscal Year 2018, the proposed rates of assessment are \$93.92 per parcel for Tier 1 and \$4.81 per \$5,000 of structure value for Tier 2. Individual total assessments for fire protection will vary depending on each property.

7. Who actually pays the special assessments?

Assessments are the responsibility of the owner of the property subject to the assessment. So, each landowner will pay the assessment in a fashion similar to paying their real estate taxes.

8. What period of time does the fire assessment cover and when will the assessment be payable?

The fire assessment is re-imposed annually and will cover the City's fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). The assessment for each fiscal year will be collected on the property tax bill mailed in November, beginning in November 2017. The assessment is payable, as part of your tax bill, each year between November 1 and March 31.

9. What will happen if I do not pay the fire assessment?

Because the City is using the tax bill collection method, Florida law requires that all ad valorem taxes and accompanying assessments be paid at the same time. If you do not pay your taxes and assessments, the Sarasota County Tax Collector will issue a tax certificate against your property, which may eventually result in a loss of title.

10. I don't pay taxes now due to homestead exemption? Will I have to pay the fire assessments?

Yes. Assessments are different than ad valorem taxes and the fire assessment applies to all residential property uses regardless of homestead exemption. The concept of an assessment allocates the cost of the service to all properties that benefit from the service.

11. I received a discount for early payment of my taxes. Will I receive the same discount for my fire assessment?

Yes. The same discounts and penalties applicable to ad valorem taxes will also apply to the fire assessment.

12. Is the special assessment deductible like taxes?

Property owners should consult their tax advisors for income tax treatment.

13. Are any properties exempt from the assessment program?

Property owned by governmental entities (County, City, State, & Federal) and other properties which may be exempt from the payment of special assessments under state or federal law will not be subject to the fire assessments. All other properties will be assessed.

14. If the information contained on the fire assessment notice is incorrect, how do I get it corrected?

If information on the notice is incorrect, a correction request should be made to Linda Senne, Finance Director, 401 W. Venice Ave, Venice, Florida 34285 or at 941-882-7421. Staff will research any issues and make corrections to the fire assessment information before certifying it to the Tax Collector for placement on the tax bill.

15. What will happen at the public hearing scheduled for August 21, 2017?

The City Council will hear comments from the public regarding the imposition and collection of the fire protection assessments. After receiving comments, the City Council will finalize its decision regarding imposition of the fire assessment as well as the rates of assessment.

Should you have any questions regarding the fire assessment, please call the Finance Department at, 941-882-7421, Monday – Friday between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Information relating to the fire assessment program can also be obtained from the City's website at: www.venicegov.com

From: Red308 [<mailto:red308@aol.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 12:35 PM
To: Lori Stelzer <LStelzer@Venicegov.com>
Subject: Re: Stantec - Fire Fee

Lori

Thanks for the documents.

I saw in today's Venice Section of Herald Tribune that the mayor now agrees in principle with the correspondence I've been sending him. It says that he has lost confidence in Stantec, I never had any confidence in them and believe that because of the poor job they did they should return at least half their fee to the city.

Thanks Again

Gerard Viverito

-----Original Message-----

From: Lori Stelzer <LStelzer@Venicegov.com>
To: Red308 <red308@aol.com>
Cc: John Holic <JHolic@Venicegov.com>
Sent: Tue, Aug 29, 2017 8:46 am
Subject: Stantec - Fire Fee

Mr. Viverito,

Per your request, attached are the documents pertaining to Stantec, which was formally known as Burton & Associates. Thank you.

Lori Stelzer, MMC
City Clerk
City of Venice
401 W. Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
941-882-7390
941-480-3031 (FAX)

From: John Holic
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 1:43 PM
To: Mary Kean <maryskean@msn.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>
Cc: Dennis Kean <denniswkean@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Greatly Disappointed

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Kean,
On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments.
Sincerely,
John Holic
Mayor, City of Venice

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From: Mary Kean <maryskean@msn.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 12:02 PM
Subject: Greatly Disappointed
To: City Council <citycouncil@venicegov.com>
Cc: Dennis Kean <denniswkean@msn.com>

We relocated to Venice upon retirement. Sadly, the many positives which drew us here three years ago have slowly eroded with each decision made by City Council. The Council has exhibited no attempt to get the Venice House in improved financial order, a goal we are all forced to achieve in our own household budgets in order to sustain financial solvency. Preplanned travel prevented our presence at August 21 Fire Fee Public Hearing. Why is Venice City Council even discussing drawing spare \$275,000 (or \$500,000 over 2 yrs) from 301 funding to spend on low income housing instead of applying these funds toward capital needs of the fire department? Such decisions by Venice City Council will leave taxpayers like ourselves with no alternative but to relocate elsewhere rather than continue to fund this extravagant folly.

