

#16
MH

Page 1 Pinellas County Commission, 6/11/2024, Comments by Michael Hicks re: Westlake Village low reclaimed water pressure

My name is Michael Hicks. I am here today with my neighbors Michael Sapp and Rick White to support my comments.

I want to thank Commissioner Brian Scott for assisting me in understanding how to speak to you today.

As well, I thank him for his efforts over the past several weeks to address our needs internally with the utilities department.

We are here to request your immediate assistance with the low water pressure of our reclaimed water service in Westlake Village.

Many in our community, including myself, have contacted the Utilities Department several times over at least the past year about this problem. They have not improved upon the problem in the least during the last 18 months or so. In fact, it has become more severe.

Westlake is located in North County near Belcher Road and Nebraska Avenue and consists of roughly 650 single family homes.... on large lots.

I have submitted a Master package of materials which contains signed statements of 31 Homeowners supporting my

remarks today that for at least the past year we have not received reclaimed water at sufficient pressure to operate our in-ground sprinkler systems.

As a result, as a community, we have sustained irreparable damages to our lawns and landscaping.

Most of us have lost most of our lawns and many of our plantings.

Assuming an average lawn replacement cost of even only \$5,000 per home at 80% of our 650 homes results in an eye watering community loss of \$2,600,000.

I have included in our Master package representative photos of several damaged lawns in front yards. Most back yards are worse.

I have the following questions, comments and requests to bring to your attention.

I do not understand why or how a low "SUPPLY" of water results in low water "PRESSURE." We would be better off with no water than water at such low pressure that it will not operate our sprinkler systems. At least if we have NO water, we can pursue other solutions. This way we are caught in a web of complicated day and time restrictions as well as fines by the county AND our Homeowners Association.

We have been without pressure for at least a year. It is not responsible that we are now advised that it "may" improve by 10% in 30 days.

What are we to do with our dead lawns by then? What are we to do about our HOA fines?

Why are we continuing to be charged \$63 bi-monthly for a "service/product" that is not being provided to us?

This constitutes 28% of my bi-monthly water bill (copy attached). Is that even legal, let alone morally responsible?

For example, one would not continue to pay for monthly cable TV if one's cable did not provide the programming for which one was paying.

It is inexplicable that reclaimed water meters are presently being installed in our community when there is such low flow to measure.

Respectfully, I ask, "How much more can we be charged for a service we are not receiving?" This money should instead be devoted to fix our low pressure.

Why were so many homes permitted to be added to the system that its design capability was exceeded thus depriving both existing customers as well as those new customers of the service/product for which they are paying?

Originally we were permitted to water as many days per week as we wished.

As the cost of reclaimed water service steadily increased over the past years, the watering days were more and more restricted.

Thus, similar to shrinkflation, we are paying more, for less.

If we cannot receive the reclaimed water for which we are paying, the following options should be immediately evaluated and implemented:

- a. Confirm if reclaimed customers can instead use potable water to irrigate their lawns once per week.
(I have not been able to determine from the website if this is permitted.)
- b. Suspend billings for reclaimed water until it can be provided at proper full pressure
- c. Consider providing refunds or future credits to customers who for the past year have paid for reclaimed water they did not receive.
- d. Allow customers who switch to potable water to switch back to reclaimed without any costs or fees if/when these reclaimed problems are resolved
- e. Consider a county ordinance with more specific provisions than those in present rather vague Florida State law allowing Florida Friendly landscaping plans to "override" HOA lawn provisions.
- f. Initiate a FREE educational program countywide to teach homeowners how to attractively and effectively convert large portions of their existing water hungry lawns to Florida Friendly plantings instead

In conclusion, we need your immediate assistance to save what little may be left of our lawns and landscapes.

I request that you add a monthly item to your Agenda requiring the Director of Utilities to report to you on the progress made to restore our reclaimed water pressure.

Thank you.

Reclaimed water restrictions are implemented to ensure equitable distribution among customers, especially during supply shortages. To address this, PCU is enforcing watering restrictions to manage usage effectively to ensure everyone has access to reclaimed water.

