

BUDGET ALERT!

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2 HEARINGS ON COUNTY BUDGET: WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 5 AND THURSDAY, SEPT. 20 AT 6:00 PM AT COUNTY CENTER 2ND FLOOR

Please attend one or both of the above hearings, and also contact all of the County Commissioners ahead of the hearings. Ask them to *RESTORE THE 5% TO THE BUDGETS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION and THE PLANNING COMMISSION!* We need these independent agencies to be able to function properly for the health and safety of our water sources and new development.

Contact the BOCC at: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/bocc/about/contactus.cfm> and, ask for a response!

History: The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) and the Planning Commission in June were originally told by Pat Bean, county administrator, to cut their budgets 5%. This was in line with what other departments and agencies were also asked to do. Both EPC and Planning Commission complied with this request. In addition, Dr. Garrity in his hybrid proposal voluntarily eliminated an additional 5 positions in the wetlands division of the EPC. Shortly thereafter, the BOCC came back to both EPC and Planning Commission and demanded another 5% cut in their already lean budgets due to **DUPLICATION!!!!!!**

To date, **NO** evidence has been placed on any record of the duplication of review or regulation by the EPC. The commission has asked for audits and studies of this issue fishing for proof. Remember, the commission has been trying for months to find a way to eliminate the wetlands (water) oversight by EPC. The EPC is in the process of taking on additional delegation and oversight of wetlands from Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection as well as implementing the new hybrid proposal. This 5% additional cut is jeopardizing our monitoring of the bay with regard to the desal plant. How much of a crap shoot are we willing to take on our water?

As to the Planning Commission, Pat Bean stated on the BOCC record that there was **NO** duplication in the Planning Commission. As a matter of fact, the county's own planning department, Planning and Growth Management Department (PGMD), have been duplicating **COMMUNITY PLANS** for years. Not

only is this economically unfeasible, but illegal! Our Charter mandates the Planning Commission NOT PGMD be in charge of comp plan amendments (community plans) in this county. The Planning Commission has been running on an \$8 million budget compared to PGMD's budget of \$30+ million. Where's the real fat?

The BOCC has the money to restore both budgets this year because they have \$\$\$millions *put aside "just in case"* in next year's budget. WHAT??????????

SO WHY ARE THE EPC and PLANNING COMMISSION'S BUDGETS BEING CUT 5% IF NOT TO CRIPPLE THEM? Do you suppose this would then allow the BOCC to determine that these agencies can't do their jobs and eliminate them (see future BOCC/EPC meetings!) ... after all, isn't this what they really want to accomplish?