

SKA Public Hearing Comments
SKOD Amendment 2017-070
11 April 2018

Honorable Commissioners. My name is Gene Kusekoski. I live at 1660 Summerhouse Lane on Siesta Key. I have filled out a Speaker Card. As President of Siesta Key Association, I am speaking on behalf of our members and Siesta Key residents for whom we advocate.

You should be in possession of the results of a member survey we conducted regarding proposed changes to the ordinances governing the Siesta Key Overlay District. The results show that 89% of the hundreds of members polled strongly oppose any changes to the current ordinances.

We understand that Siesta Key is a popular tourist destination. Some people look at it solely as a lucrative business opportunity, or as one member puts it, a line item in their investment portfolio.

We look at it as our home, in some cases, our only home. Some of us have owned homes there for decades, and some, like me, have waited decades to finally realize our dream of buying a home there.

Whichever the case, we bought homes on Siesta Key because the island has a special, small beach village character that is unique to the area. The ordinances governing the Siesta Key Overlay District, both for residences and businesses, were created specifically to preserve this character.

They were not intended to be temporary but were intended to stand the test of time. Based on feedback from our members, they are working well and will continue to serve the needs of residents and visitors into the future.

SKA members strongly oppose any efforts to change these ordinances broadly or to see specific areas carved out for special treatment. We are concerned that the currently proposed ordinance may be an instance of spot zoning that solely benefits the property owners in a small defined area without obvious public benefit.

We do not oppose change in general and we do not oppose development of businesses that are in harmony with the character of Siesta Key and that enhance the quality of life there.

Replacing a run-down building with something new and fresh would be welcome, as long as it conforms to the current SKOD ordinances.

This case may also provide an opportunity to take a stand against the tactic of buying a piece of property, knowing and understanding the rules governing that property, then arguing that a fair return on the investment cannot be realized unless the rules are changed. It's time to make it clear that rules will be changed only when there is an obvious benefit to the community.

As no such benefit is apparent here, we respectfully request that the Commissioners take action to protect the rights of the majority of Siesta Key residents and property owners by rejecting the proposed amendment at today's meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.