FOR MORE THAN A YEAR WE HAVE NOT HAD ACCESS TO RECLAIMED WATER.

PCU has taken several short-term steps to address this issue, including:

- Adding pumps into service to increase water pressure.
- Installing air release valves throughout Palm Harbor to remove air from lines and improve pressure.
- Increasing service line flushing and filter inspections to ensure there is no debris obstructing the lines.

HAS NOT HELPED.

Long term, we are improving off-site pump stations to allow for enhanced distributing and pressure throughout the system, adding a new pump station that will improve pressure and flow for customers on the east side of Lake Tarpon, and increasing reclaimed water supply through a managed aquifer storage and recovery system with Lake Tarpon as a water source.

While we want to assure you we are actively addressing this issue, we need everyone's help in conserving water to alleviate the current stress on the system. There are several steps you can take to make a difference:

- **Know your watering schedule and rules.** Reclaimed water usage is not permitted in North County between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Implement outdoor water conservation and Florida-Friendly practices.** Install smart irrigation sensors to turn off your water when we do get rain. Also, adding mulch to reduce evaporation when you do water your lawn can reduce the amount of water needed in your landscaping by as much as 50%.
- **Sign up for the Utilities Customer Portal:** As digital meters are installed across our service area, every customer can see real-time water usage and access tools to address excessive water use and leaks in your irrigation system.

To learn more about the water conservation measures you can implement, visit pinellas.gov/water-conservation. If you have additional questions, please call Utilities Customer Service at (727) 464-4000, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Thank you,

Pinellas County Utilities

ALERT PINELLAS

Pinellas County Government



To manage your account and how you receive Alert Pinellas notifications **LOG IN** here.

County Information Line: (727) 464-3000

County Live Chat: <https://pinellas.gov/>

Ready Pinellas Mobile App: <https://pinellas.gov/ready-pineillas/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PinellasGov/>

X (Formerly known as Twitter): [@PinellasGov](https://twitter.com/PinellasGov)

X (Emergency Management): [@PinellasEM](https://twitter.com/PinellasEM)

To stop receiving future email notifications from this organization **[unsubscribe here](#)**.

Charges in Detail

Service Address: 755 Maple Ridge Rd S, Palm Harbor

Utility Charges for Jan 03, 2024 to Feb 29, 2024

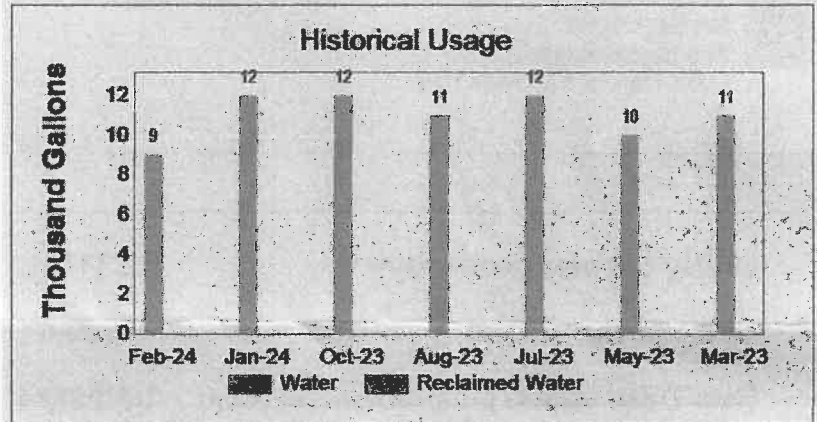
WATER	\$55.43
SEWER (PINELLAS COUNTY)	\$108.00
BACKFLOW DEVICE MAINTENANCE	\$3.18
RECLAIMED WATER (PINELLAS COUNTY)	\$60.00
Total Current Usage Charges:	\$226.61

