



Longboat Key News

May 29, 2026

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InsideLook



Existential clash at St. Armands ...page 2



Read the latest and top RE sales ...page 9



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The lizard needs a miracle ...page 10

Behind the Headlines, Longboat's Tax Base Quietly Climbs 2% — But the Easy Money Is Gone

Your home on Longboat Key is, for most of the people who own one, the most consequential investment of a lifetime — the final, hard-won place to live out the good years against ten miles of bronzed sand, with the Gulf of Mexico on one side and the noise of the mainland safely on the other.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

So when the property appraisers speak, the whole island leans in. What are the valuations? What is the market doing? And how does all of it flow, dollar by dollar, into the Town's coffers?

This week the answer arrived in two envelopes — one from Sarasota County, one, just Friday morning, from Manatee. And the answer is more reas-

See Values, page 3



Last Call on the Suncoast: Economic Headwinds and Heavy Debt Sink Sarasota-Bradenton Breweries

For nearly a decade, the craft beer scene across Sarasota, Longboat Key, and Manatee County was defined by explosive growth, community-funded expansions, and packed taprooms. Today, the narrative has sobered.

A perfect storm of rising operational costs, shifting consumer habits, and crushing post-pandemic debt is forcing several prominent local microbreweries into distress, foreclosure, or permanent closure.

The local struggles are not isolated incidents but rather symp-

See Beer, page 2

Clay and Present Danger at the 2026 French Open

Field notes from the most unhinged French Open in living memory, in which the three best men on Earth are removed from the premises by a heat wave, a teenager, and Jannik Sinner's own legs.

STEVE REID
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Back When This Tournament Had the Decency to Be Boring

There was a time — a calmer, dumber time — when the French Open was the most predictable event on the sporting calendar, somewhere between the sunrise and your brother-in-law explaining crypto at Thanksgiving. The tournament itself was a filthy spectacle: red clay that gets into everything you own, lunatic bounces, no roof, grown millionaires sliding around in what is essentially expensive dirt. And presiding over all of it, every single year, with the grim inevitability of a tax audit, was Rafael Nadal, who won the thing fourteen times — which is not so much a record as a hostage situation.

Then Rafa's knees finally unionized and he retired, and just as we braced for anarchy, the universe sent backup: Iga Swiatek dropkicking the entire women's tour into the following Tuesday, and Carlos Alcaraz, who plays tennis the way other people do parkour, waving his little magic wand and out-running, out-hitting, out-grinning, and



See French Open, page 11

A Fabricated Post, A Public Shaming, and One Resident's Years-Long Fight for the Truth

Two years have passed, but for Laurel Park resident Kelly Franklin, the internet refuses to forget.

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She describes a lingering, blinding sense of vulnerability—a feeling of being suddenly exposed and shamed in the community she calls home. The nightmare stems from an innocent photo she took of gorillas during a trip to Rwanda. In 2024, that personal memory was maliciously manipulated, mashed up with a photo of local figures, and presented on the screens of the Sarasota City Commission chamber.

See Franklin, page 12

Beer, from page 1

toms of a sweeping national “correction” in the independent beer market, leaving brewers and patrons alike wondering what the future holds for the Suncoast’s craft beverage industry.

Mounting Debt and Foreclosures in Manatee County

In Bradenton, the financial strain has become impossible to ignore. 3 Keys Brewing, a popular staple located on State Road 64, announced it is permanently closing its doors at the end of May 2026. Owners Tina Yeung and Gabriel Schmitz, who purchased the decade-old business in 2019, cited an insurmountable combination of declining sales and surging costs for everything from rent to brewing ingredients. In an attempt to keep the business afloat, the owners took on significant debt over the last year but ultimately found themselves unable to service it.

Just a few miles away, Motorworks Brewing—one of Bradenton’s most recognized breweries and event spaces—is fighting its own severe financial battles. According to recent court records, the 12-year-old brewery is facing a \$1.9 million foreclosure case in Manatee County initiated by Seacoast National Bank across multiple loans. The distress is already shrinking the company’s footprint; its downtown Orlando expansion taproom was recently served a five-day notice to vacate due to nearly \$13,000 in unpaid rent.

Survival Tactics South of the County Line

The turmoil extends southward into Sarasota County, where brewers are taking drastic measures to satisfy lenders. Big Top Brewing Company recently sold its flagship Sarasota building for \$7.2 million to settle multi-million-dollar debts with at least two lenders, including SouthState Bank and Berkeley Alternative Income Fund.

While Big Top has leased the building back for 25 years and continues to operate, the financial maneuvering highlights the immense capital pressures local brewers face. The brewery is currently entangled in a complex counter-complaint, alleging that lenders charged illegally high interest rates on undisbursed construction funds—a legal battle one owner likened to a “David versus Goliath” scenario.

The Macro View: A Saturated Market Hits the Wall

The distress echoing from Bradenton to the bars of Longboat Key is a localized reflection of a harsh national reality. According to recent data from the Brewers Association, 2025 marked a tipping point where brewery closures outpaced new openings, accompanied by a 5% decline in total craft production.