Respectfully,

Mary and Dennis Kean

From: John Holic
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 8:34 AM
To: Red308 <red308@aol.com>; earle.kimel@heraldtribune.com
Cc: City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>
Subject: Re: Fire assessmenta and Venetian walk

Dear Mr. Viverito,
On behalf of Venice City Council, thank you for your comments.
Sincerely,
John Holic
Mayor, City of Venice

From: Red308 <red308@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2017 3:27 PM
To: John Holic; earle.kimel@heraldtribune.com
Subject: Fire assessmenta and Venetian walk

Dear Mr. Mayor
Attached find my letter regarding the shortfall for Venetian walk.
I sent you a letter regarding the Council hearing requesting answers to some of my questions and concerns that has gone unanswered, are you going to respond?
Sincerely
Gerrard Viverito

From: John Holic

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 8:27 AM

To: Red308 <red308@aol.com>

Cc: earle.kimel@heraldtribune.com; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>; Edward Lavallee <ELavallee@Venicegov.com>; Linda Senne <LSenne@Venicegov.com>; David Persson <dpersson@swflgovlaw.com>; Joe Welch <JWelch@Venicegov.com>; Shawn Carvey <SCarvey@Venicegov.com>

Subject: Re: Fire Assesment

Dear Mr. Viverito,

Please excuse the delay in responding to your questions. Although I can usually find time to read all email received on a daily basis, I can rarely find time to respond, especially when emails are lengthy and involve multiple departments for the information.

I will answer what I can and have copied several additional departments that may find time to address the areas I did not feel comfortable answering. My answers will be directly under your questions and will appear in red. Others that answer may use different colors, but no other council member should respond to this group letter as it may be considered as a Sunshine Law violation. Additionally, if you find time to attend or tune into the August 28, 2017 Fire Fee meeting at 9 a.m., some of your questions may be answered there as well.

Your original letter and my letter with answers are both attached.

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

John Holic

From: Red308 <red308@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 23, 2017 12:04 PM

To: John Holic

Cc: earle.kimel@heraldtribune.com

Subject: Fire Assesment

Dear Mayor,

I am attaching my letter that was prompted by my attendance at the Aug. 21st Fire Assessment hearing.

It would be appreciated if you would like to comment on my questions and observations.

I am not trying to be sarcastic just a concerned, involved and helpful resident of Venice.

Mr. Kimel

I would appreciatre your responses to my questions regading your article in the HT on Aug.22nd.

Thank both of you in advance for your time.

Gerard Viverito

Gerard Viverito
204 Alfero Way
Nokomis, FL. 34275
Email: red308@aol.com

City of Venice
401 W. Venice Ave.
Venice, FL. 34285
ATTN: Mr. John Holic Mayor
Re: August 22, 2017
Fire Assessment Public Hearing

August 22, 2017

Dear Mr. Mayor,

You may or may not remember me, I am the individual who was seated in the front of the chamber and could not speak when you came to greet me and I asked you, with the use of an electro lrynx and hoped you understood me, why was this hearing at 9AM when most people work and not 7PM when most residence would be able to attend. That aside I don't believe you gave me a response other than the first hearing last month was at 7PM.

Unfortunately, I also have a bit of a hearing problem so I would like to apologize up front for anything I may not have hear correctly and/or misunderstood.

The following are some of my observations, concerns, questions and comments based on the hearing I attended on Aug.21st:

First off I must tell you that I am not at all impressed with your consultant "Stantec".

I would appreciate knowing if an RFP was issued to a number of consultants or did you just arbitrarily select Stantec?

If an RFP was issued I would like to see it and also see all the responses to it from the other consultants that submitted proposals and finally your position and reasoning for selecting Stantec.

Call it what you may this assessment is a tax (it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck so guess what) and as such this is typical of liberal government, increase government spending than increase taxes to pay for it.

After sitting through the hearing I was somewhat upset as to what I observed and heard. Your City Manager Ed Lavallee appeared totally disinterested in the public speakers comments. I was sitting right next to him and observed that during the entire Two (2) hour proceeding he was on his notebook (or IPAD) and didn't pay any attention to what was happening or any of the speakers. Other than yourself, who was completely involved with the speakers, the rest of the council didn't appear too interested in the public's opinions and seemed to have their minds made up at this point in time as to how they are going to vote in September.

