



Longboat Key News

October 9, 2026

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FREE

InsideLook



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School Speed Zone
Safety Program
Annual Report



The cost of enforcement ...page 15



Hook, Line and Trespassed ...page 10

Visionary Carl Abbott Taught Houses How to See

Paul Rudolph's student carried the Sarasota School into its boldest form. His death at 90 leaves a harder question: who keeps what he built?

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

For 35 years, crowds on Siesta Key's most famous beach walked past Casa del Cielo without ever seeing it.

You entered by driving beneath its gatehouse into a thicket of tropical green, and at ground level the Gulf disappeared entirely. Then you rode up to the main living floor, and the whole horizon arrived at once. Water, sky, light, nothing else.

That was the move. Carl Abbott made it, in one form or another, for 60 years.

Abbott, FAIA, the youngest and last surviving member of the original Sarasota School of Architecture, died this week at 90 after a short illness. The Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture announced his death, and Morris "Marty" Hylton III, president of Architecture Sarasota, confirmed it. A memorial has not been announced.

His output was deliberately small. A few dozen houses, a church, schools, a library, the Sarasota County Women's Resource Center. Nearly all of it rests on a single idea.



The House of Columns at dusk on Longboat Key's North end. The 5.7 acre Bayside estate came to market this year at \$22 million. Coastal Home Photography.

See Abbott, page 12

Why the Battle Over Longboat Pass is Not Just Town vs. State

A Boater says a low bridge would force him to sell his house. A condo president says a legal slope is still a cruel one. And Manatee County is being asked to pick a side.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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Stand on the sand at the south end of Coquina Beach an hour before sunset and you are looking at one of the last unspoiled postcards in Florida. The Gulf pours through Longboat Pass in bands of jade and turquoise. Pelicans work the tide line. Boats drift off the sandbar at Beer Can Island. Jewfish Key sits



green and quiet inside the cut.

And across the whole scene runs a low, gray, 69-year-old drawbridge that barely interrupts the horizon.

That bridge is coming down. Everyone agrees on that much. What replaces it is now the most

See New Bridge, page 8

City Staff Said Building is Too Tall, Shore's Team Said Change the Rule

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The light is changing on St. Armands Circle. The season is coming, the restaurants are staffing up, and the merchants who gutted their flooded shops to the studs two autumns ago are counting on the crowds that make a barrier-island business survive its summers.

This is the Circle that earned its comeback the hard way. Storm surge crossed the island twice in a single season, and the recovery that followed, Tommy Bahama reopened, Pinchers moving in, a

Told the building does not conform to the code, the applicant's consultant proposed, politely and on the record, that the city change the code.

rebuilt south block filling with wine and jewelry and confection, happened under the same 35-foot cap, the same hotel prohibition, the same parking code that has governed this acre for decades.

Nobody got a special rule. They got patience, insurance fights and sweat, and the village came back anyway.

Which is the backdrop against which one application, for one corner, keeps asking the city to bend.

The ledger

Consider what is attached to the Shore redevelopment at 24 and 28 N. Boulevard of the Presidents, the storm-gutted box at the Circle's

See Shore, page 13

With 66,984 Tickets and No Traffic Stop, Sarasota's Cameras Mailed \$7 Million in Fines Last Year



Two reports, 16 minutes, no public comment, and a unanimous vote. Line by line, here is who gets the money.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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Nobody got pulled over. Not once.

In the 12 months that ended June 30, cameras in the City of Sarasota generated 66,984 notices of violation. That is 183 a day, every day of the year, without a single officer waving a single car to the curb. A camera recorded it. A police employee reviewed the clip. A notice went in the mail.

Drivers paid just over \$7 million.

Those numbers came to the City Commission on Oct. 5 in two

See Tickets, page 15

Longboat Library Clears Town Vote with a February On the Books

Two decades of false starts, a collapsed college partnership, two hurricanes and a \$3.5 million fundraising drive. The shovel may finally have a date.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

After twenty years of false starts, the Longboat Key library has a date with a shovel.

The Town Commission voted unanimously Monday, Oct. 5, to advance the land-use approvals for the Sarasota County library at Town Center Green. As the hearing wound down, officials floated the timing island residents have waited years to hear: a groundbreaking toward the end of February, in the heart of season, when the most residents are here to see it.

That would put the first visible work on the ground roughly a year later than once projected. On the

See Library, page 13

EditorLetters

Longboat Key News and Sarasota City News encourages Letters to the Editor on timely issues. Please email to: letters@lbknews.com or mail to PO Box 8001, Longboat Key, FL 34228. We also print letters sent to Town Hall that address Longboat Key issues. We reserve the right to edit.

The Tax Cut That Sends a Bill

To: News Department

Amendment 3 is being touted as a tax cut, but it will cost Floridians.

Amendment 3 will be costly to businesses and renters. The costs of providing essential public services like police and fire protection, stormwater management, and road repairs will not disappear from local budgets with the lost revenue from Amendment 3. Local governments will still be obligated to provide these services and find new ways of paying for them, likely in the form of higher non-homestead property taxes and service fees that will cost businesses and renters the most.

Amendment 3 will be costly to quality of life in Florida. Your favorite library programs, parks and recreational activities, performing arts, and even holiday light displays will likely be reduced or eliminated.

Amendment 3 will be costly to public safety. Lost revenue from Amendment 3 will likely mean fewer police officers, fewer firefighters, less public safety equipment, and less preparedness for severe weather events. In opposing Amendment 3, the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida Police Chiefs Association and the Florida Professional Firefighters agree that the cost to public safety is just too high.

Before you vote, ask yourself if Amendment 3 is worth the cost.

BJ Bishop
President ManaSota League of Cities

One Way Off the Island

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Thanks for the call this morning to clarify the meeting you've got coming up and briefly summarizing what we were talking about after this week's Commission meeting. Here's a stab at making the case for barrier islands to be given more authority to regulate development and not be preempted by well-intentioned state goals.

The important and well-intentioned legislative efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in the state unin-

tionally treat all jurisdictions the same. Barrier islands have unique life-safety related challenges regarding safely evacuating residents and limited ways to do so when tropical systems threaten. At the same time, barrier islands have challenges with managing current development capacity in increasingly vulnerable areas.

Therefore, while the importance of facilitating affordable housing is recognized, it is also important that the legislature provide more local authority to barrier islands to make determinations over where and how much development makes sense to safely take place.

Allen Parsons
Planning and Zoning Director Town of Longboat Key

The \$1.4 Million Question on the Ballot

To: Longboat Key Homeowners

As we approach the November 2026 election, I want to share some information and my perspective regarding Amendment 3 and what it could mean for Longboat Key.

Amendment 3 was placed on the ballot by the Florida Legislature and will require approval from at least 60% of voters to pass. If approved, it would significantly increase the homestead exemption for Florida residents who use their property as their primary residence. The exemption would increase to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028, with inflationary adjustments beginning in 2029. While this would reduce the taxable value of qualifying homesteaded properties, I believe it is equally important to understand the potential impact on the local services that property taxes support.

Property taxes are the primary source of funding for many essential local government services, including police and fire rescue, emergency management, roads and stormwater infrastructure, parks, libraries, and other community services. Local governments are required to balance their budgets, so when revenues decline, services and expenditures must be reduced or other sources of revenue must be identified.

For Longboat Key, the Town anticipates approximately \$1.4 million in reduced annual General Fund revenue once

the higher exemption is fully implemented. A loss of this size could affect the Town's ability to maintain current service levels and fund future priorities.

Our experience with Hurricanes Helene and Milton is an important example of why maintaining adequate local resources matters. The 2024 storms resulted in nearly \$30 million in costs to the Town, including beach-related expenses. With continued uncertainty surrounding future federal disaster assistance and FEMA reimbursements, communities may be required to assume a greater share of recovery costs in the future.

There may also be impacts to services provided by Sarasota

See Letters, page 4

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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 2

County. County representatives have advised the Town that significant reductions could affect parks and libraries, including the Sarasota County Longboat Key Branch Library.

The need for essential services does not disappear when property tax revenue decreases. Local governments may have to consider service reductions, changes to property tax rates, non-ad valorem assessments, or other revenue sources to address funding shortfalls. For that reason, it is important to look not only at the immediate tax reduction but also at how the costs of providing local services may ultimately be funded.

Florida will also convene its constitutionally established Taxation and Budget Reform Commission in 2027. This commission meets every 20 years specifically to review Florida’s tax and budget structure and can recommend changes for consideration by voters.

