

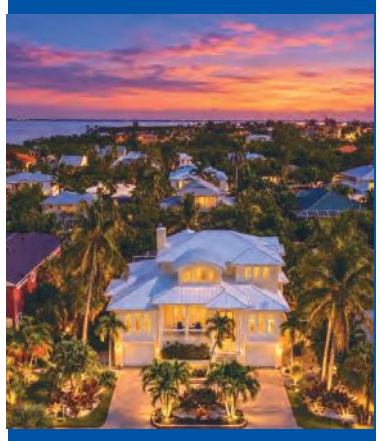
Longboat Key News

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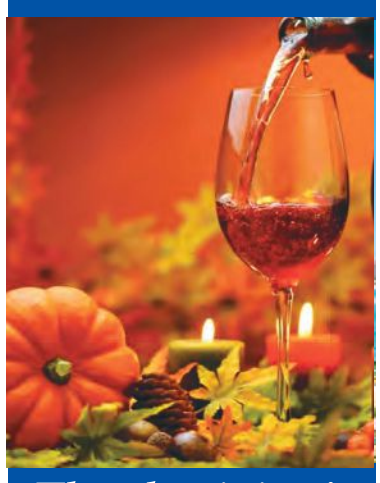
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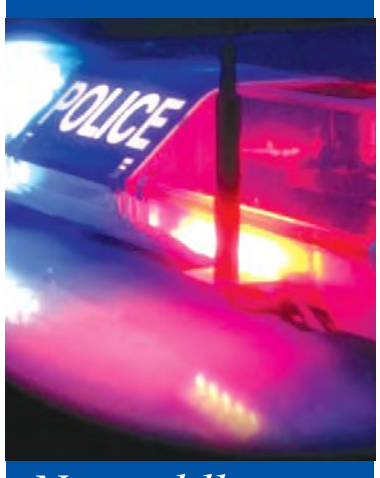
Time to Shelve the LBK Library *...page 7*



North-Key home leads LBK sales *...page 9*



Thanksgiving's Perfect Pairings *...page 11*



No peddles, no bike lane for you *...page 10*

Still Arch Enemies: St. Regis Admits the Facts, Concedes Nothing in Longboat Lawsuit

The St. Regis owner has admitted most of the Town's facts and none of its conclusions. The fight over twelve feet of steel now turns on a picture, a certificate with no name and a permit that may have expired, on ground where nobody has ever backed down.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Walk out on the old Colony groin near sunset and it is hard to imagine anyone fighting over anything.

The concrete runs 156 feet from the sand into the Gulf, with timber posts and thick rope down both sides. Behind you is the ground where Murf Klauber built the most celebrated tennis resort in America, where a president slept the night before the world changed, and where a generation of Longboaters got married, got hired or learned a backhand. It is the ground the island then watched go dark for fourteen years, and the ground where the St. Regis finally rose.

Ahead of you there is only horizon, framed by an arch of polished stainless steel with ST. REGIS curving across the top.

It is one of the prettiest spots on one of the prettiest beaches in the world. In a Sarasota courtroom, it is Exhibit 3.

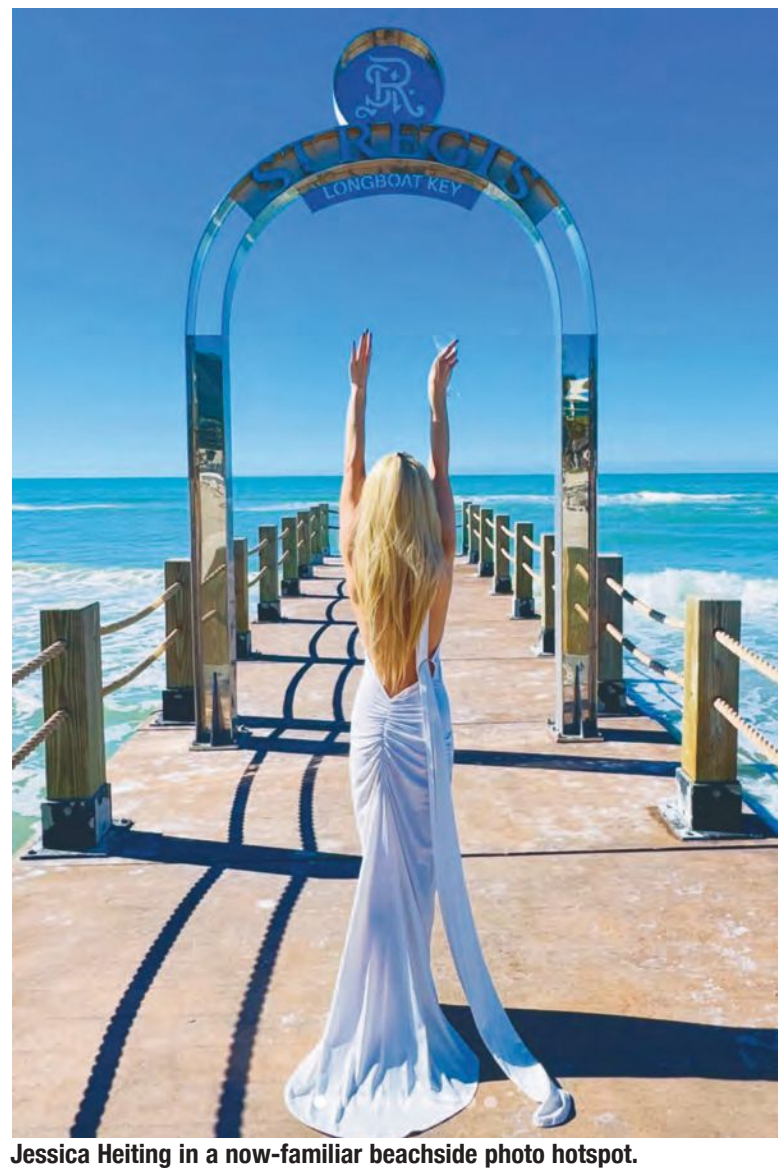
And the fight over it has just turned.

On Oct. 15, the company that owns the St. Regis answered the Town of Longboat Key's demand that it admit, one at a time, the facts behind the lawsuit to tear the arch down. It admitted most of them.

Yes, the state permit it relies on said the structure "should be installed per local governmental ordinances." Yes, Chuck Whittall signed a promise to get any municipal permit the work required. Yes, the drawing of the arch that was actually built never went to Town Hall. Yes, the Town told it to take the arch down.

Then came the one flat sentence that tells you where this is headed: "Admit the arch structure and sign were not moved."

The company admits the facts and concedes nothing. Its position is that Longboat Key's law stops at the waterline, that the State of Florida approved the arch, and that the Town itself signed off when it permitted the railing beside it. Whittall has already said how far he will carry that argument. "We will fight it on every level," he told this newspaper, "whether it's the Florida Supreme Court."



Jessica Heiting in a now-familiar beachside photo hotspot.

Circuit Judge Dana Moss has set the trial for January 2028. Until then, the arch stands.

If it seems strange that an island that waited fourteen years for this resort

See The Arch, page 8

City Hall Review Raises New Questions About Hart's Landing

City reviewers say the new bait and restroom building can bypass zoning review because it sits on state highway land. The dock, the bait tanks and the lease are another story.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The new Hart's Landing bait and restroom building doesn't need the city's zoning blessing. It just needs a building permit.

Because the 725-square-foot building would sit entirely on Florida Department of Transportation right-of-way at the foot of the Ringling Bridge, city planners say it falls outside the development review process altogether.

The dock is a different animal.

See Hart's, page 12



Sunset over the Ringling Bridge. At its foot, the city plans to rebuild Hart's Landing on two tracks: a bait and restroom building that can go straight to a building permit, and a dock that still faces the city's dock rules.

Longboat and Manatee Put the Pass Fight in Writing

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

"I don't want to absolutely burn that bridge," Longboat Key Commissioner B.J. Bishop said.

Then she added, "What an interesting irony that is."

She meant the new partnership between Longboat Key and Manatee County. The real bridge, 69 years old, opens over Longboat Pass 100 to 300 times a month. On

See Bridge, page 4

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.

Licensed to boom

To: George Frost

Good morning. I am in receipt of your email concerning the fireworks event last night at the St Regis. Attached is the approved permit that was issued to the applicant for the firework event. The Town's current code allows for these events through the permit process. We have engaged the Town Commission on the need to strengthen that part of the code to minimize these types of events. We are currently working on language to share with the Board at a future workshop for consideration. The event holder also had to obtain authorization from Florida fish and wildlife and the Coast guard. We had police and a contracted agent from the Fire department onsite to monitor the event to ensure safety and compliance with the permit.

Russ Mager
Police Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Déjà boom

To: John Di Masi

We appreciate you reaching out about the permitted event last night. Attached is the permit that was issued to the applicant for the firework event. The Towns current code allows for these events through the permit process. We have engaged the Town Commission on the need to strengthen that part of the code to minimize these types of events. We are currently working on language to share with the Board at a future workshop for consideration. The event holder also had to obtain authorization from Florida fish and wildlife and the Coast guard. We had police and a contracted agent from the Fire department onsite to monitor the event to ensure safety and compliance with the permit.

George Landry
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Passing the sparkler

To: John DiMasi

Thank you for your email regarding fireworks.I am copying George Landry, our town manager,so he can answer your question.

Debra Williams
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

No mowers, all mortars

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams

Who in God's creation authorized a massive display of fireworks on a Thursday night at 9 p.m. On Longboat Key Gulfside?What about our endangered birds? What about our turtles? Shocking that this was authorized when you can't even run a lawnmower after 5 p.m.

