

For Immediate Release:
September 29 2020

SK COALITION OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED SIESTA KEY HOTEL GROWS

Unwelcome Project and Dangerous Precedents

Siesta Key, FL September 29, 2020: The SK Coalition has grown to include representatives of a dozen Home Owners Associations (HOAs), and the leadership of the Siesta Key Condominium Council (SKCC), and the Siesta Key Association (SKA), collectively representing approximately 8500 households on Siesta Key. The coalition of Siesta Key residents and organizations was formed to oppose a proposed 170-room, 8-story hotel in Siesta Key Village. "The developers propose to ask the County Commissioners to strip away barrier island protections, degrade the unique character and charm of Siesta Key, and have significant adverse impact on neighboring residents and throughout Sarasota County" the coalition asserts.

The design of the proposed hotel includes 170 rooms in a 92-foot high structure, on less than an acre of land between Beach Road and Calle Miramar, at the southern entrance to Siesta Key Village. It will also include a 223-space parking garage, a restaurant, and a roof-top pool and bar, all of which will add to congestion and noise. All incoming and departing traffic is proposed to be via the narrow residential street, Calle Miramar. The hotel developers plan to request multiple amendments and exceptions to long-established policies, restrictions and codes that were written to preserve the unique nature of Siesta Key. These existing regulations preclude transient accommodations, limit the building height, control building density and setbacks, and discourage this kind of development intensification. Some of these proposed changes are countywide, and will impact protections of all barrier islands in the County.

The Coalition does not oppose development on Siesta Key, if it is consistent with the existing zoning regulations. However, they are very concerned that the project seeks to overturn protective Barrier Island protections. "This opens the flood gates for other intense development on the Key," worries Mark Spiegel, representative of the Beach Villas at the Oasis. "Granting these dramatic Special Exceptions and actual amendments to Barrier Island policies sets a dangerous precedent. Owners of the other 40 acres of similarly commercially-zoned land on Siesta Key could request similar height, density, and use exceptions. Even if amendments are limited to this one site, it will set the stage for other developers to sue the County due to precedent."

At a local level, neighboring property owners would be threatened by loss of privacy, noise, congestion, and reduced property values. The influx of hundreds more visitors to this already busy entrance to the Siesta Key Village, and to Beach Access #5, will also threaten bicycle and pedestrian safety, reduce public accessibility to the Gulf waterline, and precipitate confrontations between property owners and transient visitors.

The Coalition is hopeful that the developers will decide to pursue other compliant projects for the land they control. If they file their formal Development Application, the Coalition will engage with the Planning and Commissioner hearings, to oppose the amendments and exceptions sought for this project.

Further information on this coalition and its objectives can be found on the SK Coalition webpage under Projects on the SKA website (<https://siestakeyassociation.com/projects/sk-coalition/>), or via e-mail at SKCoalition@gmail.com. A full briefing of the Coalition's activities will be included in the next SKA Meeting, tentatively scheduled for October 1st.