As your Commissioner, I encourage you to learn as much as possible about Amendment 3 and consider both its impact on individual property owners and its potential effect on the services our community relies upon.

I will continue to gather and provide factual information regarding the amendment so residents can make their own informed decisions. I am available to speak with any association prior to the November 3 election and happy to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me.

Gary Coffin
Commissioner Town of Longboat Key

The County Is Coming. The Rain Isn’t Leaving.

To: Longboat Key Commission
We have received reports from the businesses that flooding is occurring in the business areas. The county has been contacted and they are responding to the area. Unfortunately, the rain does not appear to be letting up.

Karie Friling
City Manager City of Sarasota

I Don’t Know Who to Call Anymore

To: Sarasota City Manager Karie Friling
I don’t know who to contact about flooding anymore. I’ve just heard from a St. Armands resident and from Rachel Burns with the St. Armands Circle Merchants Association that there is serious street flooding, specifically in the area of 29 N. Blvd. of the Presidents, the Speaks Clam Bar location.

Can someone please check this out ASAP before homes and businesses are unnecessarily flooded?

It used to be the case that temporary pumps and generators on trailers would be brought in when needed. The people who were in charge of this have all moved on, and I don’t know who to call about this anymore.

Chris Goglia
President St. Armands Residents Association

I’ll Call You From the Car

To: Town of Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Board Member Ron Ginsberg
I am in a Commission meeting this afternoon and will be going to a meeting near UTC at 6 p.m. I will try to call you as I am driving to the 6 p.m. meeting.

We are meeting with the City of Sarasota on Wednesday about their desire to remove the transportation comp plan.

BJ Bishop
Commissioner Town of Longboat Key

The Bridge Somebody Deleted

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Ron Ginsberg here, one of the Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Commissioners. I am also, as you know, a member of the MPO Citizens Advisory Committee.

At the last meeting at the MPO, I brought up the issue of the deleted future bridge across the Bay from Longboat Key, and why I thought it was a pretty good idea to keep it as a future goal. I know you were interested in this proposal, if only as a possibility in the future, and I wanted to talk to you about what I learned at the MPO meeting.

Glad to speak with you at your convenience. Thanks!
Ron Ginsberg
Planning and Zoning Board Member Town of Longboat Key

One Year Later, the Report Is Attached

To: Longboat Key Commission
As mentioned during the meeting, Public Works Director Charlie Mopps provided the one-year report and observations, attached. We will ensure that a copy of the report is placed on the website where appropriate.

Please let me know if you need any other items.
Stephanie Garcia
Deputy Town Clerk Town of Longboat Key

Homework Before Monday’s Award

To: Longboat Key Deputy Town Clerk Stephanie Garcia
Steph, this goes along with the FLC award that we are getting on Monday. It was sent to Commissioner Coffin as he is on the Policy Board of the SBEP.

We may want to send it to the other commissioners ahead of the award to see how well the seawall panels are functioning. If you agree, please forward it on to the others.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director Town of Longboat Key Public Works

The Seawall That Came to Life

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
Congratulations to you all at the Town of Longboat Key on the Environmental Stewardship Award from the Florida League of Cities for the Bayfront Park Living Seawall project.

Sharing a write-up on the project, including observations made by SBEP and citizen science surveys of the seawall panels from post-installation to one year. SBEP is pleased to be a partner on this project with you all and looks forward to seeing how it continues to progress.

Nicole Iadevaia
Science and Restoration Manager Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Winning Back a Foot at the Fence

To: Longboat Key Commission
I am writing to share the positive outcome of last Thursday’s onsite meeting at Bayfront Park and to express sincere gratitude on behalf of our local pickleball community.

At that meeting, alongside many dedicated local players, I met with Public Works Director Charles Mopps, Streets, Facilities, Parks and Recreation Manager Mark Richardson, and Project Manager David Kushnir. Our primary focus was reviewing the court layout, specifically

See Letters, page 6

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It's Time to Give Your MEDICARE COVERAGE A CHECKUP

To help people with Medicare make informed decisions for the coming year, Sarasota Memorial offers this information about Medicare Open Enrollment, now taking place through December 7.

This year, Medicare's Open Enrollment Period runs from October 15 through December 7. During this time, Medicare recipients can make changes to their health and prescription drug coverage, including:

- ☒ returning to Original Medicare (also known as Traditional Medicare)
- ☒ joining a Medicare Advantage Plan or switching from one plan to another
- ☒ joining or changing prescription drug plans

Health and prescription drug plans can change from year to year, so it's important to review your coverage during Open Enrollment to ensure it meets your needs. Any changes made during Open Enrollment will go into effect on January 1, 2027.



ORIGINAL MEDICARE ("Traditional")

Sarasota Memorial and First Physicians Group (FPG) always accept all Original Medicare and Medicare/Medigap Traditional supplemental plans.

Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C Plans) IN-NETWORK with Sarasota Memorial and FPG as of January 1, 2027.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ☒ Aetna | ☒ Florida Complete Care | ☒ Simply |
| ☒ Florida Blue* | ☒ Freedom Health* | ☒ Wellcare |
| ☒ Florida Blue HMO* | ☒ Optimum Healthcare* | |

*Note: These plans are in-network with SMH and FPG Specialists only

Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C Plans) OUT-OF-NETWORK with Sarasota Memorial and FPG as of January 1, 2027.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ☒ American Health Advantage | ☒ Healthspring | ☒ Ultimate Health |
| ☒ Devoted Health | ☒ Humana | ☒ UnitedHealthcare |
| ☒ Gold Kidney Health | ☒ Longevity Health Plan | |

If you have already made your Medicare selections for the coming year, you can make additional changes through December 7, 2026.



For assistance with health insurance issues, contact SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders), a free program offered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the local Area Agency on Aging. Specially trained volunteers can provide one-on-one counseling and information. Call 1-800-963-5337 or visit www.floridashine.org.

This information is not a solicitation and is not intended to persuade you to make any changes to your relationship with any health insurer.

For more information about insurance plans accepted by Sarasota Memorial, go to www.smh.com.

For more information about insurance plans accepted by First Physicians Group, go to www.smhfpg.com.

EditorLetters



Letters, from page 4

player safety buffers along the perimeter fences and efficient court access for the center court. This serves as a welcome follow-up to my correspondence from last week regarding quality assurance and site execution on the Bayfront Park resurfacing project.

Thanks to an open, productive dialogue grounded in USA Pickleball technical guidelines, the Town agreed to adjust the layout to gain approximately one foot of additional clearance between the perimeter fences and the outside net posts on the end courts. By rebalancing the interior corridors between Courts 1-2 and Courts 2-3, we successfully expanded the outer run-off zones without compromising the safe, open space between adjacent matches. We also had constructive discussions regarding an additional gate to streamline access to the middle court and minimize cross-court disruptions. These two revisions to the project eliminate a critical pinch point, ensure safe deceleration space on wide returns and around-the-post play, and will significantly enhance the overall playing experience for everyone in Longboat Key.

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Charles, Mark and David. Mark's ongoing initiative and dedication to delivering a high-quality playing surface has been commendable. It speaks volumes about the Town's leadership that these individuals took the time to meet on-site, review the measurements in detail, listen to player input, and act decisively with on-site field adjustments that prioritize safety and the long-term enjoyment of our park. A special thank-you as well to David Kushnir for his time and accessibility throughout this past week. Despite not being a player himself, David showed wonderful patience speaking with me multiple times to understand the specific movement dynamics and safety rationale behind our request.

I also want to specifically recognize fellow community residents Mariena Evans and Mike Eden, whose technical consultation, insights and articulate advocacy during our discussions were instrumental in presenting our case effectively, as well as all the players who attended in support. Having our community present with constructive, unified input made all the differ-

ence.

Thank you all for your collaborative spirit, responsiveness, and continued commitment to making Bayfront Park a premier, safe recreation destination for the local community and our visitors. We look forward to the project's completion and seeing everyone out on the courts, including our new Town Commissioner, George Landry.

Shawn Leven
Liaison Longboat Key Pickleball Community

By the numbers: 85 hopefuls, one trolley ride, one Karie

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
For the City Manager search we had:
85 applicants
42 semi-finalists selected
36 video interviews reviewed (6 withdrew during this process)
6 finalists selected
5 visited on-site (one withdrew before the visit)
My staff is working on finding some images. Miles has some for the RLT interviews, but we are trying to see if anyone has anything for the trolley tour.