John L. Di Masi
Longboat Key

Throwing the bridge a curve

To: Longboat Key Commission

I recently came across the bridge concerns of your community and would like to offer a possible solution. This is an opportunity to maintain a grade level that the community would appreciate and a proposal to the state for a design that satisfies all involved.By extending the length of the bridge horizontally you can maintain the comfortable walking and biking grade. While it could add concrete and structural expense it would eliminate the expense of adding a steel drawbridge along with the expense of maintaining such. I thought I would pass this along if anyone is interested. Please let me know your that you received this.

A bridge 65 ft. tall with a span of 2,130 ft.

Average Grade: 6.10% (or about a \bm{3.49^\circ} angle).

A bridge 78 ft. tall with a span of 2,556 ft but still connecting at the same point as the straight bridge of 2,130 ft. will maintain the same grade as the 65ft tall bridge.

The result is a horizontal curve (probably into the bay side).

The construction trade off of vertical height vs horizontal distance is worth looking into

Michael McWilliams
Longboat Key

No contest, literally

To: Longboat Key Commission

We are pleased to congratulate the following individuals on successfully qualifying for the 2027 Town Election:

District 2: Mr. Jeff Ray

District 4: Ms. Suzy Brenner

As no opposing candidates filed for either seat, no contested election for candidates will be necessary in 2027 (but an election will be held for the potential Charter Amendments at this time). Accordingly, both individuals are now considered Commissioner-Elects for their respective districts.

We look forward to welcoming Mr. Ray and Ms. Brenner to the Town Commission at the Statutory Meeting in March 2027, for terms through March 2030, and supporting them as they prepare to assume their new roles. Town Administration stands ready to assist with the transition and provide any resources or support needed as they prepare to serve.

Please join us in congratulating our two Commissioner-Elects! Thank you!

Stephanie Garcia
Deputy Town Clerk
Town of Longboat Key

Zero pay, plenty of problems

To:

So, let me give you a quick synopsis of the insurance issues. Most on Medicare in Longboat have Medicare Advantage programs as well.Last year Aetna, a major company for this program ended their relationship with Intercoastal Medical - one of the largest medical groups in Sarasota County.This

See Letters, page 3

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EditorLetters

Letters, from page 2

year United Healthcare has announced they will cease coverage for Sarasota Memorial Hospital and their medical groups that cover as many medical practices as Intercoastal does. This forces many residents to have to give up their doctors or be faced with covering out of network costs if they end up in the hospital.As health, welfare and safety are at the top of our responsibilities as elected officials this is a nightmare for our constituents.

I am not sure how much Tallahassee can straighten this mess out, but our citizens are at risk.

On another front we are concerned about the implementation rules that Tallahassee will put on Amendment 3.As you know, 60 percent of our revenue comes from property taxes and this will have an immediate impact on Longboat Key's joint project to finally have a library on LBK with Sarasota County.The second issue is police, fire and rescue.Telling us we must fund these at existing levels is not possible as we are losing a significant portion of the revenue.One of the leaders of Amendment 3 suggested to me that we look at the amount of compensation for elected officials.Longboat Key's elected officials are paid zero - nothing to add there.

Finally, I want to once again commend Fiona for running the most positive campaign with the best commercials. Every time I saw one of her televised ads I smiled.They were about the issues and who she is.Really fabulous.So happy she is our Delegate.Let me know if you need more info.

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Anything but Mondays

To: Legislative Aide to Representative Fiona McFarland Andrew Parker

Pretty flexible next week or so. Afternoons good except Monday. Thank you!

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Playing calendar tag

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

Got your message you left at the district number. Happy to get some time down for you and the Rep to chat. When were you hoping for?

Andrew Parker
Legislative Aide to Representative Fiona McFarland
District 73
Sarasota

Rogue elves on MLK

To: Carolyn Mason

The City did not instruct the vendor to remove or relocate the holiday lights; they did this on their own accord. When staff was notified about this, they contacted the vendor and stopped it. The vendor is responsible for installing them both in Newtown but also in other areas of the city, as well. We will hold them to this requirement.

Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Who stole Newtown's Christmas?

To: Sarasota City Commission

The lights/ decorations installed on the street lights along the corridor were beautiful and created quite a stir among residents. A positive stir, I might add. A few days later some of the lights/decorations had been removed and it was very noticeable. Very disturbing.

As a Newtown resident and former City Commissioner and Mayor, I am appalled. It is my understanding the lights/ decorations will be replaced. How did this happen? Why did this happen? Did the contractor who installed the lights arbitrarily remove them or was he instructed to do so? In my honest opinion, I think the Commission owes the Newtown community a public explanation and apology.

Carolyn Mason
Sarasota

Return of the holiday lights

To: Carolyn Mason

The vendor did relocate some of them on their own accord - not directed by the City. When staff was made aware of this, they were instructed to stop immediately and relocate them back to the neighborhood. I am copying Steve Cover on this email, as he is aware of the issue and it was his staff that stepped in immediately to address.

Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

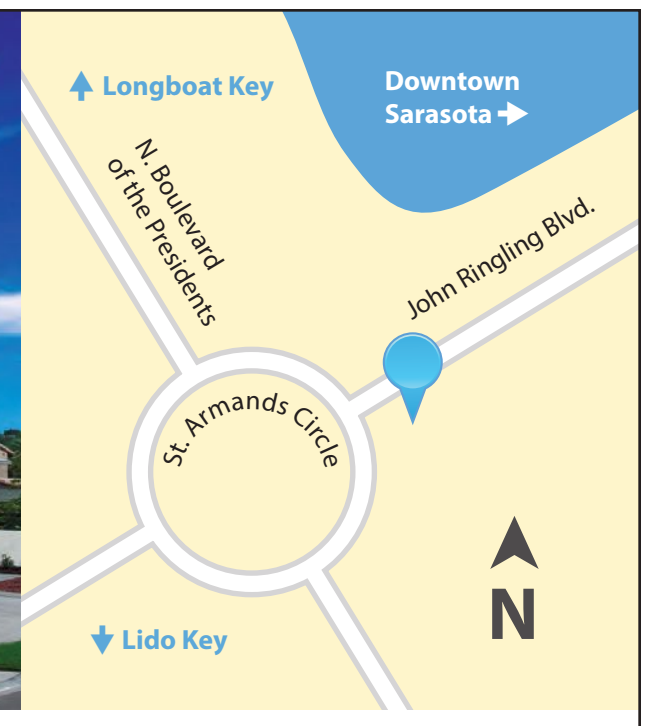
See Letters, page 6

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Bridge, from page 1

Nov. 9 the Town Commission took up the question that has hung over the north end for two years: how hard to push the state over what replaces it.

On the table was something two years of hearings and petitions had never produced: one letter from both governments, drafted by Manatee County for its chair, Tal Siddique, and Mayor Debra Williams to sign. It asks the Florida Department of Transportation to drop its preferred 78-foot fixed span. The first choice is a bascule drawbridge. The fallback is a 65-foot fixed bridge.

Commissioners agreed 6-1, with Gary Coffin dissenting, to send it as written rather than risk delay, and to follow with a sharper letter of their own. It goes to the Dec. 7 meeting for formal approval.

The discussion showed why this has become the great debate of the barrier islands. The state wants a high span that never opens. The north end wants its horizon. Sailors want a door to the Gulf. Cyclists and wheelchair users want a hill they can climb.

What the Letter Says

The undated draft is addressed to James M. Driggers Jr., FDOT's interim District One secretary.

Most of its case is about people on foot and on bikes. For them, it says, "an approximately 80-foot climb would make the crossing substantially more difficult to use," and "a steep, extended descent can increase bicycle speeds and reduce the margin for safe control." Then comes the line the north end has pushed for two years: "Compliance with minimum design requirements alone should not be the measure of success."

The ask comes in two tiers: "If our first choice of a bascule bridge is not possible, we ask for a 65-foot fixed span bridge option to be considered."

It says nothing about the sailors who say a 65-foot span would lock them out of Sarasota Bay.

"As Forceful as We're Going to Get"

Coffin had counted 67 bridges along Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, 48 of them drawbridges. "Those 19 fixed bridges, on average, are 65 feet," he said. What FDOT proposes "is just way out of line."

Bishop told him the town didn't hold the pen. "If it were ours to write, we could certainly put our own forceful language in it, but we're not in that position," she said. "We're asking Tal to do something in partnership with us."

Commissioner Steve Branham suggested a light touch with the county: "Great letter, 95% of it we like, but let's just add one sentence in there."

Why 65?

"The 65-foot is really driven by the requirement for any bridge going across the Intracoastal Waterway," Branham said. The Coast Guard does list 65 feet as a guide clearance, but says the figure is not a regulation and sets clearances case by case. Longboat Pass is a Gulf inlet, not the Intracoastal channel, and Clearwater Pass already has a 74-foot fixed span

"That One Very Large Sailboat"

The sharpest moment was also the shortest.

"Well, you know, we have to accommodate somebody's very large sailboat," Williams said.

"Well, it's that one," Bishop said.

"That one very large sailboat. Not mentioning any names," Williams said.

"Boats are sold on an average of every seven years," Coffin added.

Nobody said a name. But the sailor who has pressed the commission hardest this fall is Mark Fishman, a year-round resident whose sailboat carries a 71-foot mast. The Ringling is fixed at 65 feet, Cortez will be too, and New Pass is too shallow to count on. With a 65-foot span at Longboat Pass, he wrote in letters published in these pages, "my boat will be permanently trapped in Sarasota Bay." He has said he could accept the state's 78 feet or a taller drawbridge. "If a lower fixed bridge is installed, I will likely have to sell my house and move elsewhere."

The Last Tall-Mast Door

Branham noted that the state's boat counts are four years old. "I'm sure that number's changed," he said. He wants a new count, but admitted it "may cut against us. We don't know."

The state's 2022 navigation report counted more than 260 boats at the bridge over three days. The two tallest were listed at 71 and 78 feet. The state's preferred bridge clears exactly 78.

Small numbers are the town's argument. The report's conclusion is the sailors': once Cortez goes to 65 feet, "the Longboat Key Bridge will be the only means of access for vessels with air drafts greater than 65 feet."

