



Longboat Key News

December 12, 2025

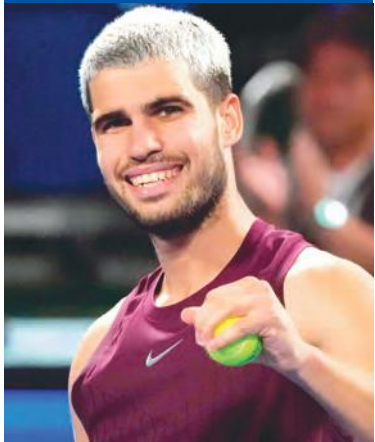
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Paradise, Marked Down... Why Longboat Key's Private Boom is the Town's Public Bust

The storms of 2024 battered Longboat Key, but the real wreckage might be on the town's balance sheet. While the real estate market roars back to life, a bizarre fiscal glitch has left the local government fighting for its financial future.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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On the third floor of a gleaming condominium complex overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, there is a unit that exists in two separate realities. In the first reality—the one where real estate agents trade keys and wire

transfers—this three-bedroom, three-bath apartment is a fortress of equity. It is pristine, untouched by the storm surges that swallowed the coastline a year ago. If listed today, amid the jubilant, storm-free winter of 2025, it would likely command a price north of \$1.5 million.

But in the second reality—the dusty, bureaucratic ledgers of the Manatee
See LBK Budget, page 2

The 'Third Rail' of St. Armands: Shore's Gambit in a Graveyard of Big Ideas

If history is any guide, the Shore Restaurant's new proposal for a three-story, mixed-use complex on St. Armands Circle is sailing into choppy waters.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

If history is any guide, the Shore Restaurant's new proposal for a three-story, mixed-use complex on St. Armands Circle is sailing into choppy waters.

While the renderings promise a chic, courtyard-style "lifestyle center" with a bodega and pool, the project is landing on a piece of real estate that has historically functioned as a graveyard for ambitious development. For the last five years, St. Armands Circle has been the site of a bitter, invisible war between commercial landlords who want to build "up" and a powerful bloc of residents who want to keep the Circle "low."

To understand why a simple



three-story building is a headline event, you have to look at the wreckage of the proposals that came before it.

The Fillmore Fiasco (2021)

The most spectacular failure in recent memory was the saga of the Fillmore Parking Lot.

In 2021, a development group floated a plan that seemed, on paper, like a slam dunk: a 98-room boutique hotel and a high-end grocery store to be built on the city-owned parking lot on Fillmore Drive. The developers argued it was exactly what the Circle needed to compete with Naples' Fifth Avenue—a place

for visitors to sleep and shop without creating traffic.

The backlash was immediate and visceral.

The St. Armands Residents Association (SARA), a well-organized group of homeowners who live on the quiet streets radiating off the commercial hub, mobilized with military efficiency. They argued that a hotel would turn their neighborhood into a 24-hour tourist trap and choke the already congested Ringling Causeway.

A survey conducted by the association was devastating: 75 percent of residents opposed the project. The opposition was so fierce that the City Commission, usually pro-development, got cold feet. The proposal died a public death in February 2022 when the commission voted 4-1 to halt any sale of the land, effectively killing the hotel.

See Shore, page 3

The Case for Funding the Circle Resiliency Plan

Why should disaster relief funding go even indirectly to residences and businesses in a location that would not in any sense qualify as one in economic distress? Why would not the residents and business owners in St. Armand's Circle step up and pay the costs of rebuilding St. Armand's Circle?

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

Economics does not have an agreed upon solution for problems of who pays taxes and who receives government benefits. Decisions about who receives benefits must balance the desire to provide a support system for those in need against investments in the infrastructure that supports important sources of tax revenues.

Wine Times usually stays in its food and beverage lane. We are making an exception here because the food and beverage sector of the St. Armand's Circle business community is recovering from a disastrously destructive 2024 hurricane season and is asking for help in preventing similar destruction by weather events in the future. Sarasota County has begun receiving some \$210 million in federal funds for recovery from Hurricanes Helene and Milton improvements in flood and wind damage control during hurricanes and other extreme weather events. The City of Sarasota has requested that Sarasota County assign \$25 million to implement an extreme weather

KeyOpinion

Resilience Plan for St. Armand's Circle. The Sarasota County commissioners will have to decide during mid-December 2025 whether to move ahead on the plan.

We recognize two concerns about the St. Armand's Circle Resiliency Plan. Why should disaster relief fund-

ing go even indirectly to residences and businesses in a location that would not in any sense qualify as one in economic distress? Why would not the residents and business owners in St. Armand's Circle step up and pay the costs of rebuilding St. Armand's Circle?

The case for Sarasota County \$25 million funding of the St. Armand's Circle Resiliency Plan begins with the second of the aforementioned concerns. In fact, residents and business operators have poured millions of their own dollars into mucking out sea water, drying out, tearing out walls, rebuilding more resilient interiors and exteriors, and hauling off ruined contents and merchandize to the dump. In many locations, owners had to tear down residence and commercial buildings and offer empty lots for
See Flood Funds, page 3

LBK Budget, from page 1

County Property Appraiser's office—this same unit is a ruin.

In 2024, the county valued the condo at \$1.4 million. This year, the assessment arrived with a shocking new number: less than \$450,000. It was a 69 percent write-down for a home that hadn't lost a single shingle. The computer had decided that because the building's ground floor had taken on water during Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the pristine apartments floating above it were suddenly worth a fraction of their former selves.

For the owner, it was a tax-bill miracle. For Howard Tipton, the Town Manager of Longboat Key, it was a mathematical catastrophe.

"The town is concerned," Tipton says, measuring his words carefully, "that a mass devaluation... does not actually reflect the true property values on the island."

Tipton is the man tasked with keeping the lights on in this sliver of paradise, and right now, the math isn't adding up. As Longboat Key enters the winter of 2025, it is living through a bizarre municipal paradox: The private wealth of the island is booming, but the public check-book is bleeding, trapped by a paperwork disaster that threatens the town's ability to pay for the very services that make it livable.

The \$724 Million Ghost

The trouble started on January 1, 2025. That is the date Florida law requires property appraisers to take a snapshot of value for the upcoming tax year. On that day, Longboat Key was still wearing the bruises of the 2024 hurricane season. But Tipton and his staff argue that the resulting snapshot wasn't just a candid photo; it was a distortion.

On the Manatee County side of the island—Longboat straddles the line between Manatee and Sarasota counties—taxable property values didn't just dip; they collapsed. A total of \$724 million in value vanished from the rolls.

"Not every property within Manatee County was adversely impacted," Tipton wrote in a pointed letter to Manatee Property Appraiser Charles Hackney on Nov. 19. He cited the "mass devaluation" that seemed to sweep up undamaged homes in its wake.

The result is a hole in the budget that no amount of sunshine can fill. According to Finance Director Sue Smith, the town is collecting 12 percent less revenue from its Manatee County properties than it did the year before. For a town that relies on property taxes for 75 percent of its general revenue—money that fuels the police cruisers, the fire trucks, and the paramedics—that figure is terrifying.

