

Date: March 15, 2023

CRA and Regular Commission Meeting

Submitted by: Commissioner Mary Beth Taylor

Subject: Termination of the Oceana Logistics International (i.e. Oceana Coffee) Contract Agreement and recovery of the first \$200,000 disbursement of a **one million dollar** Grant they received from The Town Of Lake Park on December 22, 2022.

In my opinion, the conclusion is encapsulated in one sentence. ***The contract agreement was breached on February 1, pursuant to Oceana Coffee's inability to commence construction, as listed in the grant contract agreement or to fulfill the requirements to complete their permit application.*** Not hard to understand. The consequences of defaulting on the Oceana contract are clear, *number 3* on the first page of the Unconditional Guaranty of Repayment and Performance Contract, 'Grantor hereby agrees to provide the Guarantors written notice of any default by the grantees, under the provisions of the Grant Documents. If you are a resident or business owner in Lake Park that explanation may be all you need.

But, as a Commissioner I welcome the opportunity to explain my 'Nay' to awarding the **one million dollar** grant to Oceana Coffee.

- I have many unanswered questions about the five investors/principals of the partnership and about their inability to fulfill the essentials of their contract, by defaulting on February 1, 2023, and failing to complete their permit process. The Oceana Coffee presentation was well scripted, but abstruse and devoid of the details I wanted to hear. The million dollar grant disbursements among partners were suspicious, and I felt misled, and pressured. The mercurial additions, shifting parts and serious lack of background details, especially from KISS Kitchens LLC and Florida Canning Company are still questionable.
- On March 9, 2023, I requested *all* the background information on the five Oceana partners, I received seven documents, including the Executed Guaranty that provided the investor related contact information, addresses...but no background, financial or credit information. Interestingly two of the partners listed the same address, a single family home on the west coast of Florida. Interesting also, was that seven companies have been linked to this home through corporate registrations. Two other partners gave a Wellington address. None of the information I received included their legal residency or credit and business histories. My question, "Is Granting, essentially gifting, one million dollars to a group of people without a thorough background check a standard way to do business or did I not receive all the information I requested?"

- I took an oath when becoming a commissioner to uphold laws and codes and I promised myself, that promoting and protecting the best interests of the residents and businesses of Lake Park would be my priority. I do not believe granting a gift of one million dollars to the Oceana Coffee Partnership at this time is prudent or fair to the residents and other struggling businesses in town. The Oceana Partners have admitted they have adequate personal money to fund their investment and I cannot imagine investing my money in the Oceana venture, so it makes no sense to me to expend much of our *small, tiny town's* taxpayer monies on a seemingly desperate vision that has already faltered. A million dollars could go a long way to improve the image and reputation of the entire Town of Lake Park *if spent wisely*.
- I also do not believe that the *vision* presented by the Oceana partners is beneficial or realistic for The Town of Lake Park. I traverse this town with my eyes open! I see never occupied and empty shopfronts. I see another *grant gone bad*, the 754 Park Avenue eyesore. I hear of previously popular businesses closing or struggling to stay open. ***Lake Park needs help, but should help itself first!*** We need to provide beneficial, reliable essential services. We need to improve the Town's safety and image by, repairing, cleaning, lighting up common public areas. We need to support *local* and pop-up, practical businesses, that economically match the needs and desires of the town's diverse population. And at the same time address our critical infrastructure, the cracked seawall for example.
- In conclusion, Thank you, and "*Don't worry, Every little thing gonna be alright!*" Lake Park will survive and has *innumerable, innovated* spaces for entrepreneurial ventures.