And the final say on height belongs to the Coast Guard, whose permit FDOT lists as "to be acquired."

The One Design Everyone Could Live With

A drawbridge is the only design that serves both the north end and the sailors. It sits low

See Bridge, page 5

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Bridge, from page 4

when it is down. When it goes up, it has no height limit. The 65-foot fallback is the option that sets the town against its own sailors.

FDOT's own report found a mid-level drawbridge with 36 feet of clearance would let about 95 percent of the boats counted pass without an opening.

The state's answer is money. FDOT puts construction of the 78-foot span at about $138 million and a drawbridge at $176 million to $194 million, before decades of bridge tenders and maintenance. "The bascule option would be my preference, but FDOT is not currently entertaining the thought," Commissioner Sarah Karon wrote this fall.

Yet the state still builds drawbridges. "They did build a bascule bridge on the east coast. Was it Jupiter?" Williams asked. It was: FDOT finished a 42-foot drawbridge there late last year, though Bishop and Branham cautioned that Jupiter had its own reasons.

The Case for Going High

The tall bridge has local defenders. A fixed span never opens, and the state calls it the more reliable evacuation route, with a 12-foot protected path. In May, residents Ralph Haschke and Amy Holcombe wrote FDOT calling a fixed span "a no-brainer."

On the grade, FDOT figures relayed in March by Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman put the maximum slope at 4.5 percent, gentler than the Ringling's 5 percent. The north end's reply came from Northgate condominium president Richard Abuza: "Just because something is technically in compliance does not mean it is practically in compliance."

The Clock

Then the debate turned to timing, and the room changed its mind.

Karon warned that Manatee is seating two new commissioners. "The longer you wait, the more it could get bogged down in their process or not make it across the finish line," Brownman said.

There is also the signature line: Siddique's term as chair began Jan. 1, and if the county keeps last year's calendar, a letter that slips into January could carry a different name.

Vice Mayor Penny Gold offered the way out: a follow-up letter, "two bites at the apple instead of one." The town's own letter could carry Coffin's 65-foot average, a request for a new boat count and a list of recent FDOT bridges.

"It's not perfect," Branham said of the joint letter, "but we need to get on the board with it."

Karon hoped Bradenton Beach, at the other end of the bridge, might co-sign the second letter.

"We can ask. Doesn't hurt to ask," Williams said.

"Yeah, we've asked," Bishop said.

"Many times," Coffin said.

What Happens Next

The Town Commission votes on the letter Dec. 7. Manatee's board must then approve it, with no date set.

The letter lands at an agency about to change hands. Town lobbyist Dave Ramba told the commission to expect "wholesale changes to the agency's heads" before Gov.-elect Byron Donalds takes office in January. The island's state senator, Jim Boyd, became Senate President Nov. 17. "We used to get half an hour with him," Ramba said. "It'll probably be five minutes now."

FDOT's study has not formally closed, no Coast Guard permit has been issued and construction is unfunded. A few miles up Gulf Drive, the state's $123 million, 65-foot Cortez Bridge is under construction. When it opens, Longboat Pass becomes the last tall-mast door into Sarasota Bay.

The state can build one bridge low enough for the horizon and, when it opens, high enough for any mast. It is a drawbridge. Two governments now ask for it in one voice. The state has spent two years making clear it would rather not build one.

Comments go to FDOT Project Manager David Turley at David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us or (863) 519-2255.

Read the full story at LBKNews.com, including what the state's own boat survey found, Bradenton Beach's position, the Northgate condominium and the changing cast in Tallahassee.

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EditorLetters

Letters, from page 3

In the dark on the lights

To: Carolyn Mason

I don't know why some of the lights came down. I'm passing your email on to City Manager, Karie Friling, who should be able to track down an answer.

Kathy Kelley Ohlrich

Mayor

City Commissioner

Still appalled, take two

To: Sarasota City Commission

The lights/ decorations installed on the street lights along the corridor were beautiful and created quite a stir among residents. A positive stir, I might add. A few days later some of the lights/decorations had been removed and it was very noticeable. Very disturbing.

As a Newtown resident and former City Commissioner and Mayor, I am appalled. It is my understanding the lights/decorations will be replaced. How did this happen? Why did this happen? Did the contractor who installed the lights arbitrarily remove them or was he instructed to do so? In my honest opinion, I think the Commission owes the Newtown community a public explanation and apology.

Carolyn Mason

Sarasota

Rave reviews for the history lesson

To: Sarasota City Manager Karie Friling

Thanks! And, wow what an incredible synopsis of the background she wrote!

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner At-Large

City of Sarasota

The house that wouldn't stay put

To: Sarasota City Manager Karie Friling

That was quite a while ago, and the deal fell through. Here is a bit of history which I will be prepared to share, if requested, but I didn't put all of the detail in my agenda memo because I tried to reference only the most salient points.

The McAlpin House at 1530 Cross Street was built in 1912 as the six-room residence of George McAlpin and his family. The house remained a residence for approximately 60 years. In the 1970s a large storefront addition was constructed on its northern façade, and the structure was operated as a retail grocery/goods store for over a decade. After a period of vacancy in the early 1980's, the building was purchased by Robert Kimbrough, whose aim was to preserve and restore it. The building was locally historically designated in 1985 via Ordinance No. 85-2842. Mr. Kimbrough subsequently renovated the much-altered building, removing the storefront addition and converting the building into a small commercial office, and it remained operating as a commercial office space until 2021.

The building currently features three exterior walls of rusticated block, with additional wood- and stucco- additions at the rear (southern façade). In 2023 Orange Pineapple LLC, the new-owner of the 1530 Cross St parcel as well as other adjacent parcels, submitted application 23-COA-02, requesting permission from the Historic Preservation Board to demolish The McAlpin House. Demolition would allow for the unimpeded redevelopment of a cumulative parcel of land located between Pineapple Avenue, Ringling Boulevard, Orange Avenue, and the alley north of Dolphin Street; approximately 3.38 acres that also includes the now-vacated Cross Street is included in the development.

On July 11, 2023, the Historic Preservation Board denied demolition application 23-COA-02, by a vote of 4-0. The Applicant then appealed the denial to the City Commission (23-APP-03). The Commission deliberated the appeal on October 2, 2023, before continuing the item to a future meeting. On April 1, 2024, the Commission granted the appeal, 3-2. The approval was certified May 6, 2024 (23-COA-02), including the Commission's detailed conditions: The Applicant could demo, but would have to 1) Incorporate the rusticated blocks of the demolished McAlpin House in the design of the new development; and 2) contribute $200,000 to Historic Preservation. However, if the applicant could instead locate an appropriate site for relocation, they could apply that $200,000 towards the cost of the move instead.

The item coming to the Commission on Monday will supply a site suitable for the McAlpin House relocation and the developer will pay for the house to be moved and placed on a new foundation.

Cindy Emshoff

General Manager

Office of Housing and Community Development

Checking the forwarding address

To: Cindy Emshoff

Agenda item VI.3 on the agenda summarize that the McAlphin House will be relocated to this parcel. I received an inquiry from a commission who thought originally the house was moving to a different location in the Laurel neighborhood. Can you confirm this was the original plan and any insight on what changed, if you know? Thanks!

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner

City of Sarasota

See Letters, page 12



OpinionEditorial

Time to Finally Shelve the Longboat Library Plan

The voters said enough. The construction money was collected for somebody else's neighborhood. And this island was never short on books. In December, the County Commission should close the cover.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Let me start with a confession that will cost me at dinner parties. I was an English major. I went to graduate school for literature, voluntarily and at my own expense. I have owned thousands of books, and I want every person in this county reading every novel, newspaper and periodical they can get their hands on.



STEVE REID

And I am telling you the Longboat Key library should be shelved. Not paused. Not signed, sealed and slipped into a drawer until the weather improves. Stopped.

It is the wrong building, paid for with the wrong money, in the wrong place, at the worst possible time. Other than that, I have no objections.

A Solution in Search of a Problem

Start with the supposed emergency, which is that Longboaters cannot get to a library.

The Town Center Green is about eight miles from Selby Library in downtown Sarasota, the biggest branch in the county system. For the north end, Manatee County's Island Library in Holmes Beach is the closer one. Virtually no one on this island lives more than about 10 miles from a public library. The island has also had a small volunteer library of its own for nearly 70 years.

That is before we count the libraries in everyone's other states. A good many Longboaters have a summer place, or a mountain place, or a place near the ski lift, and I am reliably informed that those towns have libraries too. The typical resident here is a short drive from a public library in at least two time zones.

Then there are the books themselves. Most of us moved here with a personal library. We offered it to the kids. The kids, who do not want our books any more than they want our china, turned it down. So it went to Goodwill, and we bought a Kindle or an Ipad.

Longboaters know how to get online. They know how to research, how to send email, how to ask an AI a question and then argue with the answer. To suggest this community has been sitting in the dark, waiting for the county to deliver the written word, is almost condescending.

What Longboat Wanted Was a Room

Here is the honest history. For years the dream was an arts and cultural center, a Longboat project to be paid for by Longboat. The partnership with Ringling College fell apart. The county library arrived as the make-good, pushed hard by former Mayor Ken Schneier.

But listen to what residents asked for at the 2024 workshops. They asked for a real meeting hall. And look at what the island's donors bought, in the words of the town's own planning staff: "an enlarged community meeting space, covered outdoor terrace on the Green, and an enhanced entry."

A hall, a terrace and a nice front door. The books are the cover story. What we are building is a clubhouse with a card catalog.

And we have clubhouses. We have the Key Club. We have condominium common rooms from one end of Gulf of Mexico Drive to the other, every one of them equipped with chairs, air conditioning and a neighbor with strong opinions about the landscaping budget. We have the Green itself and its pavilion, which by my eye have been underused since the day they opened. I have not seen anything close to a full calendar of concerts out there.