A Tale of Two Counties

The absurdity of the situation is heightened by what is happening just down the road. Cross the invisible line into the Sarasota County portion of the island, and the financial picture flips.

While Manatee County was slashing values, Sarasota County's tax base actually grew. The reason? A single, glittering behemoth: The St. Regis Longboat Key Resort.

The opening of the ultra-luxury hotel and condo complex acted as a massive financial adrenaline shot. The St. Regis alone pumped \$2.3 million in new tax revenue into the town's coffers, helping to drive a \$3.9 million increase on the Sarasota side.

It created a fiscal illusion. On paper, the town's total revenue is up 5 percent. But strip away the St. Regis, and you find a municipality struggling to stand on one leg. The shiny new hotel is effectively subsidizing the gaping wound left by the Manatee devaluations.

The "Homestead Trap"

The immediate pain is sharp—the town had to burn through \$8 million in reserves just to clean up the mess after the storms—but the long-term headache is the "Homestead Trap."

In Florida, the "Save Our Homes" amendment limits the annual increase in the assessed value of a primary residence to just 3 percent.

"And with potential property tax reform on the horizon, starting from a deficit situation, it's concerning," Tipton notes.

The math is unforgiving. If a \$1.4 million condo is officially re-valued at \$450,000, it cannot simply snap back to its true value next year. It must climb back slowly, 3 percent at a time. It could take decades for the town's tax base to catch up to reality. It is a "lost decade" staring them in the face—a scenario where the town must provide first-class services to a billionaire class while collecting taxes on a middle-class valuation.

The Price of Paradise

For now, the residents of Longboat Key are enjoying a "lag year." The beaches are raked, the landscaping is lush, and the memory of the storms is fading with every seamless sunset.

But inside Town Hall, the lights are burning late. Tipton and his team are pressing for answers, meeting with appraisers, and trying to convince the bureaucracy that a dry, third-floor condo is worth more than the computer says it is. They know that eventually, the bill for paradise always comes due. The only question is who—or what—will pay for it.



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The bumpy ride around St. Armands Circle is about to get a permanent fix

Starting this month, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will replace the temporary, modular speed humps along John Ringling Boulevard with permanent asphalt “speed tables.” The project aims to smooth out the arrival experience into the Circle while maintaining safety for pedestrians and residents.

The existing plastic speed bumps, which were installed as a traffic-calming measure, have caused wear and tear on the pavement underneath them over time. According to FDOT, the new asphalt tables will provide a smoother, more predictable transition for drivers while still effectively slowing traffic entering the busy commercial district.

“These new asphalt speed tables will help slow vehicles and create a more comfortable and predictable environment for everyone traveling through the St. Armands area,” said John Kubler, FDOT District One’s Director of Transportation Operations.

To minimize gridlock on the Circle, FDOT crews will perform the work overnight, with lane closures scheduled between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

The construction will happen in a quick, two-step process:

- Night 1 (Early December): Crews will rip out the old plastic humps, repair the damaged pavement underneath, and lay down the new asphalt tables in a single shift.
- The “Cure” Period: For the next 10 days, the road will be open as usual while the fresh asphalt hardens. No construction will happen during this window.
- Night 2 (Mid-December): Once the asphalt has cured, crews will return for one final night to paint permanent thermoplastic warnings and striping on the new humps.

While the work is fast, residents driving late at night should expect delays. Lane closures will be in effect during the two active work nights. FDOT warns that cold weather or rain could push the schedule back slightly, as asphalt requires specific conditions to set properly.

The Shore, from page 1

The “Vision 2026” defeat

Undeterred, the St. Armands Business Improvement District (BID)—a coalition of commercial landlords—tried a different tactic later that year. They dubbed it “Vision 2026.”

Instead of a specific building, they asked the city to change the rules of the game. They petitioned for a “Zoning Text Amendment” that would raise the maximum building height on the Circle from 35 feet to 45 feet. Their argument was that the aging, single-story buildings from the 1950s were obsolete and that landlords needed the extra 10 feet to make renovations financially viable.

This, too, touched the “third rail.”

Residents saw the “extra 10 feet” as a Trojan Horse for density. They feared it would transform the quaint, European-style circle into a canyon of four-story condos.

- The Statistic: A staggering 90 percent of surveyed residents opposed the height increase.
- The Outcome: The Business Improvement District, realizing they were fighting a losing political battle, withdrew the height increase request in October 2022, admitting defeat to the homeowners.

The Leonard Factor

What makes the new Shore proposal so intriguing is the man behind it: Tom Leonard.

Leonard, the co-founder of Shore, was a key figure in that failed “Vision 2026” push. He has long argued that St. Armands is falling behind rival destinations like Tampa’s Hyde Park or West Palm Beach because it is frozen in amber by outdated zoning.

Now, Leonard is back, but with a different strategy.

- Private vs. Public: Unlike the Fillmore proposal, this project is on private land he controls, not public property, removing a key political hurdle.
- The “Mixed-Use” Needle: By proposing just eight residential units rather than a 98-room hotel, he appears to be trying to thread the needle—offering the “live-work-play” density landlords crave, but on a micro-scale that might not trigger the wrath of the Residents Association.

However, the “three-story” height is still a flashpoint. If the project requires a variance to exceed the strict 35-foot cap that residents fought so hard to protect in 2022, the Shore proposal could quickly turn from an architectural rendering into the next battleground for the soul of the Circle.

Next Steps: The Dec. 17 pre-application meeting will be the first test. City planners will reveal whether Leonard’s vision fits inside the existing box, or if he is asking the city to break the very rules that residents have spent half a decade defending.

Flood Funds, from page 1

sale at prices equal to or less than their values as estimated by the County property appraisers. Residents and Businesses have funded a remarkable recovery of St. Armand’s Circle despite uncertainties about tropical weather and the appeal of a battered island to tourists.

The first of the two concerns has particular salience in an ”America (Me) First” era. No doubt the federal government has left numerous gaps in support for those in need. No doubt also that funds earmarked for hurricane relief will find their way to hurricane relief programs more than a year after the damage done by the hurricanes.

The St. Armand’s Circle Resilience Plan looks beyond relief for the hurricane damage more than a year ago and asks for funding for measures that will help St. Armand’s Circle avoid another round of neglect by Sarasota County. Residents and business recall the multiple failures of pumps installed by the County to help drain flood waters quickly from the Circle, the debris and mulch that blocked the storm sewers, and the parking lot and roadway channels that the County approved and maintained for years leading up to the storm surge of Hurricane Helene when the eye of that storm sat eighty miles away from the Circle. The aftermath of that storm blocked the paths to Lido Key to the south and Longboat Key to the North, and laid waste to one of the major economic engines of the West Coast of Florida. The City and County of Sarasota lost many millions in sales taxes, business taxes, and parking fees. Under cover provided by the State Legislature, Sarasota County appraisers ignored damages to anything outside buildings in their revised appraisals of property values.

