



March 4, 2015

**STATEMENT FROM**

**INDIAN RIVER SHORES MAYOR BRIAN BAREFOOT**

**REGARDING CONSUMER PROTECTION WORKSHOP**

**INDIAN RIVER SHORES, FLA.** – I've asked our Council to convene a Workshop on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, to discuss potential consumer protection measures that are available to our Town after our Franchise Agreement with the City of Vero Beach expires in November of 2016.

Regardless of the outcome of our ongoing mediation or our abated lawsuit, I believe our Council has a fundamental responsibility to our citizens to protect them from unfair rates and utility practices after Vero Beach's Franchise expires. If the court rules in our favor and we enter a franchise with another alternative electric service provider, we need to be in a position to ensure that the rates and practices of that provider do not harm our residents. Similarly, if the court determines that Vero Beach is to remain our electric service provider after the Franchise expires, our Council has the same duty to see that our residents are protected.

Our Franchise Agreement with Vero Beach expires in approximately 19 months, so we need to think seriously about these issues now. I've asked Mr. Terry Deason, our outside utility consultant and former chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission, to lead a Workshop discussion on some of the ways he believes the Town can be in a better position to protect our residents when the Franchise Agreement expires. One option that Mr. Deason mentioned at our last Council meeting is a proposed rate ordinance.

We look forward to discussing it and other consumer protection opportunities at the Workshop, which will begin at 8:30 a.m. next Monday. I encourage all our residents to attend.

Thank you.