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JANUARY 8, 2023

Matt Osterhoudt, Executive Director, Planning
Ann Messina, Planner
Sarasota County Government
1660 Ringling Blvd
Sarasota, FL

Dear Matt and Ann,

I wrote a few questions for Benderson's proposed mega-hotel public workshop of January 8th but did not have time to address them all. The following are my questions that I believe Sarasota County should address in the upcoming review of the mega-hotel application.

- 1) In the pre-application cover letter, Benderson's representatives claim that "...Siesta Key, a nationally and internationally recognized destination, drawing around 350,000 visitors every year..." where did Benderson Development get that visitor number? That is definitely a low ball number. Do they have any official documentation from a respected national organization to prove that number?
- 2) Why is Benderson Development removing protections for residential density limits in Policy 2.9.2 when they claim to focus on commercial density only?
- 3) Proposed policy 2.9.4 which states "In no event shall **new** transient accommodations be located on the beaches of Siesta Key". Since there are no CG or CI properties on the beaches of Siesta Key so transient accommodations can't be added to the beaches anyway, why was this added to policy 2.9.4? Seems frivolous unless it is the reason why 2.9.2 was changed. Is it possible there is a plan to convert condos to hotels in residential beach areas in the future?
- 4) In the new Econ Policy 7.1.4, Benderson writes "Notwithstanding any provisions, of the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, **that might suggest otherwise**, in no event shall new transient accommodations be located on the beaches of Siesta Key". Since there can't be any conflict between policies in the Comp Plan, what "policies" in the Comp Plan **suggest that transient accommodations can be built on Siesta Key's beaches**? Shouldn't they identify what those policies are so they can be properly addressed?
- 5) In Coastal Objective 1.3 and Coastal Policy 1.3.1,
 - a) Benderson is proposing not increasing hurricane evacuation time **for residents** only. How do they plan to keep visitors from evacuating in an emergency? Airports close before a hurricane event and with the rapid intensification of storms, why would Benderson believe that visitors will not evacuate before or during a storm and how does it not impact resident's time in an evacuation?
 - b) Benderson proposes to 'mitigate' the problems associated with 'Safe and Timely Evacuations' in Coastal Objective 1.3. How much money does Benderson feel they should pay to mitigate the risk of increasing hurricane evacuation times? (Aren't we still waiting for Benderson to fund the improvements of Cooper Creek Park, now known after paying for naming rights as Nathan Benderson Park?)

- c) What monetary value does Sarasota County place on each human life since they are considering 'mitigation' as an alternative to reducing or maintaining hurricane evacuation times?
- 6) Why should transient accommodations be limited to 26 units per acre in two mainland areas (Nokomis and BRR/PD) while a barrier island with only two bridges and a two-lane road connecting those bridges should have unlimited density?
- 7) Benderson Development proposes to 'limit' the transient accommodations to 15% of all CG/CI SKOD properties and make it a favorable use. Currently, all CG/SKOD and CI/SKOD property owners have the right to ask for a special exception for transient accommodations but the new proposal eliminates that vested right for most owners. How can the County Commission deny CG/SKOD and CI/SKOD property owners the rights they currently have which, if the Comprehensive Plan amendment is adopted, will be given to only a special few? How does it NOT violate the Equal Protection laws of our Constitution and the Bert J. Harris Act vested rights provision? If the County does allow this special treatment to pass, will it set a precedent where the county CAN deny a developer the right to a particular use that others in the same district get to enjoy?
- 8) Will there be an impact study done on all Commercial and Industrial properties in Sarasota County that will have unlimited density for hotels?
- 9) How many employees will Benderson's mega-hotel have? Where will they park?
- 10) Where will the delivery trucks for the hotel, restaurant, and retail uses park?
- 11) Does Benderson Development plan to have a rooftop bar? Restaurant? How many employees will each of these establishments have and where will they park?
- 12) Do they plan to ask for a special exception to turn their rooftop bar/restaurant into a nightclub?
- 13) Beach access near the Village is limited. How does Benderson plan to get their hotel guests to the public beach?
- 14) Benderson had planned to develop on both sides of Ocean Blvd, do they plan to add a street light (just like they did for Siesta Promenade)
- 15) If approved (and not challenged), how long will construction take and where will all the construction trucks park?

If you would like to discuss any of these questions, call me at the number listed above.

Warm regards,
Lourdes Ramirez
PRESIDENT