The City of Sarasota and St. Armand’s Circle deserve a wholehearted effort by Sarasota County to live up to the flood control responsibilities that it has ignored for the past few decades. The flood risks have intensified not diminished since Helene. The sales and property taxes and parking fees from the Circle, Lido Key, and Long Boat Key that have supported Sarasota County could disappear in a storm surge. In light of the more critical storm surge concerns, we have not mentioned the threats to the recovering food and beverage sector of the Circle, but that too.

Disclaimer: the writers own a residence around St. Armand’s Circle and have a vested interest in the Resilience Plan.

The Beauty of the Blur

Victoria Hohlt’s Memory on Canvas

In a city known for its blindingly bright light and sharp, tropical contours, Victoria Hohlt is interested in the blur.

On the evening of December 5th, the Sarasota-based artist’s latest work, Blue Vase, debuted at the Art Ovation Hotel. Amid the polished hum of the city’s cultural set, the painting stood out not for its precision, but for its haze—a meditation on the fragility of the mind.

Blue Vase is not a static image; it is a timeline. In her written reflection accompanying the piece, Hohlt describes a creative process that bowed to the passage of time.

“Blue Vase began as a simple still life—a vase arranged on a table to be studied and painted,” Hohlt writes.

But art, like life, refuses to sit still. Over the days she worked on the piece in her studio, the flowers in the vase began to wilt. They shifted.

They died. Bound by the constraints of time, Hohlt stopped painting what she saw in front of her and began painting what she remembered.

“The image became softer, blurred, and filled with the feeling of what once was,” she writes.

This pivot from observation to memory is the hallmark of Hohlt’s work, a practice deeply informed by her background. A Texas native, she didn’t just study brushstrokes at the University of Texas; she studied visual anthropology and global studies. She looks at a canvas the way an archaeologist looks at a dig site—as a record of human perception. Her research-driven approach draws a direct line from the motifs of ancient cave paintings to the fractured reality of modern abstract expressionism.

For Hohlt, Blue Vase became a critical-thinking piece about how we construct our own realities.

“I think that’s how we experience life, too: we hold onto memory, but only in fragments,” she writes. “The blur becomes the truth we carry. The beauty remains, even if the details fade.”

The painting stands as a testament to that philosophy—a blend of fine art and contemporary abstraction that challenges the viewer to question what they are actually seeing. Is it a vase? Or is it the memory of a vase, filtered through the haze of yesterday?

For Sarasota’s art community, the unveiling at Art Ovation was just the beginning. Hohlt’s work is currently on display at her studio at Creative Liberties, a growing hub for local talent. As interest in her anthropologically informed practice grows, Blue Vase serves as a quiet reminder that artists do more than record the present moment; they shape how we remember it.

Blue Vase is currently available for purchase at www.victoriahohlt.com.



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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.

County Commissioners Meeting

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
On behalf of the Lasting Manatee program at Manatee County Government, I'd like to extend an open invitation to our upcoming Board of County Commissioners meeting.
Our team will be presenting an update on the Lasting Manatee (CDBG-DR) program, highlighting program development and next steps in our housing and infrastructure recovery planning. We welcome your presence as an opportunity to stay connected with the program's progress and to hear how these efforts are approaching the selection of projects that serve community priorities.
Meeting details:
Date/Time: Tuesday, December 16, at 1:30 p.m.
Location: Patricia M. Glass Chambers, 1st Fl., Manatee County Administration Building (1112 Manatee Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205)
Agenda item: 1:30 p.m. Time certain - Item 37, Update of progress on Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Grant and Lasting Manatee Program
We appreciate your continued partnership in supporting Manatee County's long-term recovery.
Odugo Ohizu
Communications Coordinator
Manatee County Government

Longboat Key – Serhiivka friendship

To: Longboat Key Department Heads
This is some additional information about the Ukrainian town we're working with. We'll

keep you posted on our ability to provide any technical assistance.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Key – Serhiivka friendship

To: Longboat Key Department Heads
Sharing the slides that were presented by the Ukrainian town we're talking with. Again, perspective is a powerful tool and what these folks are going through helps us to remember that 1) we really don't have any serious problems and 2) positive leadership in the face of difficult times is critical to keep a community moving forward. What the Serhiivka leadership is exhibiting is the Admiral Stockdale paradox – "Retain faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties and confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they may be". Easy to say, hard to do and we can be inspired by their example.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Key – Serhiivka friendship

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Thank you very much for yesterday's meeting and for the openness and inspiration you brought into the conversation. We truly hope this will grow into a strong and meaningful partnership between Longboat Key and Serhiivka.
Below is a summary of the topics and areas of interest that were raised on both sides:
1. Infrastructure & Essential Services
Water and wastewater management
Energy solutions (including renewables and grid resilience)
Transportation and mobility
Bridge and critical infrastructure needs
Post-disaster and emergency response planning
2. Community Recovery & Social Development
Temporary and social housing solutions
Post-war community visioning and long-term recovery planning
Community engagement strategies
Support for local businesses and economic development
Skills development and workforce readiness
3. Safety & Public Facilities
Exploring possibilities for modern or underground community facilities
Improving public services and community-centered spaces
4. Health, Rehabilitation & Veteran Support
Rehabilitation services
Veteran support programs, including housing and rehabilitation models
Exchange of practices in community-based healthcare approaches
5. Governance, Communication & Partnerships
Strengthening communication channels between communities
Sharing governance practices and municipal management experience
Building frameworks for sustained cooperation and knowledge exchange
Next Steps:

See Letters, page 5

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1:00 – 5:00 PM

All-Day Dinner Menu

1:00 – 9:00 PM

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 4

Choosing a Shared Topic
The next step is to identify one topic that is mutually interesting and promising for both sides.
Serhiivka is kindly asked to suggest the topic they believe would be the best starting point.
Confirmation by Longboat Key
If Longboat Key agrees with the proposed topic, Serhiivka will prepare a list of more detailed questions and discussion points.
This will help ensure that the next meeting is focused and productive, with a clear plan.
Scheduling the Next Meeting
Please propose a few possible time options.
Would it be possible to meet before the Christmas holidays?
I will also add a presentation of Serhiivka, as asked. Thank you again for your time, openness, and commitment. We are very hopeful that this cooperation will grow into a strong and impactful partnership.
Anna Koshel
Project Manager
Cities 4 Cities

Spanish Main

To: Jim Darden
Jim, congratulations and thanks for letting me know! Spanish Main is a true island gem, and I’m happy to know the path is clearing for your community’s bright future. CC-ing the Observer’s Tommy Cardinal here in case he’d like to connect with you.
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Spanish Main

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon
You met me at the Spanish Main clubhouse late last year. I wanted to let you know that the lawsuit and lien on SMYC has been dissolved by the presiding judge which is great news for all of us. I think the Observer sees a copy of this e-mail, maybe they can write a short news blast.
Jim Darden
Longboat Key