Shayla Griggs
City Clerk
City of Sarasota

Mayor tossed the binders, now wants the numbers

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs
I definitely want to include info about the City Manager search, but I apparently dumped

See Letters, page 7



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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 6

the contents of all the binders as soon as Karie signed her contract.

Would you please provide number of applicants, number of semi-finalists whose video inter-views we watched, and number of finalists who visited Sarasota. I suspect that Miles has video (or can locate stills) of the trolley tour we took the finalists on and the “meet the people” event at RL Taylor. Please add any other info and images you consider worth including.

Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

Let there be light

To: Sarasota City Commission

I wanted to share my appreciation for the City’s new Click-2-Fix app. A streetlight in my neighborhood had been out for quite some time, and after I noticed the new app, I used it to report the issue. Within just a few days, the light was repaired.

The app made the reporting process incredibly simple, and the City’s quick response was genuinely impressive. Great example of technology making it easier for residents to communi-cate with the City and see tangible results.

Please make sure my compliments are shared with the appropriate City teams and staff—both those responsible for developing and launching the app and those who responded to the service request. Their work is noticed and appreciated!

Brogan Wachob
Sarasota

The city was “monitoring” the rain

To: Scott Macdonald

I want to acknowledge receipt of your email. The City was monitoring the rain event last night and was in regular contact with the County during it. I have reached out to Jonathan Lewis and asked for a post-incident report to be shared.

Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Fifty dry years, then water through the back door

To: City of Sarasota and Sarasota County Officials and Staff

I am writing to request immediate attention and action regarding the worsening stormwater and flooding problems on St. Armands Circle. Businesses are experiencing flooding during rainstorms that, historically, have not caused water intrusion. This is an unacceptable situation that threatens the investments and livelihoods of our business community.

Crab & Fin has operated on St. Armands for nearly 50 years. Before the two hurricanes of 2024, we had never experienced flooding inside our restaurant. Yet during last night’s heavy rain, water entered through our back door. Columbia Restaurant had to sandbag its front and back doors, and other businesses experienced flooding as well.

More than two years after the devastating hurricanes, the stormwater system appears to be performing worse, rather than better. In all our years on the Circle, we have never seen flood-ing from non-hurricane rain events become this severe. Last night, the pump station in the Fillmore parking lot did not appear to activate during the storm, nor did other pumps in the area. We need an explanation of whether these systems were operating properly and, if not, why.

Following the hurricanes, St. Armands businesses made the difficult decision to rebuild, reinvest, and remain committed to the Circle. We need the City and County to demonstrate that same commitment by addressing the infrastructure necessary to protect this community.

I am requesting:

- An immediate inspection of the stormwater system and pump stations serving St. Armands Circle.
- A written explanation of pump operations during last night’s storm, including any failures or outages.
- Immediate measures to reduce flooding while permanent improvements are developed.
- A clear corrective action plan, with a timeline and an identified point of contact responsible for coordinating the response.

Please acknowledge this letter and provide an initial written response within five business days. We also request a meeting with the appropriate City and County officials and staff to discuss these concerns and the steps needed to resolve them.

Continued inaction in the face of recurring flooding is unacceptable. Our businesses cannot be expected to repeatedly absorb preventable damage while waiting for a meaningful response. This issue requires urgency, accountability, and measurable action.

Thank you for your prompt attention. I look forward to your response and a concrete plan to protect St. Armands Circle.

Scott Macdonald
President
St. Armands Circle Association

The surprisingly expensive math of “free” parking

To: Sarasota City Commission

At the request of Commissioner Ahearn-Koch, staff has provided the attached financial pro-jections that show what would happen to revenues and expenditures for the parking fund, if the City removed timed meter parking on the street. As reflected, the deficit increases because we would still need enforcement on the free 2-hour timed street spaces. However, it does decrease the expenses one-time in FY2028 by \$650,000 due to the removal of the pay station replacements. The attached spreadsheet shows the current projected fund (as shared with the Commission on August 31, 2026) versus the revised projected fund.

Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Commissioner gets the Siegfried’s house rules

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

Reservations are only valid with a confirmation, and most likely your reserved table will not be available prior to your reservation time.

René Zimmermann
Owner and Executive Chef
Siegfried’s Restaurant and Biergarten
Sarasota

Landlords say the 1800 block of Fruitville is not for sale

To: Tenants

Alex and I want to provide you with an update regarding the property and clarify what has taken place over the past few days.

As you know, the property had been under contract for sale. We want to emphasize that we did not list the property, solicit offers, or approach buyers looking to sell the property. The buyer approached us directly and presented an offer, to which we agreed.

Because we entered into the contract, we were required to sign a nondisclosure agreement. We were not permitted to discuss the potential transaction with our tenants or with the general public. This confidentiality requirement is also why you did not see us quoted in the news-paper or making public statements regarding the potential sale. Our lack of communication was not intended to create uncertainty or concern; rather, we were contractually required to maintain confidentiality.

We wanted to let you know that the contract is no longer in effect, and the property is no longer under contract. Most importantly, we are not listing the property, marketing the prop-erty, or seeking a buyer. The property is not being offered for sale.

Our intention is to continue owning and managing the property and providing the stability and continuity you have come to expect prior to the offer we received.

We want you to hear this directly from us and to have a clear understanding of what occurred. We appreciate your patience and, most importantly, your continued tenancy.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything regarding the property.

Alex and Marlene Lancaster
Sarasota

Breaking News from the Tennis Court Wire

To: Steve Vancore

I will get it from the person who said this to me on the tennis court this morning.

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 15



Top-Ranked for a Reason

Perched on the eighth floor of **Lido Beach Resort**, Drift ranks #1 among 900 Sarasota restaurants on TripAdvisor for its unrivaled views and unforgettable flavors.

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Key Real Estate

*Bird Key, Lido Key,
Longboat Key latest sales*

THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF RECORDED SALES • WEEKS ENDING
OCTOBER 2 AND OCTOBER 9, 2026

The week’s top sale: Unit 1103 at Rosewood Residences
Lido Key, 1000 Benjamin Franklin Dr., sold for \$10,600,000.



ADDRESS	SQ. FT.	LIST PRICE	BED/BATH/ HALF BATH	DAYS ON MARKET	SALE PRICE
---------	---------	------------	------------------------	-------------------	------------

Longboat Key

65 Lighthouse Point Dr.	4,921	\$6,995,000	4/4/1	11	\$6,500,000
1005 Bogey Ln.	3,624	\$2,999,000	4/4/0	226	\$2,600,000
4561 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #202	3,260	\$2,750,000	3/4/1	261	\$2,525,000
415 L Ambiance Dr., #C203	2,634	\$2,580,000	2/2/2	0	\$2,420,000
549 Halyard Ln.	1,594	\$2,195,000	3/2/0	73	\$1,925,000
1211 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #603	1,585	\$1,595,000	2/2/0	3	\$1,575,000
2425 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #1B	1,472	\$1,575,000	2/2/0	33	\$1,450,000
1055 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #301	1,172	\$1,349,000	2/2/0	7	\$1,349,000
1425 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #308	2,002	\$1,040,000	3/3/0	252	\$950,000
1955 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #G6-311	1,492	\$949,000	3/2/0	148	\$900,000
1975 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #G4-307	1,257	\$849,000	2/2/0	6	\$830,000
7115 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #23	1,170	\$885,000	2/2/0	52	\$800,000
2089 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #G1-108	933	\$675,000	2/2/0	197	\$635,000
4621 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #10D	756	\$625,000	2/2/0	238	\$600,000
1925 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #G8-302	1,257	\$569,000	2/2/0	163	\$555,000
601 St. Judes Dr.	1,360	\$575,000	3/2/0	18	\$490,000
734 Spanish Dr. N., #165	1,357	\$450,000	2/2/0	0	\$450,000
3240 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #B104	1,260	\$425,000	2/2/0	142	\$400,000
589 Spanish Dr. N.	1,429	\$335,000	2/2/0	0	\$315,000
2850 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #5	657	\$324,000	1/1/0	123	\$304,000
2600 Harbourside Dr., #I-09	—	\$300,000	Boat slip	316	\$275,000
2600 Harbourside Dr., #N-05	—	\$225,000	Boat slip	916	\$210,000

