

SIESTA KEY COALITION

Dear Mr. Anderson,

When you met with neighboring Associations representatives, to advocate for your proposed hotel near Siesta Key Village, you motivated many homeowners and Associations to voice their concerns about the concept and to reach out to each other. The outcome of those conversations was the grass-roots formation of the Siesta Key Coalition. Our SK Coalition is also strategically aligned, and in close cooperation and coordination, with the Siesta Key Association (SKA) and the Siesta Key Condominium Council (SKCC). Our collective organizations and memberships represent 8500 residences in the area.

In a recent Siesta Sand article, you were quoted as “Citing strong support from barrier island families”. You have also represented that you have had positive responses from neighboring associations. Every “neighboring” condo association, next to or across the street from your property, is part of our SK Coalition, including many others from all parts of SK. We have yet to talk with a single condo or residential neighborhood association on SK that thinks your plan is a good idea. It is the view of our SK Coalition that most local residents are strongly opposed to the proposed hotel in its current scale and configuration. Each week we are adding new community Associations as supporting members that are expressing similar concerns.

Our coalition is not at all opposed to re-development of your property or enhancing development on SK in general. We strongly favor economic growth on Siesta Key, but not at the cost of so many adverse consequences, or if it involves revising and circumventing existing protective policies, regulations, and codes. Many of the long-standing policies you would like to see amended, or to receive Special Exceptions from, were voted in with broad input from the residents of SK to protect the unique environment of the Barrier Islands. Your hotel design substantially exceeds height, density, and other regulations under the applicable UDC/SKOD and the Comprehensive Plan for the Barrier Island FLU. Moreover, attempting to remove “Transient Accommodation” from the SKOD-applicable UDC and the barrier island FLU would set a dangerous precedent, putting Siesta Key on a slippery slope towards more “density and intensity”.

You will have noticed several opposition articles in the press, (including Siesta Sand, Sarasota News Leader, The Observer, Sarasota Herald Tribune, Suncoast TV News and most recently the Herald Tribune Editorial). You have also received letters of opposition from the leadership of SKA and SKCC. Our Webpage continues to attract a lot of public interest, even from residents of mainland Sarasota; and there is a petition from another organization with over 1600 signatures.

We hope you will evaluate other options for the land you control in the vicinity of Calle Miramar, Ocean Blvd., and Beach Road. We hope that any development will be compliant with your by-right zoning and would result in a project more consistent with the unique character of Siesta Key. A large-scale, high-rise transient hotel will have multiple adverse consequences at

this location and set concerning precedents for other similarly zoned commercial property on our barrier island.

Again, we hope that you will be willing to reconsider your proposal. Respectfully, if you elect to proceed with the current plan in a formal application, our membership has asked that we continue to grow our coalition, expand our public voice, and further elevate our engagement with the public process.

As you know, I am a career commercial developer and have never opposed any development project until now. As such, our coalition leadership opposes this plan after much research and objective consideration. Nonetheless, as I have with you in the past, I remain open to, and actually welcome, further dialogue, if you wish to seek feedback on our specific concerns, or if you wish to discuss alternative plans. Take care.

Mark Spiegel
Chair, Siesta Key Coalition
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