Retirement

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon
Thank you for the heartfelt card and, in particular, for the gracious and thoughtful words you shared in recognition of my retirement. Please know how deeply I appreciate them.
It has been a distinct honor to serve as your Deputy Chief and Interim Police Chief. After 45 years in law enforcement, I consider myself fortunate to have dedicated my career to work I truly love—and even more fortunate to have shared part of that journey with the individuals who live and work on Longboat Key.
Thank you for everything you do on behalf of our community. As I conclude this chapter of my professional life, it has been a true honor to serve under your leadership. With highest respect and appreciation.
Frank Rubino
Deputy Police Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Retirement

To: Longboat Key Deputy Police Chief Frank Rubino
Chief Frank, I truly believe you are “One of the Good Ones!” Best wishes for all of the great times ahead. Happy Holidays and come visit often!
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

St Regis Groin Sign

To: Unicorp President Chuck Whittall
A special moment, in a special place. That’s what you guys are all about. Thanks for the feedback.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

St Regis Groin Sign

To: Longboat Key Commission
Thanks for your time in commission yesterday. This was sent to me today from someone who wanted to share a special experience they had with their daughter at the property. He said it was a great memory and I wanted to share it with you.

Chuck Whittall
Unicorp Companies
Orlando

St. Regis

To: Longboat Key Commission
I was unaware that this week you would be discussing the Groin Sign at The St Regis or I would have been there to personally address you. I apologize for not being there.
I think there was a horrible misunderstanding of how this matter was handled and how we got to where we are today. I’ve been in business for 30 years and have always played by the rules throughout my career.
I personally will be at the commission on Monday at 1:00 PM to address this matter and hopefully add clarity to how we got here and seek resolution. I hope your listen with open minds as we have been a good community partner and I think a huge benefit for Longboat Key. We have not caused any traffic issues, provided several new dining and drinking venues, we have raised property values, hugely increased the property tax revenue, provided meaningful employment opportunities and gained a great reputation throughout the country. We delivered on our promise and are committed to being a solid part of the community and a team player. I look forward to seeing you.
Chuck Whittall
President
Unicorp Companies
Orando

Coordination call for SB 180 panel

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Hi all, thank you again for taking the time to discuss the logistics for our SB 180 panel at the Legislative Conference.
Attached is the questions document I planned to send today. Please feel free to review and let me know if you’d like me to adjust or add anything before the panel. As we discussed, we’ll structure the workshop with roughly 45 minutes of panel discussion and 15 minutes for audience Q&A, and pre-screening questions will help keep us on track.
I appreciate each of you being part of this session, and I’m looking forward to a strong discussion on December 4th.
Matt Singer
Legislative Advocate
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

Coordination call for SB 180 panel

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Thank you again for agreeing to participate in our panel “Navigating Challenges Under Senate Bill 180” at the FLC Legislative Conference (December 4 from 2–3 pm), with Mayor Rumrell moderating and Commissioner Bishop, Susan Trevarthen, and Ian Whitney serving as panelists.
I’d like to schedule a brief call next week (15–30 minutes) with you all to walk through the panel format, provide sample questions, discuss how we want to handle audience Q&A, and to give everyone a quick chance to connect.
Please let me know which of these times work for you:
Thursday, November 20 at 2:30 p.m.
Friday, November 21 at 10 a.m.
Friday, November 21 at 2 p.m.
If none work, no worries. I can touch base with you individually.

Matt Singer
Legislative Advocate
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

Rates for services

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
Your understanding of the amended fee schedule is correct. Since 2017, the Town Attorney fee hourly rates have increased annually each October 1, beginning in 2018.
Attached is this year’s CPI letter that was transmitted to the Town in April 2025 reflecting a CPI adjustment of 2.3% for FY 2025-26. That CPI adjusted the 2024-25 rates to the current 2025-26 rates (which are already applicable to the Town) as follows:
Maggie Mooney Current Rate: \$287/hour Rate beginning Oct. 1: \$294/hour
Partners/Attorneys Current Rate: \$268/hour Rate beginning Oct. 1: \$274/hour
Associates Current Rate: \$237/hour Rate beginning Oct. 1: \$243/hour
The rates reflected in the Third Amendment that is before the Town Commission include the above rate schedule and include additional categories (billed at lower rates) for paralegals and associates with less than 5 years of experience. We will put together an analysis of the annual CPI increases since 2018. I am hopeful we will have it in time for the 1 pm meeting today. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
Maggie Mooney
Town Attorney
Town of Longboat Key

Town Attorney Contract


To: Longboat Key Town Attorney Maggie Mooney
An amendment to your firm’s contract with Longboat Key appears on the Consent Agenda for the December 8, 2025 Town Commission meeting. The proposed amendment contains an updated fee schedule, including some new categories. For pre-existing categories, I believe the amended fees reflect changes from the schedule created in 2017, the last time the contract was formally amended, and that the actual fees have increased each year per the COLA provision contained in the original contract. Would you confirm this and also let us know what the most recent fees have been with the COLA increases, so that we can understand that actual year-on-year impact of the new contract schedule?
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Canals


To: Longboat Key Commissioner Debra Williams
Ma’am, attached is the presentation you requested. This one was provided to Tip when he presented to the Federation.

See Letters, page 6

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

The last slide is just a representation targeted on the audience.

The Canal team consultants are in the process of creating a website, similar to the one used for the Undergrounding Project. So sometime within the next month or so, we should have that operational and could brief from and direct citizens to that website.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key Public Works

Canal maintenance outreach program

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

Can I get a copy or a link to the canal maintenance outreach program that is being presented to groups in town? Thank you.

Debra Williams
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Medal Day

To: Longboat Key Fire Chief Paul Dezzi

Thanks for your note. It was a pleasure to attend the Medal Day yesterday at Town Hall. You and your crew deserve all the recognition bestowed yesterday and so much more. Your unit is a credit to our town and our region. Thank you for the opportunity to offer a few extemporaneous thoughts about how fortunate we are to enjoy your outstanding service to our community.

Steve Branham
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Medal Day

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Steve Branham

Thank you for attending the fire departments annual medal day. Good seeing and thank you for your kind words.