If we cannot fill the gathering place we already built, I doubt the cure is a bigger one that the county has to staff.

There Is No Free Library

The fiscal conservative in me is offended by the sales pitch, which is that this is a gift. Impact fees build it, donors dress it up, and Longboat gets a library for nothing.

There is no free money. There never has been.

The county's own finance chief put the operating bill at about $740,000 for a partial first year, $1.1 million for the first full year and roughly $1.4 million a year by 2031. Not one dollar of that can come from impact fees or donations. All of it comes out of the county's general fund, which runs on property taxes, which the voters of Florida just cut.

The county expects to lose $46.85 million in fiscal 2028 and $87.09 million the year after. Its library department had 18 vacant positions in October, with hiring paused. The Longboat branch now sits on a nine-project review list alongside a jail addition and two fire stations.

It is not free on this end, either. The town has agreed to lease its land to the county at no charge for up to 80 years and to maintain the property.

Whose Money Is It, Anyway?

Now my inner liberal would like a word, because he is angrier than the conservative.

About $11 million of this building comes from library impact fees. An impact fee is what a new house pays so that public services can keep up with the growth that house creates. It is the one charge in government with its purpose stamped right on it.

Longboat Key is not growing. It is built out. Its population has flatlined. So that $11 million did not, by and large, come from here. It came from new rooftops in places like North Port and Wellen Park and the subdivisions marching east of the interstate, where homes are approved by the thousand and where some families face a longer drive to a branch than anyone on this island.

We have a county government that has staked its entire financial future on growth and then declines to fund what the growth requires. Sarasota County has not opened a new library anywhere since 2018. After all that building, its next one would go on a barrier island with a flat population and a private beach club, so that we can have a terrace.

Those homeowners out east already paid. They cannot be billed twice. If their fees are spent here, the next library in their part of the county waits on money from houses that have not been built yet, in a market nobody can predict. That is a shell game, and it does not lift literacy by a single page.

Four of the five county commissioners represent districts that do not contain a grain of Longboat sand. I would like to hear one of them explain this at a town hall. Your impact fees built a lovely library on Longboat Key. You are welcome to drive out and visit. Yours will be along when the next few thousand homes get permitted.

This is not a gift to Longboat. It is a public taking.

Two Hats, One Project

The project gets sold two ways. On the island, the message is that it is practically free. At the county, the message is that Longboat pays a great deal in taxes and deserves its fair share of services.

Is that really where Longboat wants to hang its hat? Demanding our cut, for something we do not need and do not much seem to want?

One of the library's most effective champions lives in both of those worlds. Commissioner Sarah Karon is one of the loveliest, most charming and most enthusiastic people you will ever meet. She and her husband have been generous to this island, and the pavilion carries their name. She has also spent years at the top of the Library Foundation for Sarasota County, the nonprofit that raises private money for the county's libraries.

I think it is wrong for one person to hold both megaphones on a project like this. Affection is not agreement.

The fundraising tells its own story. It was supposed to run through the Longboat Key Foundation. In practice, much of the lifting fell to Karon and to then-Town Manager Howard Tipton, who was handed the job of spearheading it. A town manager is hired to run a town. Raising private money for a county building is what the executive director of a charity does, and the commission should never have dumped it on him.

When the county signed off in June 2025, this newspaper reported the pledges had come from 12 people, with the town on the hook for any shortfall. The campaign did eventually beat its goal. But on an island with this much money, a thing people truly wanted would have been funded before the salad course.

The Buchanan Discount

Then there is the name over the door.

County policy said the name on a building costs 25 percent of the project, or about $3.5 million here. U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan and his wife, Sandy, pledged $1 million. The town asked the county to relax its rule, the county obliged, and the building became the Vern and Sandy Buchanan Sarasota County Library.

A million dollars is real money and real generosity, and I do not sneer at it. But that is naming rights at roughly 70 percent off. The congressman built a car-dealership empire. He knows a markdown when he sees one.

It is hard to see eye to eye with officials who insist on kneeling in a compromising position before the very person whose approval they seek.

Now meet the son. State Sen. James Buchanan backed Amendment 3 and said on election night that a permanent tax cut is the best way to put government on a diet. Then came the matter of the library that would carry his parents' names and cost the county more than a million dollars a year to run. He has said he would want to talk with town and county leaders about how it can still move forward.

Everybody on a diet, in other words, except for dessert at our table.

That is not a political position. That is a contortion act, and it belongs at a charity gala, somewhere between the silent auction and the flourless chocolate cake, where a half-drunk ballroom can watch a man say one thing, do another and bend toward a third, all in opposite directions.

The Voters Already Voted

Amendment 3 passed with about 62 percent statewide. Sarasota County gave it 62.6 percent. And at Longboat Key's own Town Hall precinct, after town commissioners spent the fall warning residents what it would cost them, it got 61.5 percent.

Longboat did not dissent. We voted like the rest of Florida.

The town's own lobbyist, Dave Ramba, said it plainly to the commission on Nov. 9: "62% is 62%, and people need to listen to what the voters said."

What they said is not complicated. They want an end to the exuberant years. They want government to stop building things that are merely nice to have because the money looked free. Libraries did not even make the amendment's list of core functions. A specialty project on a wealthy island, sold as a gift, with a permanent bill attached, at a time of real fiscal uncertainty, is the exact thing they were voting against.

Build Our Own, With Our Own

We can find a better way to solve one reasonable need. Town Hall's chambers seat about 80 people, and a town ought to have a room where it can gather.

So If we feel compelled to build, it should remain ours, scaled to a size and cost that makes sense, fitted into the Green with beautiful landscaping and architecture. More than $4 million in pledges goes back to the donors if the county walks. Ask them to leave it here if we must have a gathering space.

Yes, we would have to pay to run it. That is what owning something means. If Longboat has the largesse everyone keeps telling the county it has, here is a chance to prove it — or not.

Close the Cover

The County Commission is set to take up its project list in December, with Dec. 15 as the working date. It takes three votes. It may not even take that. The town's ordinance says that if the county does not accept the approval within 30 days of receiving it, the ordinance is "deemed to have been denied."

I have a feeling people are working behind the scenes to save this thing with some Hail Mary of funding. Please don't. Do not torture the system, do not compound the problem and do not go against the plain will of the voters to rescue a building because the drawings are pretty.

About a million dollars has gone into those drawings. Losing it will sting. There is a name for that, politically and emotionally: cutting your losses.

Send the impact fees where the impact is. Send the donors their checks, or better, ask them to build the hall. And let's stop funding a solution on Longboat Key to which there is no known problem.

The Arch, from page 1

is now suing it over twelve feet of steel, consider the ground. On this stretch of beach there is always a fight. The man who made the Colony famous sued the Town and collected millions. His own unit owners fought him into bankruptcy court, and the resort closed. The Town condemned the ruins and was sued for doing it. The developer who bought the wreckage spent years in court prying it loose from holdouts. Now the Town that approved his resort is suing his companies over something he built on the one piece of the old Colony that survived.

Here is where the fight stands, where it is headed, and why this one strip of sand grows lawsuits the way the rest of the island grows sea grapes.

Fifteen Times Yes

In August the Town's special counsel, Martin Garcia, put 28 statements of fact in front of SR LBK II, the company named as owner on the groin permits, and told it to admit or deny each one. Under Florida's rules, a fact admitted this way is settled for the rest of the case unless the judge lets it be taken back.

The score, signed Oct. 15 by defense attorney Brian D. Goodrich: fifteen admitted, five denied, eight the company said it could not answer.

The admissions read like the Town's opening statement. The state permit "is valid only after all applicable federal, state and local permits are obtained." Whittall certified that he would get any municipal permit the work required. The one Town permit the company got for the groin in 2024 was for handrails, and the contractor who pulled it did not build the arch. The arch matches a fabricator's sketch dated April 28, 2025, and that sketch never went to the Town.

The denials are where the company plants its flag. It denies that it never applied for a permit. It denies that the 2024 handrail application left the arch out.

Unicorp is not saying it hid the arch. It is saying the Town saw the arch, in a picture tucked into the handrail file, and approved it.

The Company Without Its Own Application

Then there are the answers that are not answers.

Four times the company said it could not respond because "Defendants do not have a copy of the application and plans filed with DEP." Of its own state permit application, it said the defendants "do not have the application to DEP or know when it was filed." The agent listed on that permit is Unicorp National Developments, the company Whittall runs.

The Town made eleven requests for documents and got eleven identical replies: "All responsive documents in Defendants' possession, custody or control will be provided."

