

7-30-14 Lawsuit Update

In filing its lawsuit against the City of Vero Beach, the Town of Indian River Shores was required by law to abate litigation and enter into a state-mandated mediation process.

That process includes a number of public meetings, the first of which has been set for 9 a.m., Thursday, August 21, 2014, at the Community Center, 6001 A1A North, Indian River Shores. All of these meetings will be open to the public.

The first meeting is a Conflict Assessment Meeting in which the Town and City will be expected to discuss and assess issues pertaining to the Town's pending lawsuit against the City. A public meeting notice will be published in area newspapers and posted on the Town's website in the near future.

Note regarding Vero Beach Utilities Commission

The lawsuit correctly points out that Town residents have no electoral voice regarding the governance of the utility. Some have since asked about the role of the Vero Beach Utilities Commission, which includes one Town resident as a member.

The Commission is an advisory body that provides recommendations to the Vero Beach City Council, but unlike an independent utility authority, it has no decision-making power over utility operations and rates. Decisions regarding the level of rates, and the amount of utility revenues transferred to the City's general operating budget, are made exclusively by the Vero Beach City Council.

Electric Rate Comparison

After the filing of the lawsuit, we have received several questions regarding the differences in the electric rates of the City and FPL. To address these issues, attached is the Florida Municipal Electric Association's most recent comparison of residential electric rates. As you can see, the City's electric rates are approximately 31% higher than FPL's rates.