Paul B. Dezzi
Fire Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Agenda Request Item for the first meeting in January 2026

To: Sarasota City Manager Dave Bullock and City Clerk Shayla Griggs

As the City’s liaison to the Sarasota Housing Authority, I would like to request, on their behalf, an agenda item be added to the first meeting in January 2026 for the City Commission to discuss the idea of the City working with the Housing Authority to potentially participate in the construction of public parking spaces in the proposed McCown Towers III new Senior Housing development application and parking garage. This request is the result of discussion at the SHA Board meeting on Dec 10, 2025

Would you kindly reach out to me for any discussion, or necessary clarity on this item. Mr Russell and I will work on submitting backup materials, so please let us know the deadline for

See Letters, page 11

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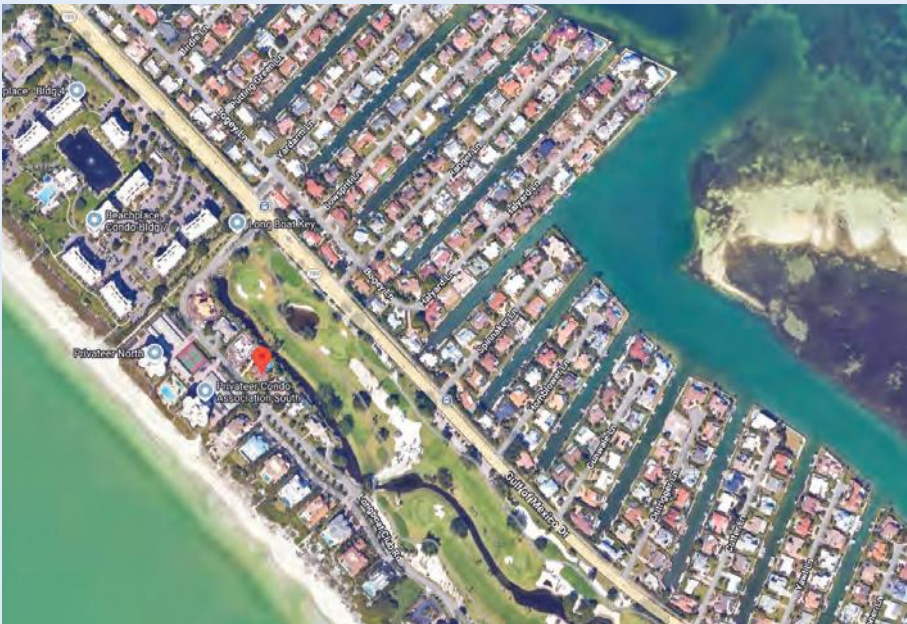


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991 LONGBOAT CLUB RD	5,101	\$3,490,000	5	5	2	1	\$3,490,000
2410 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#151	3,825	\$2,495,000	3	3	1	7	\$2,250,000
603 WESTON POINTE CT	2,712	\$2,195,000	3	3	1	6	\$2,150,000
4325 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#102	1,336	\$1,000,000	2	2	0	30	\$950,000
1055 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#402	1,392	\$950,000	2	2	0	0	\$950,000
2013 HARBOUR LINKS DR Unit#2013	2,369	\$899,999	2	2	1	27	\$905,000
560 CEDAR ST	1,824	\$700,000	3	3	0	64	\$655,000
780 JUNGLE QUEEN WAY	1,242	\$795,000	2	1	0	206	\$600,000
4621 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#19B	900	\$629,000	2	2	0	267	\$575,000
4400 EXETER DR Unit#J-201	1,168	\$525,000	2	2	0	244	\$505,000
31 TWIN SHORES BLVD	482	\$199,900	1	1	0	282	\$170,000



991 LONGBOAT CLUB RD



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RHINELANDER

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Jeff@jeffrhineland.com



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TARANTINO

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courtney.tarantino@floridamoves.com



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BEACHES • LONGBOAT KEY
775 Longboat Club Rd #203
3BR/3BA • Gulf front • \$1,999,000



COUNTRY CLUB SHORES • LONGBOAT KEY
510 Wedge Lane
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friendship, and abundant laughter
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Judy, John and The Kepez-Hays Team





John & Judy

In loving memory of my brother
Gabe Buky
April 27, 1952 - July 28, 2022

Charles Buky & Family
REALTOR®

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REALTOR®

Veronika Humphreys
Licensed Marketing Director

Leah George
REALTOR®

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757HideawayBay.com

Siesta Key



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21 Lands End Lane | \$9,900,000 - 25 Lands End Lane | \$2,500,000
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BeachResidences709.com

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6473SleepyLagoon.com

Villa di Lancia



2165 Gulf of Mexico Drive #114
\$2,100,000
VillaDiLancia114.com

Tangerine Bay Club



Under Contract

350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #126
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Tangerine126.com

350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #211
\$938,500
Tangerine211.com

Longboat Key Towers



603 Longboat Club Road #402N
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LBKTowers402N.com

Promenade



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\$999,000
Promenade704.com

Golden Gate Point



660 Golden Gate Point #32
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MarinaView32.com

OnPatrol

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

Dec. 5
Vehicle

7:13 a.m.

Officer Barrett responded to Sister Keys regarding an abandoned vessel in the mangroves. Officer Barrett discovered the owner's name and called the owner who advised that he was in the process of moving the vessel and his intentions were to have it removed and properly anchored on the weekend. Officer Barrett explained to him that the registration was expired and that he prepared a uniform boating citation and that he would be receiving it via certified mail. On Dec. 5 a certified letter and a copy of the citation was mailed to his residence. Case clear.



dog was okay and wasn't injured. The owner advised the caller that they were finishing a walk with another dog and would return to get the dog. Case clear.

Dec. 9 Property

3:46 p.m.

Officer Smith responded to Russel Street for a report of property damage involving a residential water backflow device. Upon arrival, the complainant advised that an unknown vehicle accidentally struck and damaged the water backflow located on the property. The complainant stated the incident occurred between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Officer Smith conducted a check of

the surrounding area and made contact with the resident at Russel St. During the contact the complainant provided a photograph depicting a white truck traveling past the residence around the estimated time of the incident. At the time, no identifying information for the vehicle or driver could be determined. Based on the circumstances and information provided, the damage appears to be accidental in nature with no indication of criminal intent. The incident is considered a civil matter, not criminal in nature. The complainant was advised of the option to pursue the matter through insurance or civil remedies. No suspects were identified. No further law enforcement action is required at this time. Case clear.

Found property

6:26 p.m.

Officer Tillman responded to 4400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of a floating kayak dock that had washed ashore. An attempt to contact was made via phone tot he complaint without success. Officer Tillman also emailed the Public Works Director Mark Richardson and the complainant the case number for future reference. There is no further mention of a similar floating kayak docks missing in the area. No serial numbers of traceable numbers are available. This information has been forwarded to our marine unit. Case clear.

Dec. 10 Incident

3:15 p.m.

Officer Troyer responded to Longboat Club Road on the report of a suspicious incident. Sgt. Montfort notified Officer Troyer to respond to the location due to a report of an older woman driving a green Toyota Camry going through the trash at the address. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer observed the trash containers were set out to the road and there appeared to be people working on the residence. Officer Troyer knocked on the front door but didn't get a response from anyone in the residence. Officer Troyer canvassed the area, but didn't locate a vehicle matching the description. Case clear.

Dec. 11

Boat

2:11 p.m.

