

Minutes of Perla Marina HOA meeting with Coraapplata

19th April 2023 10:30am

In attendance for Coraapplata:

- Sr Oliver Nazario Brugal – Director General Coraapplata
- Sr Samuel Vasquez – Executive Subdirector
- Sr Emil Sanchez – Operations Manager of Sosua
- Sr Pablo Rivera – General Manager - Century 21
- (guest of Coraapplata)

In attendance for Perla Marina HOA:

- HOA Board Members – Sra Sharon Martinez
- HOA Committee – Sr Carl Darden, Sr Steve Williams
- HOA Legal Representation – Sra Marta Cabrera

Executive Summary

Following on from an initial meeting on the 04th April 2023 between Corapplaata and Perla Marina HOA in Puerto Plata, Perla Marina was invited to attend a further meeting on the 19th April to include previous attendees and also Oliver Brugal the Director General Coraapplata in Puerto Plata.

Whilst the initial meeting on the 04th April 2023 was more of an HOA fact finding mission to discover the issues relating to why Perla Marina has no street water and confirm status, in the second meeting Coraapplata was able to release information clarifying changes that are going to be happening immediately, within six months and then 12 month and beyond.

Coraapplata was able to confirm that the six month plan includes drilling six new bore holes (wells) in the District of El Choco and creating two new water storage tanks to begin feeding the water into the existing north coast pipe structure. At around 200 litres a second this would significantly increase the amount of water entering the water system as a whole.

Within an anticipated one year period options will be considered for other sources of water. One option being considered is building a new wall (dam) to retain water along the Yassica river and diverting that water to a new treatment plant likely close to the existing treatment plants in La Catalina. All such options will depend on decisions at Government level.

These changes will not just benefit Perla Marina but the whole of the north coast.

Over the coming weeks tests are going to be conducted across the north coast water pipe network including Perla Marina to test pressure, identify leaks and where investment is required to bring the network back up to full working capacity.

As part of this action and during this period, the military will be stationed at water valves along the network to prevent unauthorised removal of water as is currently happening.

Perla Marina residents are being offered an amnesty on water wells constructed before 1st May 2023, but ALL residents will be required to register their wells and will then enjoy a reduced monthly water bill as well as free test of their water quality to ensure there is no cross contamination.

Coraaplata was also able to clarify a refund / cancellation of 6 months of water bills for ALL residents in Perla Marina.

The meeting was cordial and Coraaplata attendees are thanked by Perla Marina HOA for taking their valuable time to meet and present constructive solutions to the issue facing Perla Marina residents.

Both sides agreed to continue the process of working towards the common objective of restoring safe and reliable water sources to Perla Marina.

Agenda

Purpose of the meeting;

- a) to discuss with Coraaplata current, medium term and long term approved plans to resolve as best as is possible the lack of water into Perla Marina.
- b) To discuss with Coraaplata what permits if any are needed to drill wells and how to ensure that the water is safe that comes from such wells.
- c) To discuss and see if there is a solution to people receiving bills at the same time as receiving no water.

Corrections

The below notes are based on information taken down in writing during the meeting. Given the rapid pace of some of the discussions in English and Spanish, if any attendee has a different recollection of the discussion, please advise as soon as possible to obtain collective input and if necessary correction of the minutes.

Detailed notes on various discussions

Sr. Brugal kindly and for the benefit of attendees who do not speak Spanish was able to conduct the majority of the meeting in English. Where points were being discussed that were of a more technical and/or legal nature the conversation was conducted in Spanish between mostly Sr Brugal and the HOA legal representative Sra Cabrera who then periodically translated those conversations for the benefit of the other attendees.

1. The meeting began with introductions and then Sr Brugal thanked the HOA for bringing to his attention the issues in Perla Marina.

A short discussion followed around the overall issues of lack of water caused by an increase in consumption along the north coast and a decrease in rains which has gradually made the situation more difficult on the north coast to supply street water.

Sr Brugal explained the many steps he has to take in order to get permissions to be able to get funding and approval to make changes to the water infrastructure but was able to confirm the following actions are being taken along the north coast by Coraaplata.

a) increasing the supply of water to the north coast

The creation of six new water holes in the District of El Choco, to be connected to two large storage tanks with treatment facilities that have the ability to add a further 200 litres per second to the existing water supply. The anticipated time frame for this is six months.

Another option being considered is the creation of a wall (dam structure) along the Yassica river that has the purpose of diverting water to a new treatment plant most likely located at the existing treatment facilities at La Catalina. Time frames for such options depends on a number of different factors. The aim is to produce a list of options over the next 12 months and then identify which projects to put forward for Government support.

As an immediate solution Coraapplata offered to supply a truck to arrive on the 22nd April 2023 to supply residents who can prove that they are fully paid with Coraapplata. The details are to be agreed with Sr Vasquez. Sr Vasquez had indicated such an offer could be made in the previous meeting pending approval, which was provided in this meeting.

b) testing and repairing the water supply infrastructure.