Bird Key, Lido Key

1000 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #1103	4,081	\$10,600,000	3/3/1	0	\$10,600,000
1000 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #1107	4,482	\$9,880,000	4/4/1	0	\$9,880,000
1000 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #603	4,081	\$8,000,000	3/3/1	0	\$8,000,000
259 Robin Dr.	4,078	\$7,900,000	3/3/2	267	\$7,275,000
1418 John Ringling Pkwy.	5,582	\$7,900,000	5/5/3	144	\$7,210,000
1000 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #605	3,350	\$6,000,000	3/3/1	0	\$6,000,000
1354 Westway Dr.	3,364	\$3,495,000	3/3/0	282	\$3,200,000
516 Spoonbill Way	1,930	\$1,670,000	3/2/0	4	\$1,675,000
1800 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #B308	1,700	\$1,300,000	3/2/1	124	\$1,187,500
223 Seagull Ln.	1,814	\$1,325,000	3/2/0	480	\$990,000
900 S. Blvd. of the Presidents, #4	912	\$599,000	2/2/0	222	\$515,000

Downtown Sarasota

1838 Alta Vista St.	4,452	\$3,200,000	5/4/2	396	\$2,875,000
35 Watergate Dr., #1103	2,985	\$2,200,000	3/3/0	425	\$2,200,000
509 Golden Gate Pt., #2	2,439	\$2,295,000	3/3/1	879	\$1,996,913
543 Columbia Ct.	2,335	\$1,649,990	3/3/0	45	\$1,550,000
340 S. Palm Ave., #PL1	2,313	\$1,150,000	2/3/1	4	\$1,100,000
888 Blvd. of the Arts, #707	1,288	\$1,225,000	2/2/0	26	\$935,000
614 N. Osprey Ave.	925	\$345,000	2/1/0	20	\$305,000

OnPatrol



The following are actual police reports as written by Longboat Key Police Officers. They are edited for length, punctuation and to protect privacy.

Friday, Sept. 25

Tight squeeze

9:44 a.m.

Officer Andrew Van Dyke responded to Harbourside Drive for a report of property damage. The security manager said a vehicle struck property near the Moorings Marina at the Longboat Key Club at about 11 a.m. the day before. Video showed a white Chevy pickup making a tight left turn out of the marina, and the black trailer it was towing hit a yellow barrier pole, the concrete slab beneath it and a light fixture on the gate access pole. Damage was estimated at \$1,500. The truck carried a company name on its side, so the officer called the business, and the receptionist said the owner would be told and the matter would be handled civilly. The plate could not be read, and the officer could not determine whether the driver knew about the collision. It did not appear intentional and no crime occurred. The security manager wanted the incident documented for insurance. Case clear.



The officer explained that the grill was on private property, that its placement was not against the law and that her dispute was with the homeowners association. She agreed, and said she had wanted to talk to the fire department in the first place but dispatch sent the police. She planned to take her safety concerns to the fire department. Case clear.

Tuesday, Sept. 29

Raising the roof

5:07 p.m.

Officer Maple was sent to the 700 block of St. Judes Drive North on a noise complaint about a roofing company working after 5 p.m. The foreman, speaking through an interpreter, said the crew was

cleaning up and needed a few more minutes to get a tarp over the bare spots of the roof because of possible rain overnight. The officer spoke with the person who complained, who appreciated the effort and was fine with that plan. The crew was given a verbal warning, and the officer went over construction hours in detail. Case clear.

Thursday, Oct. 1

What a drag

7:15 a.m.

Officer Dallas Troyer was sent to the waterway at the Linley Street boat ramp after a caller reported two boats tied together dragging anchor and drifting close to the Mar Vista restaurant dock. The caller only wanted police to be aware. The officer told him it was an ongoing issue and that the two sailboats were known derelict vessels. From the dock, the officer saw the boats were very close and about to make contact with it. They were in a different spot than they had been recently, never appear to be occupied, and both registrations were long expired. One had fiberglass damage on the starboard side and sat low in the bow, as if taking on water. The officer photographed the boats. He called one owner several times and received only a text message reading "Hello," with no reply after he explained the reason for the calls. He found no phone number for the other owner. Each owner was issued two boating citations, for anchoring on public waterways with an expired registration and for having an at-risk derelict vessel. The citations were left with police records to be served by certified mail. Case clear.

No vacancy

1:27 p.m.

Officer Nazareno was sent to a condominium in the 400 block of Longboat Club Road after a unit owner, who was out of state, heard from his cleaners that the front desk had given a key to an unauthorized guest. The building manager said a front desk employee had mistakenly handed the key and door code to a woman who showed a confirmation receipt for a one-week rental of the unit, without checking with the owner. The manager confirmed the unit was not rented to anyone and is listed for sale. The woman later returned and was told the unit is not for rent. She said she had booked it through Booking.com on Sept. 17 from her home in Colorado and was charged \$2,600 for the week. She turned the keys over to the manager and was advised to file a fraud report with her local police department. Case clear.

A few after work

8:56 p.m.

Officer Miano was southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive when he saw a black GMC fail to stay in a single lane and noticed its passenger-side brake light was out. He stopped the vehicle in the 1900 block. The officer reported a strong odor of alcohol from the driver, slurred speech and unsteadiness as he stepped out. The driver said he had had a few drinks after work. He showed multiple signs of impairment on field sobriety exercises and was taken into custody at 9:32 p.m. A search turned up a foil bag in his front pocket holding 1.6 grams of marijuana, which field-tested positive for THC. He was taken to the Sarasota County Jail, where breath samples measured .123 and .124. He was charged with driving under the influence and possession of marijuana, along with the traffic violations. Case clear.

Don't leave home without it

10:56 a.m.

Officer Ivan Zunz took in an American Express Platinum card from a man who did not want to give his name. The man said he had found it moments earlier outside the coffee shop in the 3200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The officer found a phone number for the Longboat Key resident named on the card and left her a voicemail asking her to contact the police department if she had lost an AmEx card. As of the report, she had not called or stopped in. The card was placed in a property and evidence locker for safekeeping. Case clear.

Friday, Oct. 2

Fuel for thought

9:39 a.m.

Officer Jorge Castro Agis was sent to a condominium on Harbourside Drive on a report of criminal mischief. A resident said someone had opened the gas tank door of her 2023 Lexus while it was parked in front of her garage sometime between Aug. 26 and Aug. 28. There was no damage to the door and no sign it had been forced open, and she did not recall whether any fuel was missing. She said she was concerned because of an earlier incident this year, when she found a beheaded snake in her driveway near her car, and she suspected a neighbor with whom she had a previous disagreement. She had reported that incident to police at the time. She also reported finding nails near her car that had damaged her tires, though she acknowledged they could be accidental because a construction company is repairing the property's roof. There were no cameras in the area and no witnesses. The management office said no other gas tank doors had been reported opened. No evidence of a crime was found. Case clear.

See On Patrol, page 11

The advertisement for LBK Liqueurs features a central graphic of a pink flamingo standing on its left leg, with its right leg tucked up. The text 'LBK' is in a large, black, serif font, and 'Liqueurs' is in a black, cursive script font, both positioned to the left of the flamingo. To the right of the flamingo is the phone number '941.953.1835' in a black, sans-serif font. Below this, the text 'The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits' and 'Come check out our competitive prices!' is centered. Further down, 'Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome' is centered. Below that, 'Locally owned & operated' is centered. At the bottom, the address 'Whitney Beach Plaza' and '6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL' is centered. On the left and right sides of the bottom section, there are stylized illustrations of three liquor bottles in yellow, teal, and magenta.

OnPatrol



Long-distance call

3:26 p.m.
Officer Simon Maple was sent to a home on Exeter Drive on a fraud call. The man there said a contractor had stolen a check off his kitchen counter at his other home in New Jersey and cashed it for \$50,000. He had tried to file a report by phone with the police there, and the dispatcher told him to go to the police department where he is now. The officer explained that the crime did not happen on Longboat Key and that the report would have to be filed by phone or in person with the New Jersey agency, under its policies. The man agreed and said he would contact that agency directly and possibly take it up its chain of command. Case clear.



argument, only that he kept asking her whether what she was doing was necessary. The woman, who lives in another unit and does not own the units being worked on, at first refused to identify herself. She said no permits were posted on the doors and that she had filed complaints with the town, the Attorney General’s Office and the state building department. The officer and the woman went to the complex office, where the manager showed them the town permit for the pipe replacement, issued Sept. 24, and explained that a neighboring unit was being used only to reach the pipes and did not need a permit. The manager said she had confirmed this with the town several times. The officer gave the woman a copy of the permit. She remained unhappy and was

told to take any complaints about the permits or the work to the town or state regulators. Her filming was lawful, and no crime occurred. Case clear.