Officer Troyer responded to Harbourside Drive in reference to a civil dispute over work being completed on a vessel. The complainant contacted police for a reported verbal disturbance between him and the worker. Upon arrival, Sgt. Montfort was speaking with the complainant and had already spoke with the other man. The worker said he had been working on the complainant's vessel and he had gone through hoops to have the work completed already and was abiding by all the mooring rules and the complainant kept telling him he was in violation by having workers sand the vessel about the water line. The worker said this had been a persistent issue with the complainant and the complainant kept making a big deal out of the work, and the worker was abiding by the rules. In the end, the two men went their separate ways and agreed to keep separate. The complainant and the worker said they would have their lawyers draft certified letters to communicate the issue. Both parties were advised this was a civil issue, and to seek legal advice on how to proceed if there was or was not a rules violation.

Dec. 11 Family

7:29 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Sutton Place in reference to a family disturbance involving a verbal argument between a man and woman. Dispatch advised the argument was between a man and his wife which was a verbal dispute only and all parties were separated. The caller advised that his wife was inside an unknown residence with her alleged boyfriend. The caller was sitting in his vehicle last seen driving a silver Toyota Camry. Dispatch also advised that the caller has a firearm, however it was not used or involved. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma and Sgt. Butler made contact with the caller who was sitting inside the Camry. The man stated that he called police because he wanted to make a report that he has reason to believe that his wife is having an affair and is currently with her boyfriend who lives at a home on Sutton Place. The man stated that when he spoke to her via phone, her tone seemed strange. He said she was laughing and avoiding giving him her location. The man also stated they have been having marital issues. Officer Pescuma asked the man if he thought she was in duress or there on her own free will, to which he said yes, she voluntarily drove there as he followed her there. Officer Pescuma asked the man if there was any physical altercation or contact in which he stated no and that the wife was unaware of him calling police. He also stated that there wasn't much of a verbal argument over the phone but rather he was trying to confirm his suspicions so that he has proof an alleged affair for when he files for divorce. Officer Pescuma conducted an FCIC/NCIC query on both parties and did not find any history of domestic violence, protection orders or warrants/warrants. Officer Pescuma advised the man that they could not confirm nor deny his allegations and that he would have to go through the proper channels in court through his attorney and/or hire an investigator. Officer Pescuma made attempts to contact the wife with negative results. The man left the area without incident. Case clear.

Dec. 6
Citizen assist

12:35 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a man asleep in the hotel lobby possibly impaired. The caller stated he was unable to communicate his address to get an uber. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma made contact with the complainant who said he got separated from his wedding party group and was unable to locate them. Officer Pescuma asked the man if he needed any medical assistance to which he said he did not. While attempting to assist the man with ordering an uber, his group entered the lobby and reunited with the man. The complainant was left in the people's care and they all departed the area without incident. The officer conducted an FCIC/NCIC query for wants/warrants with negative results. Case clear.

Dec. 8
Vehicle

10:02 a.m.

Officer Maple while on patrol in the 4000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive when he observed a white Chevy Silverado which was attached to a trailer, parked in the middle of the roadway adjacent to the hardware store with its hazard lights energized. Upon arrival, Officer Maple made contact with the driver, who presented a valid Florida driver's license. Officer Maple ran both the vehicle and the driver through FCIC/NCIC checks, which returned negative results. It was determined that the vehicle was disabled due to a likely power issue involving the starter. A coworker of the driver on the scene was able to tow the vehicle safely off the roadway to await repairs. Officer Maple cleared the incident at approximately 10:30 a.m. Case clear.

Civil

10:52 a.m.

Officer Maple and Sgt. Smith were dispatched to Marbury Lane for a disturbance call. Upon arrival, Officer Maple observed a white construction vehicle pulled to the side of the road, the driver who was an Hispanic man who did not speak English was present along with the complainant. The vehicle had a Florida tag and was owned by U.S. DOT. The complainant stated that the work truck had been backing up and struck one of her landscaping poles and then the driver attempted to leave the scene. She managed to stop the vehicle and have the driver remain on the site until officers arrived. Since the driver didn't speak English, Officer Maple spoke with the owner of the truck via telephone who said they would have a worker make the necessary repairs on site. Before Officer Maple and Sgt. Smith departed, the driver began making repairs and the complainant said that if she was satisfied with the repairs the matter would end there. Otherwise, she intended to obtain the police report and pursue civil action. Case clear.

Animal

7:12 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Fair Oaks Lane for a report of an injured dog. While en route, dispatch advised the caller made contact with the dog's owner, and the owner advised the

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

this agenda item.
Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Notes from SHA Board meeting

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch
Commissioner Koch, thank you for bringing up the important topic of parking at tonight’s SHA meeting. In case helpful, here are my notes on SHA Board inputs at the meeting:
David Morgan: They want to make sure that they are not getting hit with the Maintenance and upkeep. Feels like the City commission feels like they may expect us to be subsidizing this parking. As context, yes, we’re part of the OG part of rosemary. I want to make sure that we’re doing good by the neighborhood either way we go. The other side, is the city going to chip in for the maintenance? I want to make sure if we’re doing a community service here—but affordable housing should not be subsidizing parking for the City. Our mission is housing.
Philip: To clarify, the garage could be “revenue generating”, but it may not be profitable.
William: it would actually be better for us if we didn’t charge. Time is of the essence. We communicated to Dave Bullock that we wanted by the end of the year, we need a commitment. Do you know if it’s on the agenda for the 6th? William explains that they need solidified design, it pushes everything off. Need an answer. Confirmed that they are Weekly meetings with Dave and lawyers. I would have thought that Dave would have gotten it on the agenda before end of year.
Philip: Ok, so there is an indication of interest. We need a formal approval of the City Commission that they want to fund public parking spaces as a part of this development. We said the financing could be worked out later. But we need it on the record so we can proceed.
Philip: Suggest a formal letter of interest from Commission as a starting point. Two steps in these types of transactions: one, agreeing on concept, the second agreeing on financing. What is the absolute hard deadline for financial commitment? (answer from zoom): March would be absolute.
Joe/Jack (on zoom): To be clear, this conversation started with the City a year ago—we can’t continue to push it. We have to move this forward if it’s going anywhere. Joe: I think the one thing is. This is a public benefit to everyone in the area. If there is not revenue share, maybe if we all agree public benefit, maybe that applies to us. Less is easier than more, so maybe we stick with one level.
Melissa Laughlin
Sarasota

Notes from SHA Board meeting

To: Melissa Laughlin
Thanks, we are still discussing it.
Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

332 Cocoanut Avenue Problems

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert and City Manager Dave Bullock
Larry has addressed the concerns with the builder.
Patrick Robinson
Deputy City Manager
City of Sarasota

332 Cocoanut Avenue Problems

To: Sarasota Deputy City Manager Pat Robinson
The below actions are now implemented and hope that this takes care of any further issues. If anyone has any additional restrictions please let me know and I will see to their implementation if possible.
Larry Murphy
Building Official
City of Sarasota

332 Cocoanut Avenue Problems

To: Sarasota City Building Official Larry Murphy
We are dealing with this issue, we will be towing cars, during the week we will be posting signs on 4th street that Voeller worker parking is prohibited on 4th Street between Central and Cocoanut and begin towing. Please see the following directions given to our Subcontractors at our Sub Meeting this last Thursday. Thank you and please let me know if there are any questions.
Dan Sharp
Senior Project Manager Voeller Construction, Sarasota

332 cocoanut avenue problems

To: Senior Project Manager Voeller Construction Dan Sharp
Dan ,We need to get Larry our plan of action. Just hung up with Larry
William Voeller
Voeller Construction
Sarasota

See Letters, page 12

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

A year since I last emailed, five since the beginning of this all, and we are again asking for your help in navigating a very scary situation in our Sarasota neighborhood. We appreciate your time and attention to this.