Your Usage

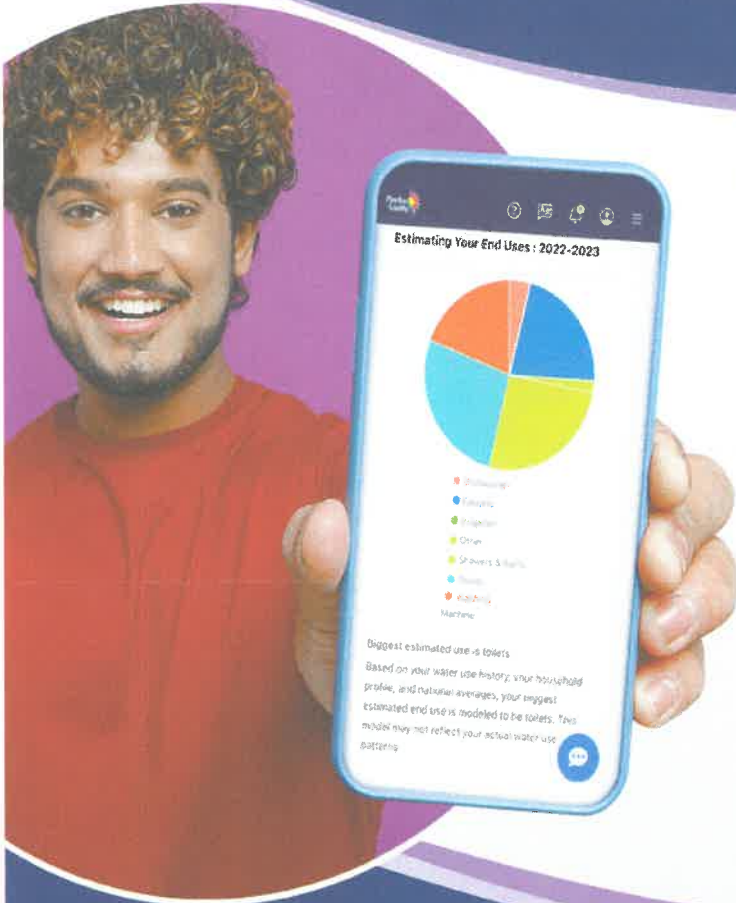
Meter Number	Read Date	Meter Read Prior	Meter Read Current	# of Days	Consumption (in 1,000 Gallons)
73974758	02/29/24	2537	2546	57	9

NEXT METER READING ON OR ABOUT: 05/01/24

DEPOSIT HELD ON ACCOUNT: \$0.00



(A) 28% OF BILLING IS FOR RECLAIMED 469-4000 #5
 5/2/24 MH Tel KYARA. She will have a supervisor call me.
 5/9/24 MH Tel 5/7/2024 LEPY MSG
 5/14/24 MH NO REPLY RCP 400 PAGE 3 PM



The digital meter upgrade is underway!

Over the next few years, Pinellas County Utilities is installing digital meters across our service area to provide you with more precise and timely meter readings. Now, you can access our Utilities Customer Portal to save water and money with insights into your water usage, leak alerts and more.

Attention Reclaimed Water Customers:

If you're a reclaimed water customer, your bill may not look the same as Pinellas County's new reclaimed water rates, but for good reason. Starting Jan. 16, all reclaimed water customers will have **four months from the date their digitally-metered water usage data is available in the new Utilities Customer Portal** before the new rates post to their bills.

This gives you time to better understand your water usage and implement water conservation measures as needed. To learn more about the digital meter project and the new rate structure visit digitalmeter.pinellas.gov



Pinellas County complies with all federal, state and local laws related to persons with disabilities. To request alternate formats of this information, contact the Office of Human Rights at (727) 464-4062 (V/TDD) or email accommodations@pinellas.gov.

THERE IS LITTLE WATER FLOWING TO MENTURE!

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
RECLAIMED WATER PROBLEMS FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR

June 9, 2024

I am a homeowner in the Westlake Village Community in Palm Harbor. By my signature below I represent to you that the below conditions have caused thousands of dollars of damage to my lawn and landscape plantings. My neighbor Michael Hicks of 755 Maple Ridge Rd Palm Harbor, FL 34683 intends to appear before you on Tuesday June 11, 2024 to bring these conditions to your attention. He has represented to me that he has contacted the Utilities Department on several occasions in the past year about these conditions. I have seen no improvement in these conditions in the past year. Now, he is appealing for assistance directly to you as our Commissioners on behalf of himself and his neighbors. Please help us with immediate action to provide proper pressure to our reclaimed water service.