Gone fishin’

7:21 p.m.
Officer David Martinson was sent to Harbourside Drive on a trespassing call and met the caller and a security officer at the gatehouse at 1950 Gulf of Mexico Drive. The caller said he saw two young men, about 17 and 18 years old, fishing on the private property, and that there had been problems with them in the past. The security officer said the two had come onto the property about an hour earlier with a third person in the back seat of the car, and had left southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive in an older Ford four-door sedan with a loud muffler. She later emailed the officer a security camera photo of the car, which appeared to be a blue-gray Ford Focus. She said she would call back if they returned. Case clear.

Saturday, Oct. 3 Hook, line and trespass warning

4:19 p.m.
Officers Maple and Castro Agis were sent to the Bay Isles community for a report of a young man fishing on the golf course. A Bay Isles security officer said a resident driving by saw him fishing and told him to leave, then reported it to security, whose captain asked that he be trespassed. Officer Maple found the young man near one of the ponds with a bike and a fishing pole, though he was not fishing at the time. He said he had been fishing, that he was visiting a home in Bay Isles and that the driver who complained claimed to have told him before not to fish there. He said he had arrived that morning, was leaving the next morning and had had no other dealings with the driver. At security’s request, he was issued a written trespass warning good for one year. Police were unable to reach his parents. He was given a copy of the warning, had the process explained to him and left with no issues. Case clear.

Sunday, Oct. 4 Ride canceled

7:50 a.m.
Officer Castro Agis was northbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive when a routine plate check on a silver Honda CR-V ahead of him showed the registered owner’s driver’s license was suspended. He stopped the car in the 1600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive and confirmed the driver matched the owner’s license photo. The driver appeared surprised and said he did not know his license was suspended. He said he was an Uber driver dropping off a passenger at the St. Regis resort. A seize-tag order was also in effect. He was cited for unknowingly driving with a suspended license, and his license and license plate were seized and placed in a property and evidence locker. Hotel staff allowed him to leave the car at the St. Regis until a tow truck could pick it up. Case clear.

Wrong number

1:05 p.m.
Officer Maple was sent to Euphemia Haye restaurant, 5540 Gulf of Mexico Drive, on an alarm call. An employee met him at the north entrance and explained that he was a recent hire, had set off the alarm when he and a co-worker arrived for work and then gave the security company the wrong access code. He had silenced the alarm and cleared it with the manager and the security company just before the officer arrived. The officer walked the restaurant with the employee, double-checked the entry, rear kitchen door and interior motion areas where the alarm had been triggered and found no sign of forced entry or criminal activity. Case clear.

Monday, Oct. 5 Tag, you’re it

10:55 a.m.
Officer Dallas Troyer received a license plate reader alert on a black Ford Explorer whose registration had expired June 30. He confirmed the expired registration, found the SUV northbound in the 3100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive and stopped it in the 3400 block. The driver said he did not have a driver’s license and produced a Florida identification card. Asked why he was driving, he said he had to work. After a license and warrants check, the officer placed him under arrest. A man the driver called came to take the vehicle, with Officer Dexter Nazareno helping coordinate. The driver was taken to the Sarasota County Jail and charged with driving while license suspended with knowledge. Case clear.

Tuesday, Oct. 6 Permit me

8:56 a.m.
Officer Troyer was sent to a condominium in the 3800 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a reported disturbance between a homeowner and a contractor. A plumber said his crew had been replacing cast iron pipes and doing fireproofing in one unit since the day before, and a woman kept following them, filming them and accusing them of doing unpermitted work. He said the crew had to leave early the day before because she kept them from finishing. He showed the officer a Town of Longboat Key permit on his tablet and said there was no big

Wednesday, Oct. 7 Take two 3:15 p.m.

Officers Castro Agis, Martinson and Maple went back to the same condominium in the 3800 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive after a worker called 911 to report that a woman was recording him and his co-workers at close range and arguing with them while they worked in a unit. He said they had been hired by the homeowners association’s management company to replace the water pipes throughout the units. The woman, the same resident from the day before, told Officer Castro Agis about numerous leaks in the building that she said were not being addressed, said she had contacted the HOA and several government officials about what she described as unsafe conditions, and said the HOA and contractors lacked the required permits and were responsible for the leaks. The management company representative said all necessary permits had been obtained and that town and county inspectors had inspected and approved the work. The worker called a second time after the officer left, because the woman had returned to the unit and started recording again, and the two calls were merged. The officer advised her to consult a lawyer about her concerns over the HOA’s response to her complaints. No crime was committed. Case clear.

Curb appeal

9:07 p.m.
Officer Martinson was sent to a complex in the 3700 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a disabled vehicle call. He found a man standing in the parking lot beside a black Chrysler van that had hopped the curb and was bottomed out and stuck on the grass and sidewalk. The man said it was dark and rainy, his wife had missed the turn into the parking lot and everyone was OK. The driver confirmed she had missed the turn and said she had already called AAA for a tow. The van was out of the roadway and not blocking traffic. Case clear.

Thursday, Oct. 8 Designated driver

1:09 a.m.
Officer Martinson responded to assist Officer Brett Miklos on a 911 call about a reckless driver southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive. He spotted the gray Nissan Kicks in the 1000 block and stopped it in the 300 block. The 23-year-old driver said he did not know why anyone would call 911 about his driving, and that he had picked up a family friend’s daughter and her friends and was taking them home. The passengers were all about 14. The driver had a valid license, and he and the car came back clear of wants and warrants. Officers had the teens step out and give their names and their parents’ names, and each one called a parent, who spoke with officers and gave permission for the driver to take their child home. All were released. The officer saw no reckless driving, and the driver did not appear intoxicated. Case clear.

The fast and the suspended

8:19 a.m.
Officer Castro Agis was running speed enforcement in the 100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive when he saw a northbound car he estimated at 55 mph. His laser speed gun clocked it at 50 mph in a 35 mph zone, and he stopped it in the 300 block. The driver immediately admitted he was speeding and apologized. A check showed his license had been suspended Aug. 3 for failing to pay a traffic ticket, which he said he did not know about. He was cited for unknowingly driving with a suspended license and for unlawful speed, and his license was seized and placed in the evidence locker. His car was left secured at his nearby workplace. Case clear.

Words on the beach

8:54 a.m.
Officer Castro Agis was sent to the beach in the 2000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive after a man called 911 to report a verbal dispute between a man and a woman. While the officer was on his way, the caller said the pair were leaving a nearby parking lot in a silver Tesla Cybertruck. The officer saw the truck northbound and followed it into Bay Isles but lost sight of it after the gate. Dispatch said nothing physical had happened. The caller said he was walking on the beach with his family when he saw the couple in a heated argument, and the man threw a bottle of water to the ground that struck the woman on the leg. The two then walked off in opposite directions, and when the caller asked the woman if she was OK, she said she was, though she appeared clearly distraught. With help from Bay Isles security, the truck’s gate tag was traced to a home on Bayou Road, where the officer found the couple walking from the driveway. The man said he knew why the officer was there. The two, who have been together seven years, were interviewed separately. The man said he argued with the woman because he was feeling unwell and that nothing physical happened. The woman said the water bottle was thrown onto the sand, not at her, and did not hit her, and that nothing physical happened. Neither showed any sign of injury. No crime was committed. Case clear.

Abbott, from page 1

“Every building we do is in effect a series of viewing platforms for nature,” he told Sarasota Magazine in 2020.

The torchbearer

Born in 1936 near Darien, a Georgia coastal town ringed by salt marsh, Abbott studied architecture at the University of Florida, then went to work in Sarasota in time to catch the final days of Paul Rudolph’s local office, by then down to two people. When Rudolph ran his master’s class at Yale, Abbott followed him north.

The class of 1962 numbered about 15. Two of his classmates were Norman Foster and Richard Rogers. He studied under Rudolph and Louis Kahn.

What came next reads like a syllabus for the century. Hawaii. London, where he worked with Foster and Rogers at Team 4, the brief partnership that launched two future Pritzker laureates. New York, in the office of I.M. Pei.

He could have stayed anywhere. In 1966 he came back to Sarasota.

The date matters. John Howey, in his landmark history of the movement, drew the line under the Sarasota School’s first generation at 1966, the same year Abbott opened his practice. Hylton put it plainly: Abbott became “the keeper of the flame.”