Valerie Bernhard, Karl and Arthur
Art Guy, LLC
Sarasota

Malear - Browning Street

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert

In an effort to continue to express our need for attention and assistance in our neighborhood, I am writing to provide an update. David Malear is currently jailed on two counts of assault after attacking our neighbor with a baseball bat.

Once again we allowed our son to watch as the good guys got the bad guy; SPD with six SUVs, drone, motorcycles and an officer on a bullhorn is a bit much to deny.

While we can typically find peace in knowing that David is jailed, in this instance upon his arrest the drug addicts that were living in a tent in his backyard set up residence inside of his home. This added element of homeless drug addicts showering with the hose on his front lawn I find hard to explain away to my young son. We are living in constant fear and uncertainty of what is next.

This man needs professional help for his mental illnesses that his parents are not providing while allowing him to live in that house alone. We are afraid that once again upon release he will return to our neighborhood and continue this vicious cycle of violence, drug abuse and paranoid schizophrenia. This is not a safe or healthy environment for anyone involved and we are again asking for your help.

Valerie Bernhard, Karl and Arthur
Art Guy, LLC
Sarasota

Malear - Browning Street

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert

There are certainly more details that I can add to the many emails and messages that you have received on David Malear’s behalf. However, I do know that you have a busy schedule and I will keep it as brief as possible.

I am the parent of one of the children on Browning Street that cannot play on their own front lawn. If David is in a screaming state we can’t play in the back yard either. My child, Arthur, has heard the nastiest, most hateful of words, had nightmares of the “mad guy” who was standing in our dining room window screaming at my husband, and watched as police have swarmed his house on far too many occasions— that certainly starts to lose its heroic appeal after awhile. This began when he was four, he is now nine. We do consciously try to let him see that SPD does respond and that the helpers are here for us.

As a mother I am in disbelief that a son, a human, is rotting in his own mental hell as he torments the lives of everyone around him on a daily basis. We have all collectively exhausted each and every effort that has been advised to us by the responding officers and it is with total desperation that I am writing you today. I have spoken to the mother, I have called the police, I have called the non-emergency police, I have prayed for his well-being and I have also gone and cried in person at the Office of the State Attorney.

Please look over the evidence provided and just imagine hearing it as my nine-year-old. I do not know how else to plead nor do I know anyone else to plead to. Every day feels closer to someone being seriously harmed; David’s mental health seems to be deteriorating as his rage grows.

We are parenting and protecting Arthur to the very best of our ability and if I do not send this letter to you, and every other contact given to me by my neighbors, I have not done everything that I can to ensure my son’s safety and well-being. I appreciate your time and attention.

Valerie Bernhard, Karl and Arthur
Art Guy, LLC
Sarasota

Urgent Request for Traffic-Calming Measures in Laurel Park

To: Lisa Schauer

Thanks for contacting me. I am copying the interim city manager and deputy city manager with this response so that they can direct the appropriate staff to guide you in what you need to do to qualify for traffic calming on your street(s).

Liz Alpert
Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Urgent Request for Traffic-Calming Measures in Laurel Park

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert

I hope you are well. I am writing as a resident and property owner of the Laurel Park neighborhood to express my growing concern about the excessive and dangerous speeding occurring throughout our community—particularly along Orange Avenue and Laurel Street. These streets have increasingly become high-risk areas where drivers routinely exceed safe speeds, posing serious hazards for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, and other residents.

In just the past few weeks, I have personally experienced several extremely dangerous incidents while simply walking my dogs. In each case, speeding vehicles approached far too quickly for a residential neighborhood, creating situations that could easily have resulted in serious harm. These experiences have made it clear that the current conditions are not only unsafe but worsening.

As someone with experience as a trauma nurse, I know firsthand the devastating and life-altering consequences that can result from being struck by a car. This background makes me especially aware of how urgent and serious the risk has become in our community.

The situation is further complicated by the “pedestrian-activated crosswalk lights” at Orange Avenue and Pineapple Avenue. Not only do many drivers ignore these signals entirely, but

the crosswalk system itself is often in disrepair, reducing its effectiveness and contributing to unsafe crossings. This makes even designated pedestrian areas hazardous.

Given the narrow roads, dense residential character, and steady foot traffic in Laurel Park and Burns Court the persistent speeding presents an immediate safety issue. Traditional signage and occasional enforcement have clearly not been enough to deter ongoing violations.

I respectfully request that the City consider implementing advanced traffic-calming technologies—specifically speed cameras and automated enforcement systems—to help slow down vehicles and improve safety. During the years I lived in Washington, D.C., as well as in nearby Maryland and Virginia, similar systems were widely used. They were immensely effective in reducing speeding and making neighborhoods safer without requiring constant police presence. These systems also tend to pay for themselves within a relatively short period of time through fines and improved enforcement efficiency, making them both practical and financially sustainable. Additionally, modern speed cameras can be moved easily to different locations as traffic patterns change or improve, allowing the City to adapt its enforcement strategy dynamically and cost-effectively.

I appreciate the City’s commitment to safe, walkable neighborhoods, and I hope District 2 will strongly consider this approach as part of its traffic-calming strategy. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further or participate in any community conversations on the topic. Thank you for your time and your service to our community.

Lisa Schauer
Sarasota

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Cindy Jessup, Owner



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BreakPoints

The Architect and the Machine Why Alcaraz, Not Sinner, Owns the Future

While the head-to-head records may ebb and flow, a deeper look at the architecture of their games reveals a fundamental truth: Jannik Sinner is a great tennis player, but Carlos Alcaraz is a tennis genius.

In the dying light of the 2025 season, as the dust settles on another year of the “Sincaraz” duopoly, a comfortable narrative has taken hold. It posits that Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are equals—two sides of the same golden coin. Sinner is the unstoppable force, the ball-striking machine who hits with a mesmerizing, metronomic violence. Alcaraz is the immovable object, the athletic freak who chases down everything. But this equivalency is a lie.

While the head-to-head records may ebb and flow, a deeper look at the architecture of their games reveals a fundamental truth: Jannik Sinner is a great tennis player, but Carlos Alcaraz is a tennis genius. The distinction lies not in who hits the ball harder, but in the vast, almost frightening gap in tennis intelligence and shot selection.

Sinner plays tennis in 2D; Alcaraz plays in 3D. And that extra dimension separates a Hall of Famer from a Legend.



