

Hi SUSAN:

FROM PETE LARKIN

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I WANTED TO PROVIDE SOME
OF OUR "LAKE" FOLKS
TALKING POINTS.

THANKS
P. Larkin

Twin Lakes Conservation – Bullet Points:

1. Our Town of Sunset Beach, NC is being offered the opportunity to have the 65-acre fresh water area know as Twin Lakes (aka the East and West Lakes along Shore Line Drive-West, and adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway) deeded at no cost over to the Town. The Town taking ownership of the "Lakes" does not necessarily equate to significant future expenditures;
 - a. Local citizens living near the Lakes have been contributing their own \$\$'s for almost 25-years to protect this important invaluable natural habitat, spending average \$10 - \$12 K/year, while trespassing on private property. This Assoc. is not a neighborhood POA with mandatory payments by members, but simply a group of voluntary contributors. Town donated about \$3.5 K/year (for a number of years) to this citizen's group lake maintenance program. The Golf Course also contributed for several years, but stopped a few years ago.
 - b. If Town took ownership of Lakes, then financial support would be available to possibly offset 50% of maintenance cost.
 - i. If Town spent \$15 - \$20K/year on maintenance (a very high end amount that exceeds what the previous Assoc. spent in past years using private donations), then \$8 - \$10K from NC State program (there are several matching fund programs available to municipalities) as matching gov't. funds only available if municipality takes ownership of Lakes, not available to private property programs. Technical support by these funding agencies can also provide the most cost effective, realistic solutions to the Lake problems, and allow for an informed approach to issuing a maintenance contract for the Twin Lakes and other lakes maintained by the Town.
 - ii. \$4K from Golf Course operations could be "suggested" by Town. The Town has much more influence over a business within the Town than a local citizen group would have, especially regarding private property VS a municipally owned property.
 - iii. Then \$3.5 - \$4K previous and future proposed Town contribution would offset total cost.
 - iv. In summary, Town would spend same \$\$ amount with or w/o Lake ownership. Therefore cost is not a reasonable argument.
 - v. Town has ability to control future maintenance budget for the Twin Lakes as each year's Town financial situation warrants. The Town would also have the authority to apply restrictions of usage on a municipally owned property.
2. Town has obligation to be far sighted and seize opportunity to embrace and protect this irreplaceable 65-acre unique fresh water natural asset for our future generations.
3. Liability insurance mentioned as "objection". Cost of insurance is only a couple thousand \$\$/year, and dwarfed by overall Town liabilities with all the other Town facilities. Therefore liability not a reasonable argument.
4. Some say that neighbors bordering the Twin Lakes should pay to maintain the Lakes. That's like saying that Bill's Seafood Store and Restaurant should pay to maintain our Town Park, or that

only those residing on the island can use our beach facilities. All our Town Citizens have the opportunity to enjoy all the Town's amenities, even though they can't see them from their homes. Another example would be ... only those Citizens living on the Town Bike Path route can use that facility. We could also individually assess homes that have had fires to support the cost of our Fire Department. The Town has an obligation to support and maintain assets for everyone to mutually enjoy and create an "umbrella" of Town controlled amenities for the common good and usage by our Citizens. The oversight of Town amenities by the governing municipality is the most appropriate way to protect the common good and reduce costs through economy of scale.

5. The Twin Lakes is one of the most important stops along our Town's "North Carolina Birding Trail" route, which attracts thousands of visitors each year, as advertised in our Sunset Beach brochure. If the Lakes are not maintained, they will soon become unusable for our fish, birds, and gators, all of which will then find other habitats in other neighboring Towns. The Town's new Bird Viewing Platform recently constructed along Shore Line Drive-West would be unused as it would overlook a large mosquito breeding ground. The Twin Lakes is the most Northern common viewing area for the rare Wood Storks. We advertise our "Birding Trail" asset to attract visitors. More visitors equate to more potential future property investors. The Town has always been very proud of the roadway sign identifying the Twin Lakes property as a "Bird Sanctuary".
6. The Town approached the Twin Lakes Conservation Assoc. (citizens group residing near the Lakes) in 2013, stating that it would be taking over control, maintenance, and ownership of the Lakes. This was not a request, but a mandate from the Town.
 - a. The Assoc. then turned over the existing \$10,422.00 funds to the Town in early 2014 in support of the transition process. Therefore, the Town has not in fact spent the reported amount of Sunset Beach funds on the Twin Lakes maintenance since they took over the program.
 - b. What has now happened to cause the Town to want to turn away from its' previous position (implied verbal responsibility) to embrace the valuable asset of these 65-acre beautiful Twin Lakes ? It proactively took over the Twin Lakes process in 2013 when it thought it had ownership of the property. Now the Town has the opportunity to gain clear ownership for free, and seems to be backing away from its' previously stated public obligation.
7. Even though the previous Twin Lakes Assoc. remains very interested in the health of the Lakes, the last few years' economic situation has now made this previously privately supported program unrealistic. It however stands ready and willing to provide detailed background support to the Town's ownership of the property.
8. Why would the Town not embrace the unique asset of Twin Lakes, and acquire (for free) this undeveloped natural setting for protection from development, and appreciation by Citizens and seasonal visitors for future generations to come ?
9. The Town's "Vision Plan", as adopted by Council, outlines to assess the future feasibility of more parks, green space, open space, all to protect sensitive areas important to maintaining our fragile coastal community character and to control development. These Lakes are unique

because of their location adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway in protecting the “open space’ concept.

10. The Twin Lakes property is specifically listed as an important Town feature in our CAMA Town Land Use Plan, as an area containing remnant species. Per the Town’s Land Use Plan, it is required to promote organized development while protecting our fragile coastal environment. The Town is also obligated in our Land Use Plan to protect or restore the quality and productivity of locations of environmental concern and other fragile areas, as well as maintain, protect and enhance water quality features of wetlands, and other aquatic locations.
11. As a crowning point ... while at the Bird Viewing Platform yesterday for less than a 1-hour period, I spoke with over 20 Town Citizens and seasonal visitors that stopped to enjoy the beautiful and irreplaceable Twin Lakes and our wonderful birds and other wildlife.