



If mere mention of a destination's name stirs wonder in our soul, then we must go and learn why that is so.

Jack Veeger, *Sarasota: A Tribute in Verse and Vision* \*

### **A Note of Celebration**

In May 2011, Dr. Leatherman, also known as "Dr. Beach," named Siesta Key Beach the *very best*, the No. 1 beach, in all the USA.

We've long cherished and protected our beach sand, magical in appearance and unique in the world. The clarity of our water, the health of our environment, accessibility, and hospitality are only a few qualities mentioned in Dr. Leatherman's evaluation.

Since this news in May, Siesta Key is a joyful host to all who come. Siesta Key tourism tax revenues already exceed 2010 totals, with data reported only through June 2011. For this distinction and benefit to our community, we celebrate!

SKA will continue to work, guided by goals of protection for our scenic and natural beauty, our neighborhood character, keeping our property secure, representing all who call Siesta Key their "own." Our actions, caring for Siesta Key, will be evident in the memories of all who visit.

Siesta Key Beach will be *forever Best*.

Thanks for your continued support as a Member of the Siesta Key Association.

Catherine Luckner  
President

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### **Our Legislative Success: Keeping our neighborhood (RSF) zoning governance**

On March 30, 2011, SKA Directors took swift action to remedy two Florida legislative bills, HB0476 and SB0883. These bills were written to enhance vacation rental availability but would eliminate local zoning code and governance of our Residential Single Family (RSF) neighborhoods. The permitting of overnight, weekend, or weekly rentals in our RSF neighborhoods placed our neighborhoods at risk.

SKA Directors called our Members to action through special email contact, wrote to legislators, and received support through legislative action of our County Commissioners. *Thank you* to our SKA Members, Nora Patterson, Chair and the Board of County Commissioners, Senators Nancy Detert and Mike Bennett, and Representatives Ray Pilon and Doug Holder.

Legislators listened. They amended both bills to "grandfather in" our current zoning and code enforcement laws. We retained our County ordinance, our special Siesta Key Overlay District ordinance and code enforcement for these zoning protections. *On July 1, 2011, the amended bills were enacted.*

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## Our Legislative Success

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### Current Ordinance overview for Residential, Single Family Homes (RSF):

In RSF neighborhoods, rentals can occur *once in 30 days*. If you have homestead exemption, you are not allowed to commercially rent. If you rent your property, you must register as a vacation rental and pay the tourism tax. If you advertise or manage such rentals, you must comply with the RSF requirement of 30 day rental and advertise it as such.

Why enforce rental ordinance in (RSF) neighborhoods? Residential neighborhoods where homes are illegally rented short-term see increases in violations of noise and parking rules. The money generated from illegal rentals is not reported to the County nor is tourism tax paid. This creates disadvantage for those who legally rent and comply with the insurance costs and tax. The homestead tax exemption on properties being illegally rented deprives our community of tax revenue. Loss of tax revenue has potential impact on our property tax assessments, County services, and home valuation.

SKA will continue to assess this problem in (RSF) neighborhoods with Code Enforcement assistance.

### Update: North Siesta Bridge Rehabilitation

In March 2011, the Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) held a public comment meeting to engage Siesta Key residents for planning of our north Siesta Bridge rehabilitation. Hearing continued concerns from residents as well as business owners, SKA took additional steps to engage FDOT engineer staff. Included in this effort were recommendations to ensure safety with minimal disruption to our quality of life on Siesta Key.

SKA approached our Commissioner, Nora Patterson, and the Board of County Commissioners with these recommendations. SKA sent on April 21 a formal request for assistance to FDOT. In this effort, SKA is thankful for support and partnership of the Siesta Key Village Association, the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, the Siesta Key Condominium Council Association, and Bay Island Association of Siesta Key.

## Update: North Siesta Bridge Rehabilitation

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May 16, 2011, FDOT responded favorably with the following results:

- The bridge will remain open throughout the rehabilitation project
- All work will occur at night (9P-7A)
- Single lane closures will occur only at night
- Work will stop during all holiday periods to prevent traffic congestion
- Off-site fabrication will be used to reduce traffic disruption
- Project will begin June 2012 and will be completed by October 2012

### At our July 7 SKA meeting, FDOT continued their supportive response with 6 project engineers in attendance.

Good news for us all:

- New gratings (part of bridge which opens) are designed to reduce road noise
- FDOT will provide an on-site project manager for the project duration. He will have phone contact information both on the SKA website as well as a dedicated FDOT website.
- The week after our July meeting, SKA sent additional ideas for increased efficiencies
- The Siesta Key Bridge Rehabilitation Project (Financial Project Number 419707-1-52-01) will bid on December 15, 2011. SKA will post the link to the results after December 15, 2011.

**An added benefit occurred**, thanks to SKA Director Joe Volpe and FDOT. During our July 7 meeting, Joe asked for information regarding a problematic, newly paved section of Siesta Drive, Key side of the bridge. Within the week, Jon Sands, FDOT Project Engineer, provided facts regarding the City of Sarasota project which included a contract dispute between paving contractors. We shared his response with our Commissioner, Nora Patterson. Within three weeks, the entire section was redone and is a smoothed and level road.



## Update: Siesta Beach Plans

SKA Officers met in late July with County Planning and Engineering staff, joined by other Siesta Key stakeholders. Our questions identified national “best practices” to be used in the redesign of our beach park.