Whittall's Stand

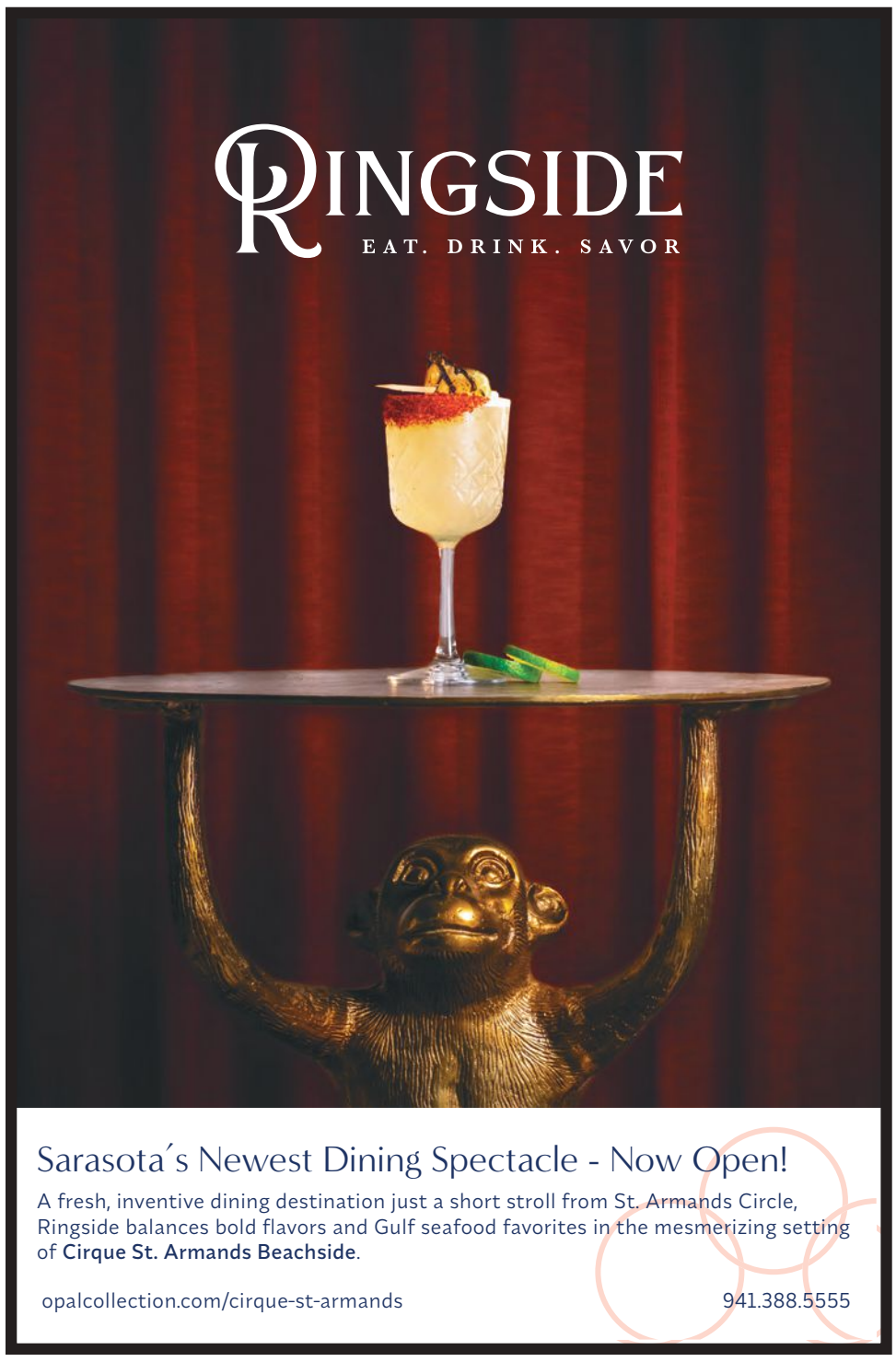
Nobody has ever had to guess what Chuck Whittall thinks.

"It is not offensive — it is beautiful," he told this newspaper in May. "It looks like a 1950s Monaco pier." And on the permit: "The state gave us a permit to build a groin, do ropes and columns and put a sign on it."

His lawyers turned that into six defenses that run down two roads.

Road one says the Town has no say. The arch is "outside the territorial boundaries of the Town." The Florida Constitution puts land under navigable waters in the hands of the state. The words "groins" and "jetties," the defense says, "do not appear at all" in the Town's code. And the Town "has not produced a survey" proving the groin lies inside its limits.

Road two says the Town already said yes, when it issued a permit in 2024 for posts and ropes on the same groin.



The Town's Answer: You Asked Us Twice

The Town's case fits on an index card.

The arch is a structure seaward of the erosion control line, a structure over water and an unpermitted sign, in violation of four sections of the Zoning and Sign codes. The company conceded the Town's jurisdiction when it asked for Town permits to rebuild the groin in 2022 and to put handrails on it in 2024. And the state permit Whittall relies on tells its holder, in print, to follow local ordinances.

Then comes the argument that may be hardest to answer. Unicorp asked the Town to change its law so the arch could stay, then withdrew the request the Friday before the vote. That conduct, the Town told the court, "evidences an awareness" that the code prohibits the arch.

A Picture, a Certificate and a Clock

Three questions now sit at the center of the case.

The picture. The engineering plans in the 2024 permit files show posts and rope, dimensioned to the inch. The only image of an arch in the exhibits is an unscaled rendering of a couple walking a boardwalk toward the horizon. The Town calls it art. The defense calls it approved plans.

The certificate. The defense says the state certified the finished "handrail and signage." The Town says the form carries the file number of the 2022 groin repair, does not appear in the state's online file, and came with the signer's name and the date covered up.

The clock. The state permit's printed expiration date is Feb. 19, 2025. The arch went up that August. Florida law lets some permits be extended after a hurricane emergency, but only with written notice to the agency. The Town says it has seen no evidence the notice was sent.

Four Ways This Ends

Judge Moss will decide the case without a jury. Discovery closes Sept. 23, 2027. Mediation must be finished by Nov. 23, 2027. The three-week trial period opens Jan. 24, 2028.

It can end with a ruling on the law, because the biggest question, whether the Town's code reaches a groin in the Gulf, needs no witnesses. It can end with a deal, and the outline of one exists in the ordinances the two sides spent months drafting. It can end at trial, where the Town has to prove only that its code applies and was broken. Or it can go on to the Second District Court of Appeal and beyond, which could keep the fight alive into 2029.

By Whittall's own account the arch cost about $16,000. The legal bills will almost certainly pass that figure many times over. Money does not explain this case. The question underneath it is who decides what stands at the water's edge.

Forty Years of Fights

Neither side is built to fold, and that is the history of this ground.

Herb Field opened a cluster of beach cottages here in the early 1950s. Murf Klauber, an orthodontist from Buffalo, saw the place in 1967, owned it by the early 1970s and turned it into the Colony Beach & Tennis Resort, ranked the No. 1 tennis resort in the country eight years running.

In 1973 the Colony was sold off as 237 condominium-hotel units whose owners were also limited partners. From then on, eighteen acres of Gulf front belonged to one strong-willed operator and more than two hundred investors, each holding something the others needed.

Murf Against the Town

In 1988 Klauber sued Longboat Key in federal court after the Town revoked his permits for The Reserve, a spa condominium planned on another Gulf-front parcel up the road. A jury awarded him $8.9 million. The Town settled in 1997 for $6.5 million.

Town Hall has not forgotten. "I cannot guarantee this commission that we will recover attorney's fees and costs," Town Attorney Maggie Mooney told commissioners before they voted in May to sue the St. Regis.

The Owners Against Murf

In 2004 Klauber asked the unit owners for about $12 million in repairs. They voted no twice. He sued. The association and the hotel partnership landed in bankruptcy court, a bank moved to foreclose, and the last guests checked out on Aug. 15, 2010.

Fourteen Dark Years

The resort sat empty and decaying. Whittall's Unicorp National Developments bought in for $22 million in 2016. Voters rejected his first plan, 3,220 to 465. The Commission approved a smaller one in 2018.

That summer the Town condemned the ruins, unit owners sued to stop it, and a judge let the demolition go forward. The last building fell in late November 2018. Klauber died that same week, on Thanksgiving Day, at 91.

Garcia, the lawyer now suing the St. Regis, represented the Town in that demolition fight, Mooney told commissioners in a memo this year. In 2018 the Town went to court to knock buildings down so Whittall could build. In 2026 it went to court to knock down something Whittall built.

Whittall Against the Holdouts

It took until 2021 for Whittall to pry the land loose from holdout owners, chief among them Tennessee investor Andy Adams, who controlled 75 units, and for a judge to dissolve the condominium.

The St. Regis opened Aug. 16, 2024. A year later the arch went up on the one piece of the old Colony that Whittall kept.

Why This Ground?

The property was divided at birth among hundreds of owners. It is too valuable to walk away from, on an island its own Zoning Code calls "predominantly built out." It draws people who do not take no for an answer.

And its western edge is a seam in the law. The groin sits where private land ends, state-owned submerged land begins and, the Town says, its municipal boundary extends over the water.

What the Groin Was For

The Colony's buildings are gone. The man who made it famous is gone. The condominium that held the property in 237 pieces was dissolved by a judge.

All that is left of the old Colony is 156 feet of concrete in the Gulf, with a new railing, a new arch and a case number.

It was put there to keep the sand from moving. It has never been able to do the same for the people who own it.

For the complete report, including the full history of the property, the court exhibits and a timeline of the fights, go to lbknews.com.

Key Real Estate

Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key & Downtown Sarasota latest sales

WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 20, 2026

17 CLOSED SALES | **$29.5M** TOTAL VOLUME | **$4.1M** TOP SALE

The week's top sale: Unit 503 at the Ritz-Carlton Residences, Sarasota Bay, 555 Quay Commons, sold for $4,107,512, and its neighbor, Unit 504, sold for $3,918,590. On Longboat Key, 550 Norton St. sold for $2,800,000, above its $2,499,000 asking price, four days after listing.

ADDRESS	SQ. FT.	LIST PRICE	BED/BATH/ HALF BATH	DAYS ON MARKET	SALE PRICE
Longboat Key					
550 Norton St.	3,453	$2,499,000	3/3/1	4	**$2,800,000**
5461 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #304	1,516	$1,495,000	2/2/0	19	**$1,495,000**
1055 Gulf of Mexico Dr., #504	1,503	$1,199,000	2/2/0	395	**$1,150,000**
2550 Harbourside Dr., #334	3,083	$1,250,000	3/3/0	26	**$1,050,000**
1932 Harbourside Dr., #244	1,192	$1,175,000	2/2/0	178	**$1,000,000**
2321 Harbour Oaks Dr.	2,478	$752,000	3/2/1	55	**$682,500**
4380 Exeter Dr., #101	1,376	$389,500	2/2/0	14	**$362,000**
Bird Key, Lido Key					
1770 Benjamin Franklin Dr., #401	1,413	$1,350,000	3/2/0	186	**$1,300,000**
Downtown Sarasota					
555 Quay Commons, #503	3,863	$4,224,000	3/3/1	61	**$4,107,512**
555 Quay Commons, #504	3,553	$3,999,000	3/3/1	0	**$3,918,590**
540 N. Tamiami Trail, #1201	3,630	$3,495,000	3/3/2	22	**$3,400,000**
325 Golden Gate Pt., #902	2,263	$3,050,000	3/3/1	0	**$3,050,000**
688 Golden Gate Pt., #201	2,088	$1,950,000	3/3/0	106	**$1,950,000**
111 S. Pineapple Ave., #1013	1,577	$1,499,500	2/2/1	262	**$1,425,000**
501 Lafayette Ct.	2,434	$799,000	3/3/1	58	**$750,000**
435 S. Gulfstream Ave., #1006	1,424	$679,000	2/2/0	11	**$655,000**
648 Cohen Way, #648	1,301	$465,000	3/2/0	—	**$450,000**

Source: Stellar MLS closed sales for ZIP codes 34228 and 34236.