He did not tend it as a relic. The first-generation houses of Ralph Twitchell, Rudolph and their circle floated. Glass pavilions, thin roofs, louvers, cross breezes. Abbott kept the principles, the orientation to sun and wind, the deep shade, the wall that dissolves between room and landscape, and gave them weight and sculpture. Massive piers. Bold geometric volumes. Shadow used as deliberately as light.

He spent years documenting the ruins of the Maya, and the influence of that ancient, land-bound architecture runs through everything he built.

Boca Grande: the ship on the dune

His first independent commission set the pattern. The Weld Beach House on Boca Grande, an informal winter house of sun-bleached wood raised on a sand dune, is a house of two temperaments. Inland, its sculpted forms gather around a green garden courtyard. Seaward, they lift toward a curving Gulf beach, and from the elevated living floor there is so much water and so little land that the house seems to be under way.

Architectural Record named it a Record House in 1972 and returned to it five years later for a vacation-house issue. It went on to earn an AIA Florida/Caribbean Test of Time award, part of a collection no architect in the region has matched.

Lido Shores: fanning toward the water

Abbott also built in the Sarasota School’s cradle. On Lido Shores, the Puttermen Residence was completed in 1986 as a home and studio for the painter Florence Puttermen and her husband, Saul. A line of royal palms stands guard at the street. Inside, the plan splays outward toward Pansy Bayou and the ceilings climb in tiers as the rooms near the water, so the house seems to exhale as you walk through it.

There is a footnote preservationists still savor. The Puttermans bought the lot believing its existing house might be a Rudolph. A phone call to Rudolph settled it. Not his. That cleared the way for his former student to start from scratch.

Longboat Key: the house of columns

You arrive through trees. The drive winds across a wooded, secluded bayside point on the north end of Longboat Key before the house at 6610 Gulf of Mexico Drive comes into view.

Completed in 2007, the House of Columns is Abbott at full orchestral scale. Eight levels, a central block and three wings, each tethered to the others by enclosed sky bridges, with 6,891 square feet of living space beneath 9,740 square feet of roof.

The name is literal. Massive rectangular piers march the length of the main elevation, holding a long horizontal block aloft over the lawn. At one end a cube cantilevers out over the terrace, a measured show of structural daring. Inside, the exterior grid carries through rooms with 21-foot ceilings. Two-story walls of glass look east over Sarasota Bay, set deep into the structure so the morning sun arrives softened. A curving, lagoon-style pool wraps the base of the colon-

nade, and after sunset, when the glass lights from within, every pier finds its twin in the water.

Nothing about it is fragile. Where the 1950s houses floated, this one plants its feet. Yet the question underneath is the one Twitchell and Rudolph asked: how does a building belong to its place?

Here the answer includes the ground itself. The estate covers 5.74 contiguous acres across two parcels, with mangroves at the shoreline and a stepped lawn descending to a private dock. On an island where waterfront is routinely cut into smaller and smaller lots, land of that size with an intact Abbott on it is close to unrepeatable.

In February the property came to market at \$22 million through Premier Sotheby’s International Realty, and the listing drew international attention. Abbott knew the island well. His Sundial House at Lighthouse Point dates to 2000.

The preservation reckoning

Abbott’s own catalog makes the case for the cause he championed.

Casa del Cielo, a Test of Time winner, sold in 2016 and came down soon after for condominiums. The Lido Bayfront House on Westway Drive is gone. So is his Lido Beach Residence on Lido Shores, and so is the House of Terraces on Boca Grande.

Each was private property, lawfully sold and lawfully razed. None can be rebuilt.

He watched it happen to his teacher first. Abbott joined the fight to save Rudolph’s Sarasota schools and served on the advisory board of the Sarasota Architectural Foundation, forerunner of Architecture Sarasota. Preservation takes time and money, he told Architectural Record in 2014, but public awareness matters most of all.

That awareness now has to carry on without him. The last man who could walk a buyer through a Sarasota School house and explain why each wall sat where it did, because he was in the room when the ideas were new, is gone.

What remains are the buildings, his professional archive, now donated to the University of Florida, and the architects he shaped, among them Leonardo Lunardi, his partner on the award-winning Villa Mar.

The test is already here. Every Abbott house that changes hands from now on, the House of Columns included, goes to a buyer who must decide whether they bought a building or a lot.

The last platform

Foster, his classmate and friend, praised Abbott’s rooms for an uncommon pairing of clarity and human warmth. The critic Michael Sorkin described moving through an Abbott building as a compact journey of shifting spaces that keeps arriving at moments of release.

Abbott put it more bluntly. The point, always, was to push you out into the landscape.

He was working to the end, booked as a featured speaker at the inaugural Florida Design Conference at UF in January.

Climb to the main floor of almost any house he designed and you understand the rest. Below, there is shade, foliage, a sense of shelter. Then the stair turns, the glass opens, and the bay or the Gulf fills the frame.

The view had been there all along. Carl Abbott built the place to stand. Sarasota’s job now is to make sure those places are still standing.

AT A GLANCE: CARL ABBOTT, FAIA

Born: 1936, near Darien, Georgia

Education: University of Florida; master’s, Yale, 1962, under Paul Rudolph and Louis Kahn

Early career: Team 4, London, with Norman Foster and Richard Rogers; I.M. Pei, New York

Practice: Founded in Sarasota, 1966

Honors: AIA College of Fellows, 1986; AIA Florida Firm of the Year, 1994; AIA Florida Presidential Award, 2023; most AIA Florida/Caribbean Test of Time awards of any architect

Monograph: In/Formed by the Land: The Architecture of Carl Abbott FAIA (ORO Editions, 2013)

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Shore, from page 1

northeastern lip.

The plan needs public parking, so it asks to lease a block of the bond-encumbered St. Armands garage, and counts seven metered public street spaces toward its total besides. The plan is roughly 40 feet of building in a 35-foot district, so it asks to be measured from a flood line its own ground floor sits eight and a half feet below. The plan carries eight en-suite bedrooms with eight private decks around a rooftop pool, so it asks the city to read that floor as one single-family home. The plan’s front overhang is barred from the right-of-way as an awning or canopy, so it asks to be called a balcony instead.

On Wednesday morning, when the Development Review Committee met the project’s second submittal with its firmest refusals yet, the applicant’s consultant made the ask that contains all the others.

“If that is what we interpret the language to be, we should fix the language to match the public policy that we’ve been talking about,” Kimley-Horn’s Bill Waddill told the committee.

Told the building does not conform to the rule, the team proposed that Sarasota change the rule.

What is not contested

Say plainly what is not in dispute, because fairness demands it and because it sharpens what is.

Tom Leonard has the right to build a restaurant on this corner. Nobody serious disputes it, and nobody serious wants the corner to stay a gutted box through another season. Shore was a fixture of the Circle from 2008 until Hurricanes Helene and Milton closed it in December 2024, and a revived corner means jobs, foot traffic and tax revenue.

If this application were a restaurant, a café and retail, it would have sailed. That is exactly the kind of investment the Circle has been welcoming for two years without asking the city to move a single line.

The fight is about what rides on top.

Too tall, in the city’s own words

The height fight has been building since July, when staff caught the plans using the optional four feet of flood freeboard to claim height in a place where the building’s lowest floor is not located. The September resubmittal revised nothing.

Senior Development Review Planner Cristian Toellner read the city’s answer into the record, and it left no room between the words. Under the code, he said, “if the structure is dry flood-proofed, the building height shall be measured from finished grade.”

Then, among the new comments, the sentence that ends the ambiguity: “Revise the proposed building height on the cover sheet to be consistent with the plans. 40 feet exceeds the maximum height for the CT zone district.”

Readers with long memories will feel the echo. This is the same 35-foot cap residents defended in a 5-0 City Commission vote in 2022, when a campaign co-led by Leonard sought to raise it to 45. The number survived that campaign. It survived two hurricanes.

‘We should fix the language’

Waddill’s response was the morning’s news, and he delivered it before staff could reach the

new comments.

“We’ve been having conversations in the community about incentivizing resiliency at St. Armands Key,” he said. “We’ve got projects wanting to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on dry flood-proofing to make a future new structure resilient, and we’re disincentivizing those sorts of investments when we should be incentivizing them.”

Take the argument seriously, because parts of it are true. Floodproofing a barrier-island building costs what Waddill says it costs. FEMA’s 50% Rule really does force owners into gut-and-elevate projects, and Leonard has long argued, with some justice, that government should reward owners who harden their buildings.

But look hard at what this version of the argument asks for. The height bargain in Sarasota’s code is explicit. Extra measuring height is granted as a safety factor for elevating a structure’s lowest floor above the flood line. Height in exchange for elevation.

