

WHITEMARSH RESERVE PRESERVE COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Board Request of Committee:

1. Explore the costs and process for gifting the 47-acre Preserve parcel to the County.
2. Explore the costs and process to bring the preserve into compliance with the SFWMD permit.

Committee Members:

Lisa Graff – Chair

Janet O'Brien – Member

Angela Zeman – Member

Lauren Provenzano – Member

Jim Sweat – Member

Patty D'Annolfo – Member

Gifting the Preserve to Martin County BOCC

Compliance Prior to Martin County Consideration - The County will require Whitemarsh to bring the parcel into compliance with the SFWMD permit before consideration.

Waive of Martin County Application Fee's – According to Joe Banfi, the County is willing to waive the application fee's for all the processes required for separating the Preserve from the rest of the platted community of Whitemarsh. Note: Liz and Joe met with Martin County in February 2024 to discuss this and Liz provided her summary where the County showed the costs for Martin County application fee's, NOT professional services required to prepare the site plans, engineering reports, environmental reports, arborist report, title work and permit applications.

Professional Services - The following professional services would be required for both parcels (Preserve Parcel and Replat of Whitemarsh) to go through rezoning (Preserve Parcel only), Site Plan Approval, Replatting, and permitting: Surveyor; Civil Engineer; Environmental Engineer; Attorney; Title Company; Arborist; and Planner.

Current Code Requirements - Each parcel would require a new Site Plan and be evaluated according to current code requirements. Whitemarsh was approved (with some variances/modifications) 20 years ago – we would have to be approved based on current codes. Meeting new codes may be an issue for Whitemarsh.

Costs – Whitemarsh would have to pay for the preserve to be brought into compliance in addition to paying for professional services to prepare the documents and take both

applications (Preserve Parcel Plat and Replat of Whitemarsh) through the MC approval process and permitting agencies. Between **\$210,000** and **\$290,000** based on professionals in the field of Engineering and Land Development.

Loss of Property Value/Loss of Privacy – gifting the property behind homes to the County gives the County the ability to install walking paths or any other activity which is allowed in the preserve per code. Houses are no longer adjacent to a private preserve controlled by a mutual HOA. The notes from the meeting with Liz, Joe, and the County showed they discussed the positives for the County installing walking/access/biking paths through the preserve behind the houses.

Bring Parcel into Compliance with SFWMD Permit:

Scope of Work Review - Present the proposed scope of work from Pace Environmental to Brian Randle, Compliance Environmental Reviewer at SFWMD, for his review and approval. This step must occur prior to executing the contract to ensure the restoration plan meets SFWMD requirements.

Contract Execution and Maintenance - Once the scope of work is approved by Brian Randle, execute the contract with Pace Environmental. The contract will first address restoring the wetland to compliance with SFWMD standards, followed by quarterly maintenance over a period of 2–3 years to ensure ongoing compliance.

Inspection Guarantee - Pace Environmental has agreed to include a clause stating if the initial remediation and clean-up do not pass SFWMD inspection, they will provide additional services at no charge to the HOA until the area passes inspection satisfactorily.

The total contract cost is **\$35,150**, covering:

- An initial treatment at \$7,950 to achieve compliance with SFWMD
- Quarterly maintenance over the next two years, totaling \$27,200 (\$13,600 per year)

This breaks down to approximately \$7.92 per unit per month or \$95 per unit per year, spread across 185 units over 24 months.

Recommendation:

The committee recommends moving forward with the proposed contract from Pace Environmental to restore the wetland area to compliance, subject to the conditions outlined above and per the Pace Environmental proposal.

This recommendation provides a simple, affordable, and practical solution to bring the Preserve Area into compliance with SFWMD requirements. It includes two years of quarterly maintenance for homeowners and there is an option to extend the contract to three years (recommended).

After a thorough review of all relevant documentation and clear understanding of the work to be done and the associated costs, the committee finds no compelling reason to recommend “gifting” the land to Martin County, as this would not serve the best interests of Whitemarsh property owners.

Thank you.

The Preserve Committee