Your council member Bob Daniels mentioned (I could have heard this incorrectly) that the Fire Dept. could be bankrupt, bankruptcy is often caused by mismanagement from the top (remember the feet only goes where the head tells it to) and if not bankruptcy it's definitely poor management and disregard for budgeting cash flow and revenue streams. In private industry if a company goes bankrupt they declare Chapter 11 and try to reorganize, I suggest that the fire Dept. do the same and also do

some internal analysis and investigation to determine how it can reorganize to save without burdening the public or the City's General Fund.

FYI, I was recruited to reorganize a public construction company in bankruptcy and as such we were not able to spend any money without first getting approval from the trustee and the court. It was watched so closely we even needed to get approval from the trustee and the court to even purchase toilet paper, so I think a closer handle on expenditures or and/or an overseer for the Fire Dept. is required.

Being in the development and construction industry for over 50 years I often faced issues where residential, commercial and hospitality projects were over budget but we did not pass any increased cost on to the ultimate end user we value engineered the developments to reduce the cost and bring it into budget without sacrificing the quality of the product or impacting the life safety of the occupants.

Unfortunately, that is the best example I can give you based on the industry I was in.

The Fire Dept. today could do and could have done over the past years the following:

- Keep, review and update their yearly budget quarterly or as required and modify it as needed.
- Do preventive and routine maintenance on its present equipment in lieu of purchasing new.
- List deficiencies of existing equipment and get estimates on refurbishing that existing equipment.
- Conduct routine inspections, repairs and rehabilitation to the fire house when not out on a call.
- Schedule personnel so that the OT could be kept to a minimum.
- Employ volunteers to supplement the force if needed.
- Get rid of extraneous equipment and get less expensive equipment by example the Fire boat in Hegel Park that is probably in excess of \$300,000.00
- The boat is the only piece of equipment I saw and is rarely utilized so I would like to have a list of all the equipment and its age that the Fire Dept. has to see what is redundant equipment or what is of no use to them and that which the Chief wants to replace.
- See a list of all items that have been replaced over the past 4 years.
- I would also be interested to see a full accounting of the Fire Dept.'s operating budget by line item

Most items I had on my notes I gave to the Secretary and they were covered by some of the speakers however, I would still appreciate answers to the following concerns I have based on the City's letter dated July 20, 2017 which I did not or may not have heard answers to and they are:

- How is the maximum amount after 2018 computed which is double the 2017 amount?
- Why will the 2018 amount be imposed covertly "without further notice" where is the transparency, the public is entitled to be advise beforehand?
- Why are City expenses included in administering and collecting the assessment, the County Tax Collector is collecting the fee, therefore there is no more administration required by the City and/or the County than what already exists to collect the taxes?
- Why are governmental agencies exempt especially the state and Federal governments, this is called an "assessment" not a tax, if they are in the city limits they receive the same fire protection as the public so they should have the same obligation as the public.?
- What is meant by "other Properties"?

Being a brand new resident I cannot comment on the resumes, backgrounds and dedication of the present council members but from attending just one hearing I can tell you I am not at all impressed with the city

council. I believe that the council should listen and heed the requests of their constituents and not go off and propose a Fire Assessment Fee which is nothing more than a tax increase because the fire chief says he needs or wants more revenue to run his department.

By copy of this correspondence I am requesting that Earle Kimel of the Herald Tribune clear up some points he brought out in his article that appeared in the August 22, 2017 issue of the HT.

- The article states Four (4) hours of hearings, I was there and it was only Two (2) hours where and when were the other Two hours held?
- What do you mean by “sandwiched around “an executive session, was there a session that was not public?
- What was it “sandwiched around”?
- When did Stantec suggest an alternate solution? Why were not alternatives requested in the RFP and why did they not suggest a number of alternates on their own in their original proposal?
- Did the Vice Mayor request Stantec provide firmer figures? If so on what items?
- Are not the figures Stantec proposed firm?
- When did the City Manager say that the budget proposal could be scaled down, I was sitting right alongside of him and he said nothing and just continued using his notebook?

Earle,

I may be off base with some of the above however, I know I wasn't sleeping or in a coma so it would put my mind at ease if you and the Mayor clarify some of my concerns.