The Shore plans take the height and leave the floor at the sidewalk.

And a rule rewritten for one corner is rewritten for all of them. Every flood-damaged commercial owner on St. Armands holds the same cards, and every financial incentive to copy whatever this corner establishes. St. Armands Residents Association president Chris Goglia has been saying it for a year: once the change is made for one property, it applies to all, and once allowed it can never be taken away.

Eight bedrooms, one label, and an R-2 problem

Then there is the third floor, a 6,508-square-foot “single dwelling unit” with eight en-suite bedrooms, eight private decks and a 41-foot rooftop pool.

The wink-and-nod question the Circle has been asking since December was answered, oddly enough, by the applicant’s own paperwork.

Plan examiner Robert Ritz, reading into the record: “The third floor is identified as one dwelling unit, however, it is noted as an R-2 occupancy. Please reclassify the residence to single-family per FBC 310.5 Residential Group R-3.”

R-2 is the Florida Building Code’s classification for apartment-style buildings holding multiple dwelling or sleeping units. A single-family home is R-3. On the drawings where labels carry life-safety consequences and cannot be fudged, the floor is classified as the very thing the application insists it is not.

The written memo goes further, noting that several areas “appear to be separated by fire-rated walls” and asking the basis for the separations. Builders fire-rate walls between units, not between the bedrooms of one family’s home.

Waddill addressed none of that substance. “There is only one residential unit on the top floor. All of that will be cleaned up as we move forward.”

The cleanup matters because Commercial Tourist zoning draws one bright line: no hotels, defined as six or more guest rooms rented to travelers. The community has defended that line three times. A purpose-built floor of eight rentable-shaped rooms needs only a future change of paperwork, which is why residents read every label on Sheet A104 like a contract.

THE FULL REPORT Online: the complete account, including the “puzzling” balcony with two identities and three departments, the 1,121-square-foot residence area that turned up on the restaurant floor, and the garage lease the city has not agreed to. lbknews.com

Library, from page 1

ground all the same.

The commission acted on two items. Ordinance 2026-13 amends the Bay Isles planned unit development to allow a county library on the town-owned Green at 600 Bay Isles Road. Site Development Plan Order 2026-02 approves the detailed site plan. Both return for second reading and a final public hearing on Nov. 2. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval 6-0 on Sept. 15.

A building already drawn

What made Monday’s vote different from the milestones before it is how little remains to be decided. County staff told commissioners the design firm has submitted 60 percent construction documents, the last submittal before the drawings are wrapped up.

The plans show an 11,273-square-foot library on a roughly 28,000-square-foot corner of the Green, between Publix and the public tennis center. Every enhancement Longboat donors paid for is in the design: an enlarged community room, a covered outdoor terrace opening onto the Great Lawn, and an upgraded entry.

A county representative said the community room is “significantly larger than what we would normally build for this library,” a direct result of the town’s 2024 workshops, where residents made clear they wanted a real meeting hall.

One item did not survive. A kitchen was considered and dropped.

Twelve feet from the line

The bigger room comes with a tighter fit. The zoning district requires a 30-foot side-yard setback. The county asked to build within 12 feet of the south property line, next to Publix Park and the Chase Bank parcel.

The original request was 15.3 feet. The architect later determined the true dimension would be 13 feet, and the county asked for 12 to allow for construction tolerance. Town staff supported the change, citing negligible impacts and the goal of preserving open space on the Green side of the building.

Of the 15 trees on the site, three will be removed and five transplanted. Seven new trees will be planted, one more than the code requires.

Parking, the perennial worry

Parking has shadowed this project from the start, and it took up most of the commission’s questions. Town code requires 39 spaces for a library this size. The harder question is what happens when the community room fills.

Staff’s answer is a list of 14 neighboring properties with about 681 spaces, most of which sit empty after 5 p.m. The town has no contracts with those owners, staff acknowledged. Only “good relationships.”

To close the gap, the site plan order carries a staff-proposed condition: large gatherings will require a special event transportation management plan, handled through the town’s permit process. The event sponsor, not the town, lines up the borrowed parking and pays for any off-duty police. Anything beyond 681 cars means busing people in.

One commissioner, a former vestry member at All Angels by the Sea, vouched for the informal system. The church lent its lot for the Kiwanis Club’s annual event for years, the commissioner said, with a single conflict: the day a parishioner “had the audacity to die” and the funeral landed on the same date.

The vote that matters more

The second reading on Nov. 2 falls one day before Florida voters decide Amendment 3, and that vote carries more weight for the library than anything on the town’s agenda.

Building the library is paid for. The roughly \$11 million core facility comes from county library impact fees, and private donors covered the \$3.5 million in enhancements.

Neither source can pay a librarian or an electric bill.

County finance staff estimated earlier this year that operations would cost about \$740,000 in a partial first year in 2028, \$1.1 million in 2029 and roughly \$1.4 million by 2031, all of it from a general fund fed mostly by property taxes.

Amendment 3 would raise the homestead exemption from \$50,000 to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028. It needs 60 percent to pass. Sarasota County projects it would cost the county about \$87 million in property tax revenue by fiscal 2029, and libraries are not among the essential services the measure directs local governments to protect.

County Administrator Jonathan Lewis told his board over the summer that no decision on operating money is needed until after the election. County officials have also said donors would be refunded if the project were ever abandoned.

The lease, funding and operating agreements between the town and county are still to be finalized as well.

So the library arrives at an odd moment. Its site plan is one vote from final, its drawings are nearly done and its groundbreaking is penciled in for February.

Whether the county can afford to open the doors once it is built will be decided Nov. 3, by voters who have never heard of the Town Center Green.

THE FULL REPORT Online: the full hearing account, the twenty-year history of false starts, and what the town and county still have to sign. lbknews.com

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Tickets, from page 1

annual reports the Sarasota Police Department is required by state law to deliver, one on the school zone speed cameras that went live in January 2025 and one on the red light cameras the city has run since 2011. Together they took about 16 minutes. They drew no public comment. They were accepted unanimously.

They also showed, line by line, who gets the money.

Where each \$100 goes

The School Speed Zone Safety Program covers six schools with 22 cameras: Cardinal Mooney High, Sarasota High, Sarasota Military Academy, and Alta Vista, Southside and Tuttle elementary schools. In one year it issued 34,038 notices, about 190 per school day.

Total school zone revenue was \$2,661,200, divided in fixed slices of every \$100 fine: \$39 to the city, \$21 to RedSpeed, the camera vendor, \$20 to the state, \$12 to the school district, \$5 for crossing guards and \$3 for police training.

Run that out and the vendor collected \$558,852. That is more than the school district and the crossing guard fund received together, which was \$452,404.

No commissioner asked about it.

‘Where is the rest?’

Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch wanted to know why 34,000 tickets had produced only 24,000 payments.

“Notice of violation issued, 34,000. Violations paid, 24,000,” she said. “Where is the rest?”

John Lake, manager of the department’s Real Time Operations Center, said a ticket written in May or June may not come due until after the books close. “We’re always playing catch-up,” he said. Miss the 30-day deadline and the notice becomes a uniform traffic citation, and the price climbs from \$100 to \$208.

Ahearn-Koch worked the arithmetic aloud and concluded the genuinely outstanding number was a few thousand, not 10,000. Lake agreed.

The question a parent asks

Vice Mayor Kathy Kelley Ohlrich asked whether any of it was making children safer.

Lake pointed to a five-day count the vendor ran in the spring of 2024, before the cameras existed. On Fruitville Road in front of Cardinal Mooney alone, that count logged more than 17,000 vehicles going at least 10 mph over the limit. A year into the cameras, he said, violations were down about 70%.

“It continues today, that rate of 70% reduction,” Lake said. “And I think it’s probably going to stay that way now that obviously everybody knows not to speed in a school zone.”

“Well, yes,” Ohlrich said. “I’m one of them.”

The room laughed. For anyone walking a first-grader across Tuttle Avenue at 8 a.m., that exchange is the entire argument for the program.

The flashing light problem

Then Ahearn-Koch raised the complaint that has dogged these cameras across Florida.

“I have received comments from citizens about receiving a citation and the lights were not flashing,” she said. “No one has time to read the signs as they are going down the street, and if the lights aren’t flashing, they don’t think it is being enforced at that moment.”

State law lets the cameras run the entire time school is in session. When the yellow beacons flash, the limit drops and the camera triggers at 11 over. When the beacons are dark but class is in session, the camera stays on and enforces the regular posted limit, again at 11 over.