Longboat Key News

GOLF · DANCE · TRAVEL · SWIM · PLAY · SLEEP · WALK · CRAFT · GARDEN · ART · COOK · GOLF · DANCE

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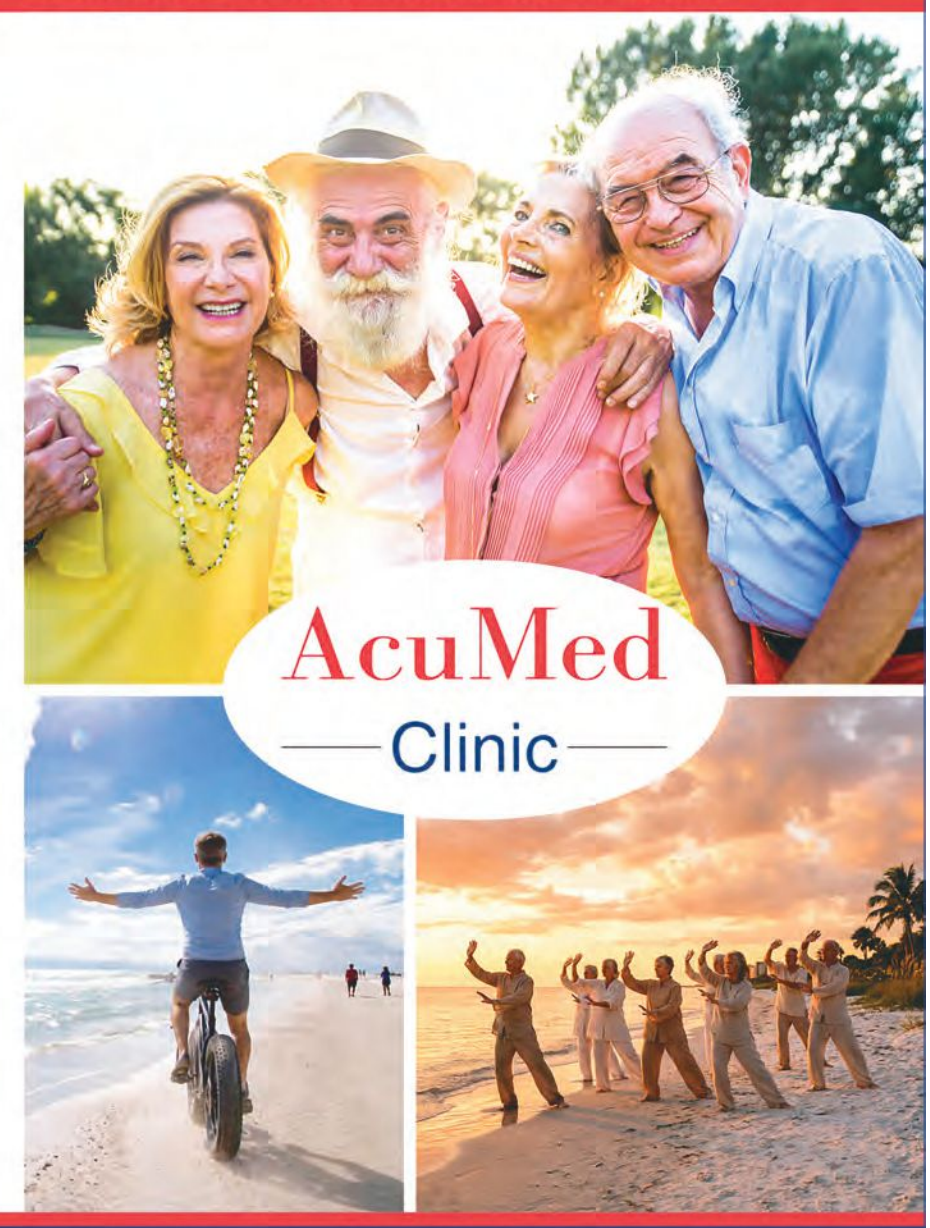
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for chronic low back pain*

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- We check your coverage in advance
- All-natural, drug-free, non-surgical care

Dr. Katrina "Kitt" Chojnicki-Hill DAOM, AP
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*Chronic low back pain lasting 12 weeks or longer. Part B deductible and coinsurance may apply; a supplement plan may provide coverage.



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OnPatrol

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

Nov. 14
Open and Shut Case

2:51 p.m.

Officer Castro and Officer Maple were dispatched to the 3100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive regarding a report of an open door. A concerned citizen called 911 after finding the business's front door ajar outside of business hours. Upon arrival, Officer Castro observed the front door was ajar. Officer Maple responded to clear the building. Dispatch was notified and Officers requested the radio channel remain clear until the building was secured. After a thorough sweep, no one was found inside and no signs of forced entry or criminal activity were observed. The store owner was contacted by phone and informed of the situation. He said that the manager may have forgotten to secure the door. The owner instructed police to secure the front door from inside the building and exit through the rear door. Officers secured the business as instructed. There is no further information to report. Case clear.



Nov. 15
Injury Report

9:33 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the 1600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a call of an injured person. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson was met by the female caller, outside in the parking lot of the resort preparing and setting up flower arrangements for a wedding. The woman stated she does not work for the resort but the wedding coordinator had hired the company she works for to set up the flowers. The woman said while she was moving a table through the doorway, an employee pushed the other end of the table pinching her finger between the door and table. The woman said the middle finger on her right hand was pinched so hard it severed the tip of her finger off. The woman also said she was bleeding everywhere and was driven by her sister to Sarasota Memorial Hospital for treatment. The woman said when she returned to the hotel after being cleared from the hospital she requested video footage of the incident, the incident report and the employee's name who pushed the table for her records and to give to her employer but the hotel refused. The woman stated her flight home to Atlanta is tomorrow and she wanted police to document the incident since the hotel was refusing to help her. The woman was given a business card with a case number. Case clear.

Nov. 16
Back-Pedaling

12:33 p.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol in the 1200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive, Officer Troyer observed a black moped driving southbound in the bicycle lane. Officer Troyer further observed the moped was not human powered and there were no pedals on the moped. Officer Troyer conducted a traffic stop on the moped in the area of Gunwale Lane and Gulf of Mexico Drive for the violation of operating a vehicle not human powered in a bicycle lane. The driver provided Officer Troyer with a Florida ID card to identify himself and the officer cleared him through NCIC/FCIC. The motorcycle was registered as a motorcycle-moped and the man was the registered owner. The man said he was unaware of the licensing requirement. Based upon Officer Troyer's investigation, he found probable cause to believe the man was in violation of Driving without a valid license. Officer Troyer followed him to a nearby service station where he would wait for a licensed driver to assist him. Case clear.

Nov. 17
Driveway Diplomacy

11:18 a.m.

Officer Miano was dispatched to Buttonwood Drive for an illegal parking call. While on scene, Officer Miano looked for a white truck with a trailer and unknown registration. While he could not find the truck, he observed other parking issues on the roadway. He advised the operators of the vehicles to park in the driveways of the residences where they're conducting work. No further issues observed in the area. Case clear.

Fore-Wheel Drive

12:01 p.m.

Officer Miano was dispatched to Police Department to interview a subject with vehicle damage. Officer Miano interviewed a man in reference to the damage to his Toyota Tacoma. The man said he was traveling southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive near the southern portion of Longboat Key Club golf course when he observed a loud noise originate from the roof of his vehicle, subsequently observed a white golf ball travel away from his vehicle. He turned onto Longboat Club Road and observed a golf ball size dent in the roof of his vehicle. The man also stated he was advised by the gate security guard to advise resort security in reference to the damage to his vehicle. Security personnel composed an internal report, further advising him to possibly obtain a report from the Police Department as well. The man advised an informational report will be completed which he was also given the incident number to reference at a later time. No further action. Case clear.

Nov. 18
Not for Rent

8:11 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 7100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a public service call for an online posting. Upon Officer Maple's arrival, he met with the complainant who said he had recently discovered his home listed on Zillow for rent with a different phone than the one he uses. The complainant also stated he had received a phone call from an unknown photographer asking for payment for pictures taken that were posted to the website. The complainant did not pay any money and instead called the police. Officer Maple walked the complainant through the procedures to reclaim his home on Zillow and to remove the listing. Unfortunately the home ownership retrieval could not be processed online and the complainant was given the information to contact the corporate office for resolution. No money, identities or personal information was released to any unauthorized personnel and at this point the complainant is not a victim. Case clear.

Verbal Dispute
9:40 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Harbourside Drive in reference to a family disturbance. Sarasota Sheriff's Office Dispatch advised that a caller reported a man and woman in a verbal argument. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos made contact with a woman on the sidewalk using her cell phone who initially denied being involved or needing any police assistance. Officer Miklos continued driving one driveway north of her location and met with a man near his vehicle. The man advised that the woman walking was his wife and they had been in a verbal argument. At this time, Officer Miklos advised the man to stay near the vehicle as he returned to speak with his wife. She was not cooperative, however, stated she was fine and walked away from her husband to prevent any incident. The woman was on the phone with her friend who was enroute to her location to pick her up. Sgt. Puccio, Officer Martinson, and Officer Tillman arrived on scene to assist and gather further information. Sgt. Puccio provided the male's information and he confirmed that the argument was strictly verbal and was okay with the woman going to her friend's for the night. The woman's friend arrived on scene and took her home without incident. Case clear.

