

ISLANDS

FROM A1

Vero Beach and the Shores will each contribute almost \$1.03 million to the purchase and split the \$80,000 cost of settling a lawsuit that Bahia Mar Road resident Jeanine Dailey Andlinger and two neighbors filed against Lost Tree in January.

The neighbors, all barrier island residents, say Lost Tree devalued their properties by citing in court cases a survey of the river islands that extends eastward to include their back yards. Lost Tree attorneys had asked that the governments pay for settling that claim as part of any purchase.

"We all thought that would be an acceptable expense," Vitunac said.

"If you're in for a penny you might as well be in for a pound, and let's not quibble over \$80,000," Councilman Jay Smith said.

Vero Beach and the Shores each will hold 10 percent share of the islands, and the county will have 80 percent ownership.

After the local governments survey the islands and take title, Clem said, they will issue quit-claim deeds to Andlinger and her neighbors. Lost Tree had offered quit-claim deeds, but Clem said the company's offer included various restrictions the neighbors opposed.

"We just want to give them what they thought they had," Clem said.

The contract would also

absolve the city and town from Lost Tree's two multi-million dollar claims against them for land-use restrictions, which have led to thousands of dollars in legal fees, Vitunac said.

He said his city's share of the price would come from its general fund. Cadden said his town would pay out of its share of the county's local-option sales taxes.

Lost Tree will have one week to consider the contract if the County Commission approves it today.

If Lost Tree decides to go with the contract, then the local governments would have until Jan. 31 for surveys, title searches and similar matters before closing.

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