Please stay on top of this story and keep the public updated on anything else that may arise.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gerard Viverito

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204 Alfero Way
Nokomis, FL. 34275
Email: red308@aol.com

City of Venice
401 W. Venice Ave.
Venice, FL. 34285
ATTN: Mr. John Holic Mayor
Re: August 22, 2017
Fire Assessment Public Hearing

August 22, 2017

Dear Mr. Mayor,

You may or may not remember me, **(I do remember you and am sorry that I could not hear everything you said due to ambient noise in the Council Chamber)** I am the individual who was seated in the front of the chamber and could not speak when you came to greet me and I asked you, with the use of an electro lrynrx and hoped you understood me, why was this hearing at 9AM when most people work and not 7PM when most residence would be able to attend. That aside I don't believe you gave me a response other than the first hearing last month was at 7PM. **(When I first took office 7 years ago, we did try to hold evening meetings starting at 5 p.m. We even tried doing meetings at different locations around the city so that citizens would not have to drive as far. Our meetings tend to last 6 to 8 hours as a meeting is the only forum we have to discuss issues and stay in compliance with Sunshine Laws. Very few people attended the evening sessions as, after a work day, they were not willing to stay up until 11p.m. or perhaps 1 a.m. to attend a meeting. We actually lost audience as many people who attended day time meetings did not attend evening meetings due to having to drive after sunset. Evening meetings were also difficult on staff, especially those with young families that required a sitter as day care did not extend to evening hours. 7 years ago technology was not as advanced as today and when we held meetings at remote locations, there was no video and audio was not streamed, it was provided on CD's . About the only attendees at the remote meetings were a few residents of the neighborhood where the meeting was held. Also, very few remote locations have a hearing loop so those who were hearing impaired did not attend the meeting either).**

Unfortunately, I also have a bit of a hearing problem so I would like to apologize up front for anything I may not have hear correctly and/or misunderstood.

The following are some of my observations, concerns, questions and comments based on the hearing I attended on Aug.21st:

First off I must tell you that I am not at all impressed with your consultant "Stantec".

I would appreciate knowing if an RFP was issued to a number of consultants or did you just arbitrarily select Stantec?

If an RFP was issued I would like to see it and also see all the responses to it from the other consultants that submitted proposals and finally your position and reasoning for selecting Stantec. **(The Stantec questions will be answered by either the City Manager or the Finance Department)**

Call it what you may this assessment is a tax (it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck so guess what) and as such this is typical of liberal government, increase government spending than increase taxes to pay for it. **(The council that I have participated on for the last 7 years has been very conservative with the budget. Our revenue for the city from property taxes is still below the 2006 peak and we continue to provide a very high level of service to the tax payer. We do a line item budget review each and every year that I have served on council and I would be happy to arrange a mutually convenient time to show you how we analyze the city's expenditures).**

After sitting through the hearing I was somewhat upset as to what I observed and heard. Your City Manager Ed Lavalley appeared totally disinterested in the public speakers comments. I was sitting right next to him and observed that during the entire Two (2) hour proceeding he was on his notebook (or IPAD) and didn't pay any attention to what was happening or any of the speakers. Other than yourself, who was completely involved with the speakers, the rest of the council didn't appear too interested in the public's opinions and seemed to have their minds made up at this point in time as to how they are going to vote in September. **(I cannot comment on this as you are correct, my focus was the speakers and jotting notes on each one. I can say, however, that the regular council meetings that we hold are served by the majority of council being well prepared and engaged in the topics being discussed).**

Your council member Bob Daniels mentioned (I could have heard this incorrectly) that the Fire Dept. could be bankrupt, bankruptcy is often caused by mismanagement from the top (remember the feet only goes where the head tells it to) and if not bankruptcy it's definitely poor management and disregard for budgeting cash flow and revenue streams. In private industry if a company goes bankrupt they declare Chapter 11 and try to reorganize, I suggest that the fire Dept. do the same and also do some internal analysis and investigation to determine how it can reorganize to save without burdening the public or the City's General Fund. **(Due to current law, Council Member Daniels will not respond to this comment. I believe what Mr. Daniels referred to was the pension plans this council inherited. If we did not take the actions we took over the past several years, the pension plans would have imploded. I do not have access to the change the State of Florida made in regards to pension plans – it was about 10 years ago – that no longer made it possible to walk away from that debt or obligation. Besides, the pension is an obligation made to loyal employees and in my mind, needs to be honored. We made substantial changes to the plan to stop the bleeding, but we have not yet funded the existing liability. Part of the reason for the fire fee was to generate dedicated revenue to be used to shore up the pension plan. That liability will lessen as additional funds are added).**

FYI, I was recruited to reorganize a public construction company in bankruptcy and as such we were not able to spend any money without first getting approval from the trustee and the court. It was watched so closely we even needed to get approval from the trustee and the court to even purchase toilet paper, so I think a closer handle on expenditures or and/or an overseer for the Fire Dept. is required.