Nov. 19
Ram-ifications

8:33 a.m.

Officer Maple and Officer Castro were dispatched to the 3400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a disturbance in progress. Upon arrival, officers met with the complainant who stated she called for the 2023 blue Dodge Ram and trailer parked on the right of way in front of the property she managed. Officer Maple observed the vehicle parked with two tires on the bike lane. Officer Maple questioned the driver who produced a Florida Driver's License and he stated he was in a verbal confrontation with the manager and told her to call police. Officers deescalated the situation and the driver was issued a citation for stopping, standing or parking in the bike lane. The driver left the area without incident. Case clear.

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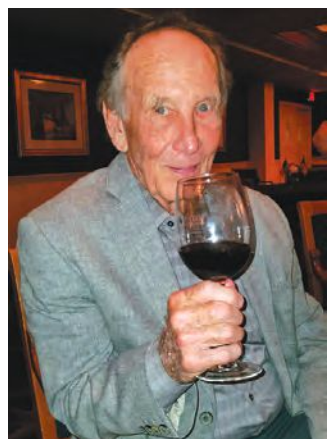
WineTimes

Affordable Thanksgiving Wines

Following a rough outline of a Thanksgiving feast, we suggest quality and affordable wines for each of five courses.

S.W. and Rich Hermansen
Guest Writers
wine@lbknews.com

The Pilgrims had learned to substitute beer and hard apple cider for the polluted supply of public drinking water in England. We know little about the beers and ales, wines, and spirits the Pilgrims drank during the 1620's in New England, but we think that we can do better than the Pilgrims.



Following a rough outline of a Thanksgiving feast, we suggest quality and affordable wines for each of five courses. Some of the courses have suggested wine alternatives to accommodate different tastes. Some of the suggested wines sell for under $10. Most sell for less than popular supermarket brands of the same variety.

First Course: Mini Toasts topped with thin slices of Havarti cheese sprinkled with oregano flakes and sprigs of parsley. Lightly toasted.

First wine: Tissot-Maire Blanc de Blancs Crémant du Jura Brut

This crisp sparkling wine comes from the same Chardonnay grape as Blanc de Blancs (white wine made with white grapes) Champagne and is made the same way. The hint of butter in the toasts and herbs mingle with the bubbles rising from the Crémant in the glass.

Second Course: Bread cubes impaled with toothpicks for dipping in saucers filled with flavored olive oil (light, garlic, rosemary, anchovy). Intentionally light prelude to the heavier main courses…



Second Wine: Argiolas Costamolino Vermentino

This lovely golden white wine from Sardegna Italy has become an alternative wine to Chardonnay by the glass in local bars and restaurants. An excellent sipping wine, it helps start conversations. "Have you heard of this wine?"

Third Course: Turkey and Dressing; sweet potatoes; green bean casserole with slivered almonds; cranberry sauce; brown gravy to pour over turkey.

Third wine White for breast slices: Chateau Ste. Michelle Gewurztraminer 2025

This Northern Italian variety of grape finds a friendly space in Eastern Washington State. A floral and off-dry wine, it adds the moisture and nectar that brings out the flavors in turkey breast.

Third wine Red for dark meat slices: Wente Family Vineyards' Baily Hill Pinot Noir 2023. The softer tannins in this bargain wine enrich the meaty tastes of the legs and thighs of the larger bird. The wine has evolved over centuries as an ideal sauce for gamy birds.

Fourth Course (optional) pork loin, beefsteak, or and lamb with mashed potatoes for the red meat and potatoes fanciers.

Fourth wine: Guidobono Langhe Nebbiolo CV.

This wine from the Piedmonte has a lighter hue than many of the big Cabernet Sauvignon from California. It delivers a robust taste nonetheless and stands up to red meat.

Fifth Course; Pumpkin Pie with whipped cream.

Fifth wine: Porto Tawny Port

Matching a sweet fortified wine from Portugal to a sweet dessert seems too obvious. Yet it works well, particularly when affordable quality tawny Porto sells for as little as $5 a fifth.

One could pay far more for wines for a Thanksgiving dinner. The selections we suggest offer quality at affordable price.

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Hart's Landing, from page 1

And the dock is where the shrimp will be.

Under the city's design, you buy bait at a window in the new building on the bank, cross the drive and scoop it from tanks in an open-air pavilion on the old dock footprint. City reviewers treat that pavilion, its bait tanks and a new floating dock as structures on the water. That puts them under the zoning code's dock rules, a possible public workshop and, potentially, a lease the City Commission would have to approve.

The comments came in a Nov. 3 memo from Development Review Senior Planner Cristian Toellner and were walked through at the Development Review Committee's Nov. 4 pre-application conference, item 27-PRE-01. The session approved nothing. But it laid out the road the city still has to travel to put fishermen back on the rail, and it raised the question this paper raised when the plans first surfaced: who is going to run the place?

Straight to the Permit Counter

"Therefore, the bathroom and concessionaire is not subject to development review procedures and may go straight to the building permit process," the memo reads.

"They let us know that there's no actual permit required, but the city will need to modify the existing maintenance agreement that they have on that area," Emily Gerpitz of Kimley-Horn, the city's consultant, told the committee.

Staff did flag the soft spots this paper found: too few parking spaces, no bike racks and a too-tight rear setback. But Toellner framed those as items for a resubmittal, "if you do need to resubmit." With the building headed straight to permitting, whether those numbers ever face a zoning test now depends on the dock.

The Dock Decides

The dock must comply with Section VII-1302 of the zoning code, the city's dock rules.

"If the rebuilding of the dock exceeds any of the standards in Section VII-1302(18) then Site Plan (SP) and Major Conditional Use (CU) approval shall be required," the memo says. If the dock contravenes those standards, a "G" zone waiver may be needed. Chief Planner Briana Dobbs told the committee that either route "will require a Community Workshop."

That is where the public could get a say. The bait and restroom building, on its current path, gets no zoning hearing at all.

Which way it goes is unclear, because the marine drawings still haven't been made public. Staff wants dimensions of the shade structure, bait tanks, platform, walkway and pilings. What has been seen points to more than the walk-up dock people remember: a floating dock, an outlook platform and room for six boats. And the memo, in a paragraph about lease fees, mentions an expansion of the docking area.

A Lease, a Tenant and the Hart Name

The city is checking with its Office of Economic Development on whether a submerged land lease is needed now that the shop is moving upland.

"The Tenant may be required to submit a Submerged Land Lease to the City Commission for approval," the memo says. The tenant would cover all fees, "including administrative fees for amending the current lease or increased fees due to the expansion of the docking area."

Two phrases jump out: "the Tenant," capitalized and unnamed, and "the current lease."

The plan sheet in the October filing still labels the waterfront parcel "420 John Ringling Cswy, Claudia S Hart, Lessee." According to the shop's own published history, Claudia Hart died in 1988, her son Dennis inherited the business and the Baldwin family took it over in 2017. The packet doesn't say whether any lease in the Hart name is still in force, or who "the Tenant" would be.

Toellner also asked the consultants to "please clarify how the concessionaire will be operated, whether through a usage permit or through a leasehold." Nobody answered at the table.

Lift Stations, Ladder Trucks and Palms

Other reviewers added their own homework. Utilities said Lift Station 49, the city sewage pump on the site, is to be relocated, with a draft condition moving its control panel to "a higher accessible elevation near the restrooms." Fire wants proof that a 59-foot tiller ladder truck can turn around on the curving drive. Police crime-prevention advice calls for cameras, shadow-free lighting and shrubs trimmed to 2 feet, a tall order for the 38 sea grapes in the landscape plan. And City Arborist Jackie Hartley asked the team to "consider transplanting of some of the palms instead of disposal."

Not mentioned once in roughly 13 minutes on Hart's Landing: FEMA, cost or a schedule.

So Why 2031?

As of early October, the city's hurricane recovery tracker showed construction starting in 2029 on the dock only, with the dock, shop and restrooms finished in 2031. Nothing in the staff comments changes those dates.

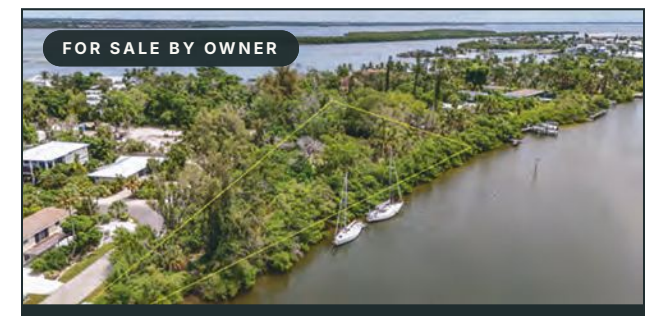
But the comments sharpen a question. If the building can go straight to a permit, what holds the bait window and the restrooms to the dock's finish line?

The design may be part of the answer. The bait window is in the building. The bait is in the tanks on the water. A shrimp window with no shrimp tanks is a ticket booth.

Money may be another part. City Manager Karie Friling has warned that the city "cannot do anything to jeopardize" its FEMA reimbursement, and neither the packet nor the committee said whether FEMA has signed off on the new layout.

For two years, the question at the foot of the Ringling Bridge was what would go back. The drawings answered that. Now the city's reviewers have answered how. Nobody has answered when, or who will be behind the bait window the morning it opens.

See the rest of this story online at lbknews.com, including the full list of what comes next and the questions City Hall can answer now.