**Safety, accessibility and traffic flow are guiding principles** and must meet new Federal and State standards. This applies to all new parking and mobility features. The esplanade, or planned walkway, is designed to improve safety for pedestrians and improve traffic flow. Upon reviews of the specifications, the esplanade will not cause a reduction in total available parking. New code safety requirements for sizing of parking spaces will affect the orientation of parking spaces and total number added, estimated to be greater than 130 new spaces.

**First phase of beach park improvement is the drainage plan,** necessary to reduce flooding risks to Beach Road.

**SKA recommends a mid-size choice of drainage pond, which would add 40+ parking spaces to new parking.** The new parking areas would be a permeable surface. While a smaller

pond would add 70 spaces, it adds cost greater than \$500,000 due to the drainage necessity for all parking to become a permeable surface.

**No parking space will be lost during the drainage construction.** Open ground available after the drainage plan is completed could be utilized for additional parking. *The current parking lot remains available for parking during construction.*

**The drainage plan is being funded through matching grants and must begin December 1, 2011.** *These grant funds will be lost if this deadline is not met.*

**SKA recommended the drainage plan receive priority for approval.** The County Commissioners (BCC) requested agreement with all stakeholders be completed by September. We supported approval for construction as soon as possible. The plan is scheduled for approval to the BCC on September 14, 2011.

**New parking and bathroom facilities are scheduled for October 2012 after surtax funds become available.**

## SKA Working for You!

### **Permits/Noise Ordinance for Special Events**

SKA completed work on a new zoning ordinance with approval by the Board of County Commissioners in April. The ordinance covers permits for outdoor entertainment and hours of operation during specific holidays. The new Temporary Use Permit (TUP) provides for specific hours of live music and a standard noise threshold for all establishments. The ordinance is in effect for one year to allow opportunity to evaluate effectiveness. This new TUP was achieved through collaboration, led by our SKVA Liaison, Director Peter van Roekens and Russell Matthes, SKVA President.

### **Permit Process for Events at Siesta Key Beach**

In April SKA received many worried phone calls and emails regarding a Special Event application for use of Siesta Key Beach. SKA was asked to review the event and provide comments which might assist the permitting process for special events. A significant step in the permitting process was for all “large use” temporary permits to involve a coordinated review by the Sheriff’s Office, Zoning, and Park and Recreation staff. This would ensure events could be managed for traffic, mitigate impact on surrounding neighborhoods, and represent a good fit for the use of our beach park environment. The County Administrator and BCC recommended this process of permitting be completed prior to issuance of new large use permits. Additionally, a process of alerting Siesta Key residents and businesses to scheduled activities for the beach park was initiated.

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## SKA Working for You

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### Adopt-a-Road

In July we had record turnout for cleanup with SKA Directors, SKA Members, Bay Island Association President Malcolm and Anarita Scott, Mark Smith and Russel Matthes, SKVA, joining our efforts. The cleanup included Ocean Blvd., Higel/Siesta Drive to the North Siesta Bridge as well as from Stickney Point Road *south* two miles, including Peacock Road and Old Stickney Point Road. Our Adopt-a-Road Chair, Peter van Roekens and Director Michael Shay led the way to our increase in coverage and volunteerism. We continue a *daily* routine for road cleanup in this southern portion of Siesta Key.

### Littering Signs

SKA requested and received new littering signs from the County. With initiative from new Director Michael Shay in May and a quick response from the County, these were installed in July along Ocean Blvd. and Midnight Pass Road. Strategic placement occurred as a result of our Adopt-a-Road observations.

### Speed Calming/Radar Signs

SKA is happy to report approval for 5 speed calming radar signs to be placed on Ocean Blvd. approaching Siesta Key Village, on Beach Road, and three neighborhood primary roads. These devices provide speed feedback to drivers and are highly effective in speed reduction. With many pedestrian activities and neighborhoods along high use roads, this will increase safety. SKA initiatives included meetings with our Sheriff's office, County Traffic and Mobility staff, County Administration, and our Board of County Commissioners. Director Joe Volpe and Member Bob Luckner took leadership roles in our project.

### Tree Trimming Protection/FPL Collaboration

SKA took initiatives to ensure protections of the tree canopy throughout Siesta Key during the FPL scheduled trimming. Ann Kaplan, Director, facilitated our collaborative "walk throughs" with FPL and Asplundh Supervisors. SKA has added an FPL link on the left side of our home page ( [www.siestakeyassociation.com](http://www.siestakeyassociation.com) ) which provides a map of the trimming schedule. For urgent help regarding the trimming of your tree canopy, an arborist phone contact is also listed with the FPL link.

### SKA has added a Facebook Link

Please visit our Siesta Key Association Facebook link on the home page ( [www.siestakeyassociation.com](http://www.siestakeyassociation.com) ) of our website. We now share news and photos of SKA special activities, meetings, and community events.

**\*\* SKA contributed more than 400 volunteer hours for our Siesta Key community, March to August 2011 \*\***

### SKA New Directors

SKA has elected three new Directors to serve on our Board.

They are **Beverly Arias, Helen Clifford** and **Michael Shay**. They have served on our Board during the past four months, adding enthusiasm, talent and considerable time for SKA projects. We invite you to meet them at one of our meetings and learn more about them from our website.

[http://www.siestakeyassociation.com/ska\\_board\\_bios.htm](http://www.siestakeyassociation.com/ska_board_bios.htm)

\* *Sarasota: A Tribute in Verse and Vision* (2010)

is the work of Jack Veeger and Patricia Nebel

[www.windvanarts.com](http://www.windvanarts.com)

We are fortunate to have Patricia and Gary Nebel

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