1. For more than a year I/we have not had proper pressure to operate our in-ground water sprinkler system.
2. I/we have been paying and are presently paying \$63 included in our bi-monthly water bill for reclaimed water service. It is not proper that I have been paying for a service that I have NOT received.
3. I/we find it inexplicable that the County is presently in the process of paying to install reclaimed water meters when there is little flow to measure. Instead, the County should expend those dollars to immediately fix the low pressure problems.
4. I/we request that you add a monthly Agenda item to your meetings and require the Executive in-charge of this system to report to you at least monthly on progress to provide proper pressure to me.

Address: 755 MAPLE RIDGE RD PALM HARBOR

Name: MICHAEL D. HICKS / Michael D Hicks

Date: 6/9/2024

← SAMPLE
HOMEOWNER
REQUEST FOR
ASSISTANCE

Addresses of Homeowners who have signed request for assistance:

- 1 700 Hickory Lane
- 2 785 Hickory Lane
- 3 30 Laurel Oak Ct
- 4 60 Laurel Oak Ct
- 5 70 Laurel Oak Ct
- 6 750 Maple Ridge Rd
- 7 755 Maple Ridge Rd
- 8 760 Maple Ridge Rd
- 9 775 Maple Ridge Rd
- 10 785 Maple Ridge Rd
- 11 10 Orchard Ct
- 12 30 Orchard Ct
- 13 848 Park Ct
- 14 863 Pinewood Terrace W
- 15 755 Rolling Hills
- 16 780 Rolling Hills Dr
- 17 785 Rolling Hills Dr
- 18 795 Rolling Hills Dr
- 19 420 Timber Lane
- 20 430 Timber Lane
- 21 620 Sandy Hook Road
- 22 760 Sandy Hook Road
- 23 760 Sandy Hook Road (second owners)
- 24 30 Village Way
- 25 725 Village Way
- 26 735 Village Way
- 27 745 Village Way
- 28 755 Village Way
- 29 770 Village Way
- 30 45 Woodcutter Lane
- 31 45 Woodcutter Lane (second owner)