Being in the development and construction industry for over 50 years I often faced issues where residential, commercial and hospitality projects were over budget but we did not pass any increased cost on to the ultimate end user we value engineered the developments to reduce the cost and bring it into budget without sacrificing the quality of the product or impacting the life safety of the occupants. Unfortunately, that is the best example I can give you based on the industry I was in.

The Fire Dept. today could do and could have done over the past years the following:

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- The boat is the only piece of equipment I saw and is rarely utilized so I would like to have a list of all the equipment and its age that the Fire Dept. has to see what is redundant equipment or what is of no use to them and that which the Chief wants to replace.
- See a list of all items that have been replaced over the past 4 years.
- I would also be interested to see a full accounting of the Fire Dept.'s operating budget by line item(**We do all the above, however, I do not have access to the records to provide them for you. The City Manager will be able to assign that to the appropriate party. Since I have been in office, the city has started a fleet fund to depreciate equipment so that replacement down the road is covered, a building analysis and depreciation fund, a building maintenance fund, established routine inspections, hired a fleet manager to assure we do not needlessly replace vehicles – not only police and fire, but all city vehicles. I do not have access to our total fleet maintenance budget, perhaps one of the other departments copied. The boat was purchased through a grant from WCIND - West Coast Inland Navigation District – and not through the City of Venice General Fund).**

Most items I had on my notes I gave to the Secretary and they were covered by some of the speakers however, I would still appreciate answers to the following concerns I have based on the City's letter dated July 20.2017 which I did not or may not have heard answers to and they are:

- How is the maximum amount after 2018 computed which is double the 2017 amount?
(**The maximum amount is the total budget of the Fire Department, almost \$9 ½ million if, in the future, the city wished to have 100% of the Fire Department budget funded with a fire fee. It is not and was not the intent of the council to impose a 100% fire fee, but it is a requirement to show what the maximum could be. The City Manager can provide the elements that comprise the total budget).**
- Why will the 2018 amount be imposed covertly “without further notice” where is the transparency, the public is entitled to be advise beforehand? (**As stated above, there is no intent to impose a further increase in fire fee. The wording is required wording and I agree that it can be confusing).**
- Why are City expenses included in administering and collecting the assessment, the County Tax Collector is collecting the fee, therefore there is no more administration required by the City and/or the County than what already exists to collect the taxes? (**The city has already incurred expenses and will continue to do so. Each year we will obtain an updated tax listing from the Sarasota County Property Appraiser and make adjustments to the fire fee based upon the then current budget of the Fire Department and the then current taxable real estate values).**
- Why are governmental agencies exempt especially the state and Federal governments, this is called an “assessment” not a tax, if they are in the city limits they receive the same fire protection as the public so they should have the same obligation as the public.? (**Government**

agencies are traditionally exempt as their buildings are already supported from tax dollars and it would be like taking money from your left pocket and putting it in your right pocket. Other government agencies might just increase taxes to pay the fee.

- What is meant by “other Properties”? (I do not know where this verbiage came from)

Being a brand new resident I cannot comment on the resumes, backgrounds and dedication of the present council members but from attending just one hearing I can tell you I am not at all impressed with the city council. I believe that the council should listen and heed the requests of their constituents and not go off and propose a Fire Assessment Fee which is nothing more than a tax increase because the fire chief says he needs or wants more revenue to run his department. (As stated at the two August 16th meetings and the August 21 meeting, the fire fee was discussed in whole or part at 23 meetings between June, 2016 and present. The fire fee discussion began shortly after a 2 year attempt to analyze the pros and cons of consolidating the Venice Fire Department with the Sarasota County Fire Department fell apart due to faulty information on both governments’ parts. The providers of faulty information on the City of Venice part are no longer employed by the city).

By copy of this correspondence I am requesting that Earle Kimel of the Herald Tribune clear up some points he brought out in his article that appeared in the August 22, 2017 issue of the HT.

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Please stay on top of this story and keep the public updated on anything else that may arise.

Thank you.

The above are not questions to the city.

Sincerely,

Gerard Viverito