Sr Sanchez, speaking mainly in Spanish, explained to the HOA how in order to fully test water supplies across the network it would be first necessary to switch off all supplies and valves in order to allow pressure to build up in the pipe system.

Then a process of opening select valves including into Perla Marina would allow Coraapplata to see what amount of pressure is entering the community and where any issues lie in the existing pipe network.

During this period residents of Perla Marina will likely experience a temporary return of water but for clarity this is at this point ONLY temporary to enable Coraapplata to test the water network.

Perla Marina HOA indicated they are aware of issues such as damaged pipes caused largely by developers and the heavy equipment crushing pipes so it is anticipated there will also be temporary leakage of water of an unknown amount.

The HOA also raised the issue that a department within Coraapplata had removed water meters from some non paying residents leaving uncapped water pipes.

Depending on the extent of any repairs needed, the same process will be repeated the following week.

Once the network is tested and validated as operating correctly it then becomes a case of waiting for the bore holes to begin operation before being in a position to restore street water supply to Perla Marina.

2. Rules and regulations regarding well construction.

Coraapplata is aware that as many households have chosen to construct wells within Perla Marina as a result of having no street water. It is also aware that water trucks are obtaining water from suspect sources including (but not limited to) its own supply - and steps are being

taken such as the military being positioned at valves - to stop the theft of its water supply. Coraapplata strongly advises Perla residents against using water sources that could for example come from untreated and contaminated water sources such as rivers.

Perla HOA asked for clarity around requirements surrounding the construction of wells as it is concerned that there seems to be no control over well sources and how close they are to septic tanks and Sr Brugal provided the following information;

To construct a well requires a permit from Coraapplata. It also requires that the location is 'checked' to reduce or remove the likelihood of cross contamination between wells and septic tanks.

The permit costs 10,000dop – and a reduced monthly fee of between 250 and 285dop depending on the size of the bore hole and property (which is approximately half of the typical flat fee)

Sr Brugal was asked how to deal with the fact that many were unaware and even in some cases misinformed by local Coraapplata offices regarding the fees and permits.

Sr Brugal has offered an amnesty regarding the 10,000dop fee for all residents who have put in wells in Perla Marina up to the first of May 2023. Residents constructing wells after this date WILL need permissions and certificates **BEFORE** constructing a well.

However, ALL residents who have existing wells are also required to register their wells with Coraapplata. In theory, their monthly bills should then reduce from 500dop to about 280dop.

Coraapplata will begin its own process of validating which properties have wells and has offered to test all well water supplies at its own cost and produce a test result to residents allowing them to see whether their supply is safe (or not) to be used.

Sr Williams asked Sr Brugal how Coraapplata deals with the fact that one house on one plot uses x amount of water from a well – but for example 10 houses on a plot use 10 times the amount of water from a well that one house does. The concern being that larger developments being constructed within Perla Marina who put in wells will eventually lower the water table for ALL residents within Perla Marina.

Sr Brugal clarified that at the moment he is only able to charge based on the number of wells and size of the bore hole.

From a Coraapplata point of view it was confirmed the street water infrastructure it would have put in place would have been based on the original plans it was shown by the original Perla Marina developers.

The original plans for Perla Marina allowed for only one house per lot within the residential zone and that only within the commercial zones were multiple houses per lot allowed. Sr Rivera has agreed to work with and help Sra Cabrera to obtain the original master plans to allow the HOA to enforce the original restrictions for the residential lots within Perla Marina.

3. Discussion regarding the billing of residents who receive no water.

Sra Martinez raised the point that many residents within Perla Marina continue to complain to the HOA that they receive water bills even though many have had no water for several years.

Sr Brugal explained that the company that does the billing is separate to Coraapplata. He then called that same company and requested that all billing to Perla Marina is stopped with immediate effect until further notice.

Sr Brugal kindly offered to also delete the last 6 months of any existing bill as well as credit those customers that continued to pay during that same period.

[Post meeting HOA observation regarding billing]

Combining the conversations regarding the wells and the billing, it is clear there are some customers who do not currently get any water (well or street) from Coraapplata – and these should be the persons for whom billing should be suspended until further notice – or have their contracts terminated if that is what they wish – but again for clarity – minus the six months given by Coraapplata the previous debt will need to be settled to terminate the contract.

Residents who are currently obtaining well water are required to register their well as soon as possible and have their contracts changed to the lower 'well water' rate and pay monthly. For clarity, that is the responsibility of the individual Perla Marina resident each of whom has a contract with Coraapplata – this has nothing to do with the HOA.

As Cabarete is the local Coraapplata office for Perla Marina, residents will need some type of document from Coraapplata they can take to the office and present as many don't speak any/enough Spanish. The HOA will work with Coraapplata to provide well owners with an official document they can take to the offices as soon as possible to get their contracts amended to a 'well contract'.

Whilst we are sure there are many Perla Marina residents that will still feel that this is an 'unfair' solution, Residents should be reminded that in order to sell their property they will need to demonstrate it is clear of outstanding debts – including outstanding water fees.