From: Katie Ayme
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Coconut Beach - Compromise
Date: Monday, May 18, 2009 11:44:01 AM

Mr. Owen,

I'm writing to you to please consider the alternatives to commandeering Coconut Beach for the pumping station and revisit the options where both entities can co-exist in the West End area. I understand the need and am supportive of keeping the city dry especially during hurricanes, but I hope you also understand the magnitude of Coconut Beach to the New Orleans community, the state of Louisiana and even the country.

After Hurricane Katrina, Bruce and Mike led the efforts and many of us banded together to bring a source of normalcy in a forever changed landscape by bringing back Coconut Beach. Post Katrina, especially within the year after, the existence of Coconut Beach was not only a source of social networking and exercise for many people, but it was a way to escape the stress associated with rebuilding our lives and go back to a time and place that we all knew and loved, even if it was just for an hour or two a week. It is also a place for EVERYONE, regardless of your athleticism, you'll fit in somewhere, and you'll be welcomed.

And now, Coconut Beach is not only a place for New Orleanians, but it has claimed it's space on the state and national map as well. Many people from around the Gulf State region come to the city each weekend, and this not only stimulates Coconut Beach but also the local economy as a whole. Coconut Beach has always given back to the community in support of various charity events such as the annual fund raiser for Children's Hospital. And recently, given that Coconut Beach has gained national recognition by hosting successful national tournaments, which again, not only stimulates the local economy through travel and tourism but also shows the rest of the country that New Orleans is recovering.

Again – I absolutely support and understand the need for the pumping station, but we have got to work together to come up with a solution that will protect the community without sacrificing the very fiber that it's designed to protect.

Thank you for your consideration

Katie Ayme

Coconut beach volleyball players since 1993