JIC Mayor's Report #1

Dear JIC Residents,

On June 20, I was elected by your Town Commission to be Mayor of Jupiter Inlet Colony. I am honored they have chosen me. It is not an office I sought, nor will I seek another term.

My fellow Commissioners and I need your support in the months ahead. We face some real challenges; we also have great opportunities. <u>Here are items on the Commission's plate.</u>

• **Selecting a new Police Chief**. As described at the June 12 Commission meeting, we have a Selection Committee (SC) process. Over 130 candidates applied. The SC will hold a meeting June 27 at the Beach Club to choose the most qualified candidates for interviews at a date we will schedule in July. At the July SC meeting, the SC will choose finalist(s) and forward their final recommendation(s) to the Commission for a vote.

• **Exploring Charter Revision**: There is considerable sentiment in the Town to move toward a "Town Manager" system, and I share it. With our current Town Charter requiring a 'Strong Mayor' government, Dan has acted as both the mayor and, effectively as Town Manager, spending full time running the government.

Dan, Dick Busto, and I have long maintained that the increasing complexity to remain a Town will require a professional manager. A charter revision would install a "Commission/Town Manager" form of government. JIC neighbor and esteemed lawyer Janet Saura has offered to lead this open process, with the counsel and legal guidance of our Town Attorney, Bill Doney. Janet will consult with residents, officials in Florida towns, and provide briefings and options. There will be a town workshop for everyone to voice their views. We plan to hold a referendum on the Charter revision in the March 2024 municipal election. Thank you, Janet.

• **Filling Commissioner Vacancies:** As announced in the June Commission meeting, at the July 10 Commission meeting, Commissioners will elect a new Commissioner to replace Dan. An applicant must be a registered voter in JIC. In March 2024, there will probably be four seats up for election. We must have five qualified people willing to serve as commissioners so we can maintain our status as an independent municipality. I think we can all agree that it is critical to remain a town. Given the interest many have shown in Town government, please consider serving the community by running for the Commission.

• **Resolving Personnel Issues:** We are working diligently on these. There are some areas that, by law, require silence on my part and that of my fellow Commissioners. I will tell you when that is the case.

Feelings have run high recently, leading some to take out their frustration on Town employees. I insist that our staff be treated with respect and civility. They are integral to running the government effectively and efficiently.

• **2024 Town Budget:** I will present the FY24 proposed Town Budget at the July 10 meeting. It will be posted on the website as we have done for the last 12 years. At the August 14 meeting, we will vote to finalize the budget, pending legally mandated final passage at the September 11 and September 25 meetings. Residents are invited to comment or ask questions. Please email them to Kevin Lucas and John Pruitt by August 7 so that they can be addressed. lucask@jupiterinletcolony.org, pruittj@jupiterinletcolony.org. Please copy me.

• **June 20 Special Meeting:** Commissioners agreed to engage Joe Santoro of Gunster to provide counsel. Mr. Santoro has worked with town attorneys on prior town business. The Commissioners also voted to ask the town's auditors to do a STUB audit of the town's finances.

• **Restoring a sense of community:** Since its founding in 1957, Jupiter Inlet Colony has been known for its tight-knit community — residents who volunteer for the common good, neighbors who help and respect each other, and folks who are grateful for the privilege of living in a "slice of paradise." Many of you have commented that you hope we can regain this positive, supportive sense of community.

I am confident we can if we hold the attitude that we are all in this together.

Chip Block