



COTI Follow-Up

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May/2008

Dear Tom,

Since many of our members are off-Island, I would like to bring you up to date on two recent issues that are of importance:

Utility Tax

As you will recall from an earlier Alert, the City had proposed an ordinance which would allow it to impose a 10% tax on resident water and electricity use. This was soundly defeated at the last meeting of City Council. Thanks to all of our members who helped us by letting the City know your opinion on this issue by email. I don't think this type of tax will resurface again. However, tax revenue available to the City will be reduced this year. Rather than cut services, COTI is encouraging the City to critically examine the budgets of each Department to identify operations that could be made more efficient.

Segway Tours On the Shared Use Paths

As you may be aware, several years ago the City found Segways to be unsafe for our shared use paths (SUP). However, it did grant an exception for operators of group tours who may wish to apply for a conditional use permit. On issuing such a permit three years ago, the Planning Commission attached strict safety reporting requirements. There have been two serious

accidents over the 36 months that this trial project has now been in operation. At a recent hearing for renewal of the conditional use permit, COTI made strong oral presentations pointing out that the safety reporting requirements had not been met and that there was serious concern associated with the presence of these devices on our congested paths. Our most pointed and forceful argument was that allowing motorized Segway tours on SUPs clearly contravenes the Sanibel Land Development Code and the Sanibel Plan. Despite our best efforts, the Commissioners voted 4 to 3 for granting a conditional use permit without any requirement for future review or reapplication. We were disappointed at the Commission's abject disregard for Sanibel regulations which are designed to maintain the sanctuary quality of our Island. I don't believe we have heard the last on this issue.

Thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Your Board of Directors

Committee of the Islands (COTI)