

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 13, 2021

From: Commissioner Costa Vatikiotis

To: Mayor and Board of Commissioners

Subj: Sea Level Rise, Mitigation Strategies, and Available Grants

I invited Dr. Paul Robinson to give his presentation on Sea Level Rise and Mitigation Strategies to the Commission. His presentation will be given in conjunction with the Arcadis Corporation. I first saw the presentation at a TS Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting a few months ago.

Recently, I had lunch with a retired engineer and attorney to discuss approaches for addressing sea level rise and sidewalk flooding around Spring Bayou. It was a “brain-storming” session. Their favorite approach was based on a mitigation strategy centered on traditional sheet pile seawalls and elevated sidewalks. I had asked whether they were aware of “Living Seawalls” and “Living Shorelines” and they were not. So, I thought if these industry experienced professionals were not aware of the concepts, then perhaps it may be worthwhile providing this information to the Commission and providing an opportunity to share it with the residents, as well.

We will soon be having a separate work session or an agenda item discussion concerning how to proceed in the Whitcomb Blvd and S. Spring Blvd area now that the topographical and geological surveys are complete. So, this information is timely.

“Living Seawalls” and Living Shorelines” provide the same mitigation approach as traditional sheet pile seawalls, in that they act as barriers to inundation. However, they are more ecologically friendly and are viewed more favorably in the permitting process.

I cannot say that this mitigation strategy will work everywhere in Tarpon Springs. However, they are another “tool” that we can consider in combating sea level rise in the future.

In addition to the technical aspects of the presentation, you will hear the details of available FEMA grants for combating sea level rise. These are large dollar grants that are applied for by the State based on applications provided by municipalities and counties. In any case, it is another funding source for an expensive project and funds are available

Thank you.