On Fruitville at Cardinal Mooney, that means a notice at 31 mph when the lights flash, and a notice at 56 mph when they do not.

“I’ve had folks come to me and say it was during the school time, the light was not flashing, but they still got a ticket,” Ahearn-Koch said.

“That is because they are going over the posted speed limit of 45,” Lake said. “When those people call you, the only reason they are calling you is because they are going 56 miles an hour or higher.”

“That’s not what I’ve been told by them, of course,” she said.

Lake called it “the biggest misconception of the program.” Ahearn-Koch said she had a case in which “there’s no way they were physically going over that speed limit,” and would take it up with police later.

The intersections, and what the report left out

The red light cameras issued 32,946 notices, about 90 a day, and brought in \$4,378,524.43. Of that, \$2,128,950 went to Tallahassee and \$2,249,574.43 stayed in Sarasota. Of 32,946 notices, 68 were contested. The driver won once.

The school zone report listed what RedSpeed was paid. The red light report did not. Its revenue slide has two lines, city and state.

The difference is in how the vendor gets paid. In school zones RedSpeed takes a cut of each ticket. For red light cam-

eras the city pays a flat monthly fee out of its own share, which was \$3,500 per camera approach when the commission last extended the contract in public in 2023, or \$840,000 a year for 20 cameras. The city has added cameras since. What it paid RedSpeed last year was not presented.

Do they prevent crashes?

Mayor Debbie Trice asked for collision numbers at the camera intersections, before and after.

Lake did not offer any. “It’s hard to do that,” he said. He blamed distracted driving and a change in signals, noting that many intersections have swapped dedicated left-turn arrows for flashing yellow ones. “Yes, it’s going to show that there is an increase of crashes, but it’s not because people are running the red lights.”

As for the rear-end collisions critics blame on the cameras, he said the cause is hard to pin down. “If I show up to the crash, the person is not going to tell me that they were texting on their phone, because it’s another ticket.”

The state has tried to answer the question. Florida’s Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles compared 174 camera intersections in 31 jurisdictions and found total crashes rose from 17,093 to 18,615. For Sarasota’s intersections it listed 1,958 crashes before and 2,001 after. The department cautioned that miles driven statewide rose 25% over the same period.

The bottom line

Notices issued: 66,984. Paid by drivers: \$7,039,724. To the city: \$3,287,442. To the state: \$2,661,190. To the school zone vendor: \$558,852. Tickets contested: 182. Tickets dismissed: 13.

The six school zones, enforced only when school is in session, produced more notices than every red light camera in the city running around the clock.

Police say the cameras are doing exactly what they were bought to do. Fewer drivers fly past Cardinal Mooney at dismissal. Fewer run the same red lights they ran a year ago. Nobody at the meeting argued otherwise.

Still, somewhere in Sarasota today a driver is opening an envelope, certain the lights were not flashing.

THE FULL REPORT Online: the complete breakdown of both reports, the license plate reader feature Sarasota turned down in 2018, the cities that have pulled the plug, and the Broward hearing officer who threw out every school zone case in his courtroom. lbknews.com

Letters, from page 7

Tallahassee’s Tax Mirage: Less Revenue, More Headaches

To: Longboat Key Citizens

Amendment 3, the Governor’s initiative, modified by the Legislature appears on all statewide ballots in November. It requires a 60 percent statewide approval for adoption. The description appearing on the ballot is brief as required by Statute, but does not accurately define the proposal.

The intent is a real estate tax decrease for Floridians who have homestead their residence. This wording does not clarify that public school taxes are exempt from this proposal, thus property taxes will not be completely eliminated for anyone. The bill does offer an increase in the Homestead exemption from \$50,000 to \$150,000 in 2027 and to \$250,000 in 2028, with the possibility of future Legislators eliminating all non-school taxes for some properties.

Constitutional amendments should not be addressed hastily. Many outstanding issues if Amendment 3 passes have not been addressed by the State Legislature, and those will create problems and unintended consequences for citizens and municipalities.

Like every citizen in Manatee and Sarasota Counties, cities, towns and counties have not been immune to the effects of inflation and rising costs. In many cases, additional revenue from property value increases has not kept pace with the costs of providing basic services. Police, fire, rescue personnel salaries have not remained flat for the past decade, and costs for the vehicles they use and the gasoline that operates them have gone up dramatically.

Every municipality in Manatee and Sarasota County was impacted by numerous hurricanes. Properties damaged and destroyed have dropped in value and severely reduced what is paid in property taxes. No municipality in our region has been reimbursed for recovery expenses that FEMA promised to repay. For my town, Longboat Key, we are due \$28 million. Other communities have similar funds due to them. Many communities had to remove tons of sand and tree and housing debris from the roads to get residents home after Hurricane Helene. Imagine if the towns no longer have the funds to do that. Every town and city in our two counties is still rebuilding reserves that were wiped out from the hurricanes.

Many citizens are renters. Your rental property is not

homesteaded and will face significant increases in those tax bills. Most landlords will have to pass those increases to their tenants. And, rents, already high, will only increase, making affordable housing more elusive.

Cities with lost tax revenue may establish new fees to offset the losses which could result in a less equitable means of spreading the costs of city services. Services such as public works, stormwater improvements, parks maintenance and future wetland purchases may be curtailed in order to balance budgets. Public safety, road maintenance and other improvements could also be affected. Statewide, Public Safety represents 56% of cities general fund spending.

The State Legislature stated that were only a few municipalities that “they felt” were not being responsible with tax dollars. The penalty for every municipality is that the most basic statement in Florida’s Constitution is being violated - Home Rule. Who makes better decisions for your community? Local officials who are in the community every day seeing the needs and hearing the needs of its residents or a group of legislators in Tallahassee who may not even know where the community is located.

The State Legislature has the opportunity during their 2027 legislative session to review these issues at the Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission that meets once every twenty years. It is a perfect venue to thoroughly evaluate and make recommendations to the Florida tax structure and tax law. A much better solution than a constitutional amendment.

Are you willing to sacrifice libraries, parks and programs developed in your community? These will be some of the first casualties if this Amendment passes.

Pay attention to organizations in our State who have come out opposed to Amendment 3. The Fraternal Order of Police, the Florida Education Association, local Library Boards and Foundations, League of Women Voters, the Florida League of Cities and the Florida Association of Counties. We want essential services in our communities and those decisions should be made at the local level.

BJ Bishop
President
ManaSota League of Cities/
Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key

Tall Masts, Low Ceilings

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon

Thank you Sarah. I know there is a contingent that is concerned about the aesthetics of a tall fixed bridge, and one that is concerned about the effort to walk or bike across it.

I just wanted you to know that from a sail boater’s perspective, this is not a “it would be nice if” kind of issue. If a 65’ fixed bridge were to be erected, some sailors would have no alternative and would need to find a different place to dock and boat. I appreciate you taking my viewpoint into consideration.

Mark Fishman
Longboat Key

Longboat Key News
Sarasota City News

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But now, as we near the end of that agreement, changes to key provisions are making our continued partnership with **UnitedHealthcare** unsustainable, and **UnitedHealthcare** refuses to adequately address these concerns.

SMH cannot keep moving backward. Our community deserves fair treatment — and reliable access to the doctors, hospitals and health care our seniors know and trust.

Medicare Advantage plans have faced growing scrutiny over policies and practices that delay or deny medically necessary care. Despite efforts to address these concerns, government reports continue to raise serious questions about **UnitedHealthcare's** use of prior authorization and other restrictions that create barriers between patients and the care their doctors recommend.

SMH is fighting for **fair, sustainable terms that protect access to the doctors, hospitals, specialists, treatments and services our community depends on.**

Our agreement with **UnitedHealthcare** remains in effect through Dec. 31, 2026, **but we expect UnitedHealthcare to remove Sarasota Memorial and First Physicians Group from its Medicare Advantage network on Jan. 1, 2027.**

YOU HAVE A VOICE — AND A CHOICE.

We encourage you to review your options during Medicare Open Enrollment, Oct. 15 - Dec. 7. Before choosing a plan for 2027, check whether your specific plan will include SMH and FPG as in-network providers. Information about which Medicare Advantage plans SMH and FPG will accept as of Jan. 1, 2027 is on our website at www.smh.com/Medicare.

You may also wish to consider **Traditional/Original Medicare** and a standard **Medicare Supplement plan**. **Sarasota Memorial and FPG always accept all original Medicare and standard Medicare supplement plans.**

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