WESTLAKE VILLAGE

VILLAS

- 1501-1563
- 1405-1467
- 1301-1393
- 1215-1277

Woodcutter Ln











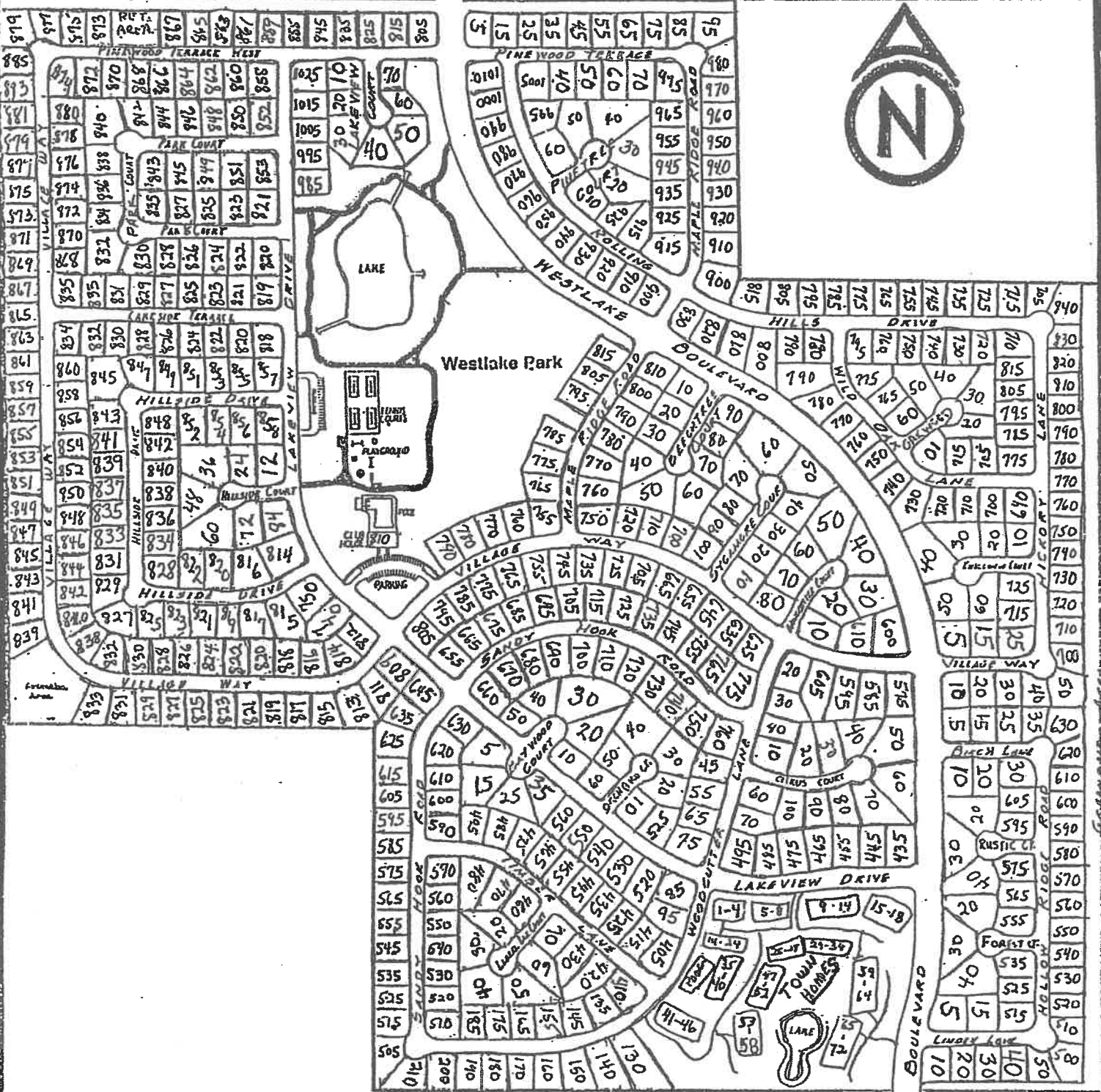


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WESTLAKE VILLAGE

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Address: 700 Hickory Lane

Name: Ryan Stewart

Date: 6/9/24

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Address: 785 Hickory Lane, Palm Harbor

Name: Will R. Munt

Date: 6/10/2024

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Address: 30 LAUREL OAK CT, PALM HARBOR, 34683

Name: RICHARD D. WHITE *Richard D. White*

Date: 6-10-24

*possible
attendant*

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Address: 60 Laurel Oak Ct
Name: Pamela Roark Pamela Roark
Date: 6-10-2024

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Address:

70 Laurel Oak Court

Name:

Jennifer Gibson

Date:

6/10/24

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Address: 750 Maple Ridge Rd. Palm Harbor FLA 34683
Name: Michael Sunderman
Date: 6-10-2024

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Address: 755 MAPLE RIDGE RD PALM HARBOR

Name: MICHAEL D. HICKS / Michael D Hicks

Date: 6/9/2024

PRESENTED
SPKR AT
Comm Mtg

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Address: 760 Maple Ridge Rd, PALM HARBOR

Name: MICHAEL SAPP

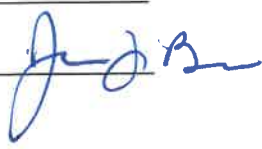
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Address: 775 Maple Rd Palm Harbor, FL
Name: James Bemis 
Date: 6/10/2024

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Address: 785 Maple Ridge Rd, Palm Harbor, FL 34683
Name: Sophia Jurgensen / Jonathan Beal
Date: 6/09/24

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Address: 10 Orchard Ct. Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Name: Melissa Francis 

Date: 6/10/2024

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
RECLAIMED WATER PROBLEMS FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR

June 9, 2024

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Address: 30 ORCHARD CT

Name: Micky Koussis

Date: 6/10/24

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Address: 848 Park Ct.