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May your Thanksgiving be filled with love, laughter, good health, and the simple joys that make life so meaningful.

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Sandra Smith & the Secur-All Insurance Agency Family



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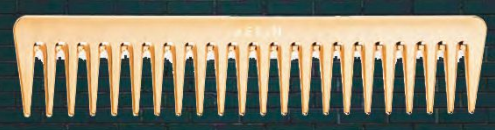


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Letters, from page 6

Forwarding the fairway facts
To: Longboat Key Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch
Please see Jerry's response below.
Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Throwing shade at the driving range

To: Sarasota City Manager Karie Friling

I hope your day is going well. The Bobby Jones Golf Club Master Plan included the driving range. However, the Master Plan does not have the infrastructure that is being requested by utilizing the Park Impact Fees. Such as the shade structures, lighting, and etc. These elements will increase capacity, which is a requirement for the use of Park Impact Fees. These elements will need to be designed and constructed. We are working with Purchasing on potentially doing a design build solicitation. I will be at the Commission Meeting on Monday. Thanks, and enjoy your weekend!

Jerry Fogle
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Sarasota

Range anxiety

To: Sarasota City Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Fogle

I got a quick question from a Commissioner - does the master plan for Bobby Jones include the driving range?

Karie Friling
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Everything, everywhere, all at Planning

To: Sarasota City Manager Karie Friling

Here is the summary for this week:

-Barancik Foundation Grant- Planning's Sustainability and Resilience Office has been awarded a $600,000 grant from the Barancik Foundation for Community Resilience Improvements and an Environmental Education Fellowship Program.

-Citizen's Academy- Planning and Communications will commence meetings with the various departments early next year. The two-day event will take place in the Spring of 2027.

-DSCA Forum- I participated on the panel with four others and it went very well. The forum was well attended, and the panel answered a variety of questions on City and downtown issues.

-Fresh Fridays- This past Friday was probably the biggest crowd we've ever drawn and the projection art program was a huge hit. It might be nice to have the CC recognize Ringling College and the students who did the program at a future CC Meeting.

-Mote Marine- Deidra and I met with Mote Marine to get an update on their campus plans on City Island. They're still in the very early stages of putting their ideas together.

-National Coastal Resilience Fund- The City has applied for a $500,000 grant to advance the Bayfront Drive Living Shoreline Project to 60% design and permitting. A decision is expected in late November or early December and $400,000 has already been secured for the project.

-North Trail Development Partnership- Staff participated at the North Trail Topics Forum to discuss the history and the current status of the Trail from a land use/zoning and infrastructure perspective.

-Plan and Permit Reviews- Planning staff continues to provide comments at DRC Meetings and attend field visits for historic preservation permits.

-Planning Website- Active Zoning Text Amendments scheduled for hearings for the PB and CC will be posted on the website so that citizens can get the latest on what is being proposed.

-Public Art Project- The "Where Time Meets Community" mural at Southside Village has been completed.

-School Convocation Agenda Items- This is scheduled for the CC Meeting on 11/16/26. The School Convocation Meeting is scheduled for 1/15/27.

-1735 Central Avenue Purchase and Sales Agreement/Relocation of McAlpin House- This is scheduled for the CC Meeting on 11/16/26.

Project Update

-Bay Park ZTA- This was recommended for approval at PB Meeting on 10/14/26 and is scheduled for the CC Meeting on 11/16/26 with the Second Public Hearing projected to be at the CC Meeting on 12/7.

-Composting ZTA- This was recommended for approval at the PB Meeting on 10/14/26 and is projected to go to the CC Meeting on 12/7/26 with the Second Public Hearing projected to be held at the CC Meeting on 1/4/27.

-Comprehensive Plan Update- The Transportation Chapter Update was approved with two amendments requested by the CC on 11/2/26. Final wording has also been approved by the State. An informational presentation will be given at the CC Meeting on 11/16/26 and a final vote at the CC Meeting on 12/7/26.

-A public open house on the Inter-Governmental Coordination Chapter was held on 7/23/26. A meeting with the Argus Foundation was held on 6/5/26. Meetings were held with two CCNA Board members on 6/8/26 and the Chamber of Commerce on 6/12/26.

-Conceptual goals of the Historic Preservation Chapter were discussed at the HPB Meeting on 5/12/26 and were discussed again at the HPB Meeting on 10/13/26. An Open House is tentatively scheduled for 12/14/26.

-A meeting was held with CCNA Board members on the Recreation and Open Space Chapter on 8/18/26 and a presentation was given to the PREP Board on 8/20/26. An Open House Meeting was held on 11/5/26.

-Condo Hotels- A discussion on this topic was held at the CC Meeting on 7/20/26 and staff was directed to research this and look into preparing a ZTA. Research has continued on this topic.

-Elevated Structures Comp Plan Amendment and ZTA- Staff continues to work on this and will request authorization to move forward with this Comp Plan Amendment and associated ZTA at the CC Meeting on 11/16/26.

-Links Avenue Alley Vacation- This is scheduled to go to the PB Meeting on 11/17/26.

Hope you have a fun weekend!

Steve Cover
Planning Director
City of Sarasota

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Jan. 28



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Speakers: Debi Frock and Rev. Becki Neumann

Feb. 4



The Stories Between Us: Migration, Identity, Belonging, and the Art of Storytelling

Speakers: Karen Arango and Elvira Sánchez-Blake

Feb. 11



Optimizing Your Brain Health: The Gut–Brain Connection and New Hope for Reducing Dementia Risk

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Feb. 18

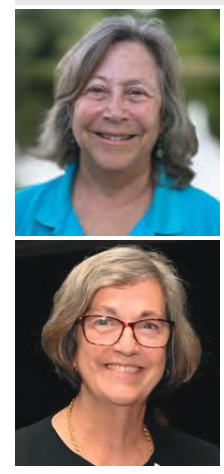


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Interviewer: Felecia Jett, Ph.D.

Speaker: Edna Sherrell, M.Ed.

Feb. 25



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Speakers: Lynne Platt, Catherine Hill-Herndon, and Stephanie Funk

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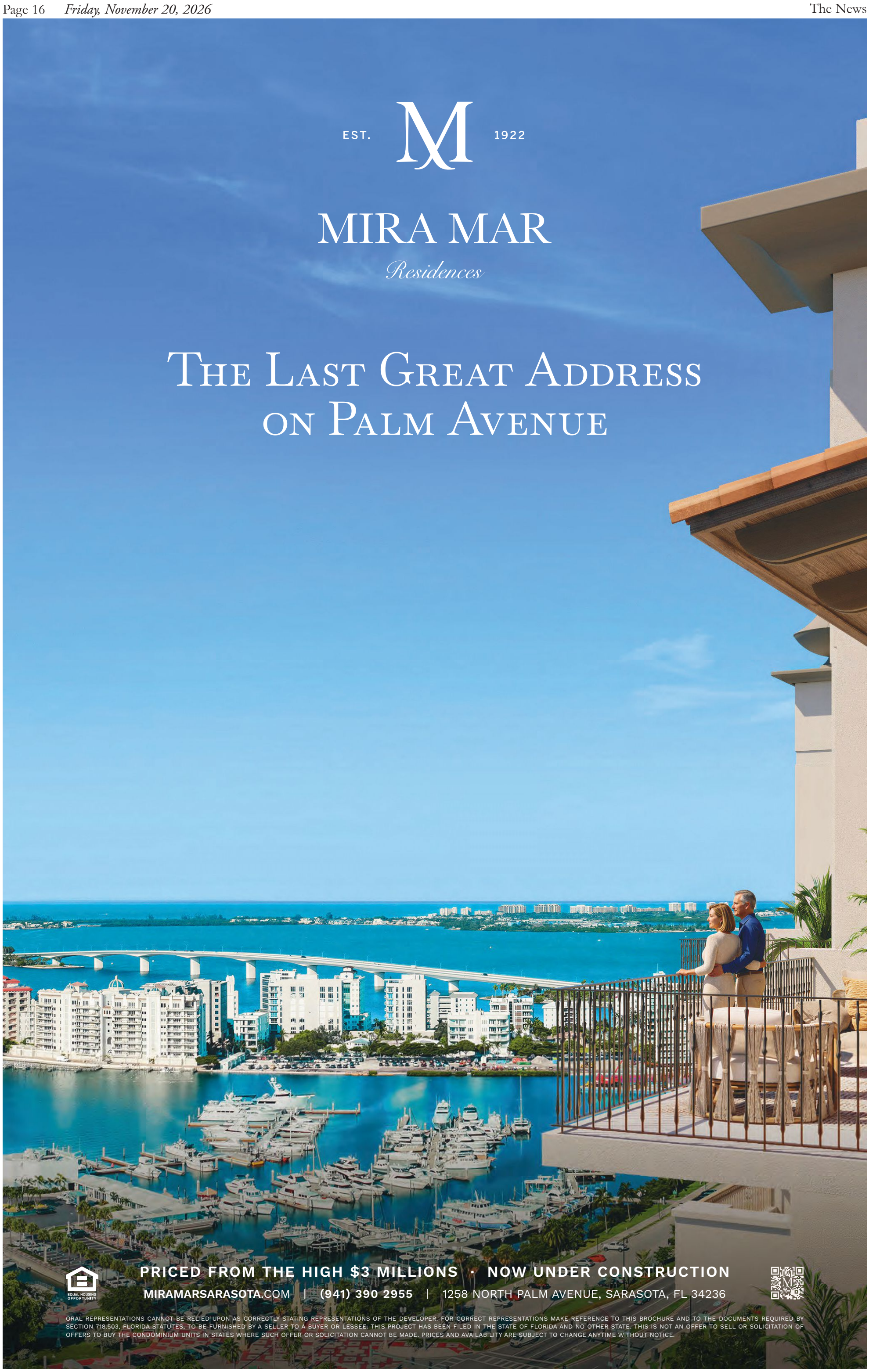
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