The Myth of “Shot Tolerance” vs. Shot Creation

To understand why Alcaraz is superior, you have to look past the radar gun. Sinner’s game is built on “linear acceleration.” He hits flat, hard, and deep. His strategy is suffocatingly simple: hit the ball faster than the other guy until the other guy breaks. It is effective, brutal, and, ultimately, limited. Alcaraz, by contrast, treats the court like a geometry problem.

In 2025, ATP data analytics revealed a telling statistic: Alcaraz utilized 28% more of the court’s surface area with his shots than Sinner. While Sinner’s heat map is a dense red cluster on the baseline, Alcaraz’s is a constellation spread across the service boxes, the alleys, and the net.

This isn’t just flash; it’s superior IQ. Alcaraz understands that pace is a renewable resource—opponents get used to it. But uncertainty is exhausting. When Alcaraz lines up a forehand, he has four options: the 100mph flat winner, the heavy topspin roller to push his opponent back, the delicate drop shot to drag them forward, or the short-angle slice to pull them off the court.

Sinner, for all his brilliance, usually has one option: Hit it hard. When his timing is off, he has no “Plan B.” Alcaraz has a Plan C, D, and E.

The Drop Shot as an IQ Test

The most devastating weapon in modern tennis is not the serve; it is the drop shot disguised as a forehand drive. Alcaraz has mastered this better than anyone since Roger Federer.

Critics often confuse Alcaraz’s creativity with recklessness. They see a missed drop shot and call it “bad shot selection.” They are missing the forest for the trees.

Alcaraz uses the drop shot not just to win the point, but to condition his opponent’s mind. By feathery dropping the ball over the net in the first set, he forces Sinner to stand two feet closer to the baseline. That adjustment—made out of fear—opens up the deep court for Alcaraz’s power later in the match. It is a chess move played at 120 mph.

In the 2025 Grand Slam season, Alcaraz won 74% of points where he employed a drop shot, compared to Sinner’s 58%. This isn’t luck. It’s the difference between having “touch” and having “hands.” Alcaraz has the softest hands in the game; Sinner, while improving, still treats the net like a foreign country he is forced to visit.

The Surface All-Rounder

True legendary status requires dominance on all surfaces, and this is where Alcaraz’s superior adaptability shines.

Sinner is a hard-court specialist who can play on grass and clay. Alcaraz is a shapeshifter. On clay, he uses heavy topspin reminiscent of Nadal. On grass, he flattens his shots and rushes the net like Sampras. On hard courts, he blends both.

The statistics back this versatility. By age 22, Alcaraz had already won Grand Slams on all three surfaces—a feat the “Big Three” took years longer to achieve. Sinner, while dominant indoors and on hard courts, still struggles to translate his linear power to the slower, grittier clay where geometry beats velocity. Alcaraz’s “Tennis IQ” allows him to recalibrate his game for the surface; Sinner tries to force the surface to submit to his game.

The “Joy” Factor

Finally, there is the intangible element of improvisation. Great players execute the game plan; legends invent new ones in real-time.

KeyCrossword

Who’s What?

Edited by Linda and Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 After-shower powder
- 5 Lord or lady
- 10 Vote in
- 19 Teen hangout
- 15 Aroma
- 20 Arabian ruler: var.
- 21 Scale sign
- 22 Potpourri
- 23 Loblolly
- 24 Source of troubles
- 26 Ustinov, in “Quo Vadis?”
- 27 Seafood choice
- 29 Take as one’s own
- 30 Large-billed bird
- 32 Important folkways
- 34 Art supporter
- 36 Perched
- 37 Founded
- 40 Faucet
- 42 Fashionable fabric
- 44 Wooded tract
- 48 Escapes
- 50 Kind of cabin
- 52 Fast food furnishes
- 54 Soaks flax
- 55 Hgt.
- 56 Went by car
- 59 Talks on and on
- 61 Coal measure
- 62 Lavish affection upon
- 64 Livery worker
- 66 Vitamin A source
- 68 Courtroom machine
- 70 Quilting party
- 72 Swift and Orwell works
- 73 Infrequent
- 74 B’wy sign
- 76 Nursery napkin
- 78 Rocky peaks
- 79 Moment
- 82 Droop
- 84 Home builder
- 88 Desert herdsman
- 90 Canine’s appendage
- 92 Final beginning
- 93 Silkworm
- 94 Seabirds
- 96 “A Night to Remember” subject
- 98 Cagers org.
- 99 Cleopatra’s waterway
- 101 Serious
- 103 Playing marble
- 104 Abolish
- 106 Small land mass
- 108 Fight off
- 110 Camp accommodation
- 112 Activists
- 113 Tear
- 115 Beer choice

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- 117 Lease a second time
- 119 Ocular sections
- 123 Political policies
- 125 Secluded
- 129 vera
- 130 Corposant
- 133 Carbonated drink
- 134 Form of address
- 135 Ranees raiment
- 136 elsel: Mom’s mandate
- 137 And others, shortly
- 138 Sound of exertion
- 139 Expletives
- 140 Former rulers
- 141 Exhausted
- 7 Letterman number?
- 8 Mother of Castor
- 9 Wear away
- 10 Slipped away, as time
- 11 Radio fan
- 12 Recede
- 13 Cut short
- 14 Assessments
- 15 Ironclad ship
- 16 Actor Baldwin
- 17 Pisa dough, once
- 18 Screwball
- 25 Highway
- 28 Computer component
- 31 Varnish ingredient
- 33 Sassafras drinks
- 35 Purple shade
- 37 Rosary
- 38 Apportion
- 39 Gold strike site
- 41 Redcaps
- 43 Starling relative: pl. var.
- 45 Church assessment
- 46 Irving or Oliver
- 47 Feudal field hands
- 49 Laundry additives
- 51 It’s a good thing
- 53 SAC part
- 57 Kind of soldier
- 58 Tiny bit
- 60 Yucca look-alike
- 63 Related on mother’s side
- 65 Beak
- 67 NASA weather forecasting system
- 69 Priestly garb
- 71 Gifted with visual memory
- 75 Clumsy one
- 77 Discuss at length
- 79 Ancient Celtic tribe
- 80 Nostril
- 81 Voice for Verdi
- 83 Obtained
- 85 Braz. neighbor
- 86 Fiery afterglow
- 87 Iranian cash
- 89 Rise up against
- 91 Edge
- 95 Covered with calyxes
- 97 Military student
- 100 Most otherworldly
- 102 Systems of government
- 105 Witnessed
- 107 Food container in England
- 109 Late-night name
- 111 Brat
- 114 Out-of-date
- 116 Changed the clock
- 118 Sly looks
- 119 Grating sound
- 120 Lamb
- 121 Rent
- 122 Party extra
- 124 Loans for college-goers: abbr.
- 126 Former photo section
- 127 Dash
- 128 Mrs. Rogers
- 131 Cubs stat
- 132 Call day: retire

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