Name: Eleanor G. Sabal

Date: 6/9/2024

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Address: 863 Pine wood Ter W Palm Harbor FL 34683

Name: John Collop John W Collop


Date: 6/10/24

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
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Address: 755 Rolling Hills
Name: Chris Baker 
Date: 6/10/24

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
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Address: 780 Rolling Hills Dr, Palm Harbor 34683

Name: Virginia Constant

Date: 6/10/24

Virginia J. Constant

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
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Address: 785 Rolling Hills Drive Palm Harbor, FL
Name: Jack & Linda Fountain 34683
Date: 6-10-24

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Address: 795 Rolling Hills Dr Palm Harbor FL

Name: Michael Moreca / 

Date: 6/9/2024

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Address: 420 Timber Lane, Palm Harbor 34683

Name: Lise Buck & Howard Buck

Date: 10 Jun 24

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
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Address: 430 Timber Lane

Name: Bob + Julie Horton

Date: 6/10/24

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Address: 620 SANDY HOOK ROAD

Name: Jeffrey Bandcroft

Date: 6/10/2024

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Address: 760 Sandy Hook Rd Palm Harbor FL 34683

Name: KENNETH W AUPPERLEE, Ken Aupe

Date: 6-10-2024

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Address: 760 Sandy Hook Rd, Palm Harbor, FL 34683
Name: Maureen Aupperlee, Maureen Cupperlee
Date: 6-10-2024

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Address: 30 VILLAGE WAY

Name: William Miller

Date: 6/10/24

Westlake Low Reclaimed water pressure

Mark Turaniczo <[redacted]>
To: Mike Hicks <[redacted]>

Sun, Jun 9, 2024 at 11:41 PM

Hi Michael, as I mentioned, I am in Hawaii and out of town and unable to complete the form since I'm on a cruise. However, here is the information for my form and please accept this as my signature for the form that I have cut and paste below.

(A) {
Mark Turaniczo
725 Village Way
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
June 9, 2024

Thank you.

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE RECLAIMED WATER PROBLEMS FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR
June 9, 2024

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↑ Address: (A) 725 VILLAGE WAY
Name: _____
Date: _____

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RECLAIMED WATER PROBLEMS FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR

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Address: 735 Village Way
Name: Carol Breish
Date: 6/9/24

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Address: 745 Village Way
Name: Jeff Bone Jeff Bone
Date: 6-9-2024

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Address: 755 VILLAGE WAY, PALM HARBOR, FL 34683

Name: JANET THOMAS WILKINSON

Date: 06/10/2024




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Address: 770 Village Way
Name: Jamie Dunne 
Date: 6/9/24

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3. I/we find it inexplicable that the County is presently in the process of paying to install reclaimed water meters when there is little flow to measure. Instead, the County should expend those dollars to immediately fix the low pressure problems.
4. I/we request that you add a monthly Agenda item to your meetings and require the Executive in-charge of this system to report to you at least monthly on progress to provide proper pressure to me.

Address: 45 Woodcutter Lane, PH, FL
Name: Phyllis VanVelkinburgh
Date: 6/10/24

REQUEST TO PINELLAS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE WITH LOW PRESSURE
RECLAIMED WATER PROBLEMS FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR

June 9, 2024

I am a homeowner in the Westlake Village Community in Palm Harbor. By my signature below I represent to you that the below conditions have caused thousands of dollars of damage to my lawn and landscape plantings. My neighbor Michael Hicks of 755 Maple Ridge Rd Palm Harbor, FL 34683 intends to appear before you on Tuesday June 11, 2024 to bring these conditions to your attention. He has represented to me that he has contacted the Utilities Department on several occasions in the past year about these conditions. I have seen no improvement in these conditions in the past year. Now, he is appealing for assistance directly to you as our Commissioners on behalf of himself and his neighbors. Please help us with immediate action to provide proper pressure to our reclaimed water service.

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Address: 45 WOODGATE LANE
PALM HARBOR, FL 34683

Name: STEPHAN VAN DERKUNDE

Date: 6/10/2024