Industry analysts point to a convergence of several unforgiving trends driving this market correction:

- **Inflationary Pressures:** The cost of raw materials—specifically international grain and aluminum cans—has surged. Commercial leases have also spiked, making renewals financially unviable for many taprooms.
- **The Debt Hangover:** Many small breweries survived the pandemic by taking out emergency loans. As grace periods have ended and interest rates have remained elevated, the margins required to repay these loans simply do not exist.
- **Shifting Demographics:** Consumer behavior has fundamentally changed post-COVID. People are going out less frequently, and younger demographics (particularly Gen Z) are consuming less alcohol or shifting toward alternative beverages like hard seltzers, ready-to-drink cocktails, and non-alcoholic options.



- **Market Oversaturation:** The barrier to entry for craft brewing was low during the 2010s boom, leading to a hyper-competitive landscape where only the most well-capitalized operations can now survive.

Looking Ahead

While the shuttering of community hubs like 3 Keys is a painful loss for residents, industry insiders suggest this is not the death of craft beer, but rather a necessary maturation of the market. Breweries that can adapt by scaling down operations, diversifying their beverage portfolios, and fiercely managing their debt may weather the storm. However, the era of easy success and rapid expansion on the Suncoast has officially reached the bottom of the glass.



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Inside the Existential Clash Over St. Armands

For nearly a century, St. Armands Circle has operated as the undisputed commercial and cultural crown jewel of Sarasota's barrier islands. Today, less than two years removed from a devastating hurricane season, the upscale residential and shopping district finds itself at an existential inflection point, caught between a booming post-storm renaissance and the creeping pressures of commercial hyper-development.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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According to a sweeping "Year in Review" address delivered by St. Armands Residents Association President Chris Goglia—and echoed by mounting public outcry across the barrier islands—the focus has fundamentally shifted. If the immediate aftermath of the storms was about survival, the 2025–2026 season has become a fierce, highly orchestrated battle for the very soul of St. Armands.

At the center of the debate: hardening the island's aging infrastructure, navigating strict federal flood regulations, fending off aggressive pushes for hotel zoning, and answering a deeply philosophical question about what exactly St. Armands wants to be in the 21st century.

The FEMA Factor: Rebuilding or Building Up?

Nowhere is the tension over the island's future more pronounced than in the renewed battle

over commercial density—specifically, the push to introduce boutique hotels and short-term rentals to the Circle.

The catalyst for this renewed push is deeply entangled with the aftermath of the 2024 hurricanes and the strict enforcement of the FEMA "50% Rule." Under federal guidelines, extensively damaged properties must be elevated to meet modern flood codes—an exorbitant engineering and financial undertaking. To make these post-storm investments pencil out, developers are increasingly looking upward.

Most notably, the team seeking to rebuild the popular Shore restaurant at 24 and 28 N. Boulevard of the Presidents has proposed a "flagship" concept that combines lower-level retail and dining with a highly controversial new third floor designated for residential units or a boutique hotel.

For residents, this proposal is a flashpoint. St. Armands is inherently a traffic chokepoint, serving as a critical state evacuation route and the primary artery connecting mainland Sarasota

See St. Armands, page 13

Values, from page 1

suring, and more complicated, than the early headlines suggested.

The headline that only told half the island's story

When the Sarasota County Property Appraiser's Office released its preliminary June 1 figures on May 22, the regional read on Longboat Key was blunt: the Town was the only municipality in the county to lose taxable value, slipping roughly 1.15% from its 2025 certified figure to a June estimate of \$6,979,174,983. In a county where North Port jumped 5.61%, the City of Sarasota rose 3.17%, and even slow-growing Venice eked out 0.07%, Longboat looked like the lone outlier headed the wrong way.

But Longboat Key does not live in one county. It straddles the Sarasota–Manatee line, and any number drawn from a single county tells only half the island's story.

The number that matters: up 2%

"These are the files I received from Sarasota, and I just received Manatee's this morning," Town Finance Director Susan Smith told Longboat Key News on Friday. "I am still compiling the numbers, but overall we have a combined increase of 2%."

That single figure reframes everything. Where the Sarasota-side estimate dipped about 1.3%, the Manatee-side estimate surged 10.81% — climbing from a 2025 taxable value of roughly \$2.67 billion to a 2026 estimate of \$2.96 billion. Stitch the two halves together and the Town's combined taxable value rises from \$9.74 billion to a \$9.94 billion estimate: a gain of nearly \$194.5 million, or 2%.

At the Town's current operating millage of 1.9600 — unchanged from last year — Smith said those new values "would produce \$366,911 of new tax revenue using the same mill rate as in the prior year."

It is real money. It is also a fraction of last year's haul, and therein lies the real story.

A mirror image of last year

To understand FY27, look at how completely the two counties have swapped roles in a single budget cycle.

A year ago, Manatee County was Longboat's problem child. Battered by Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton — three storms inside three months — Manatee-side values collapsed 9.96%, dragged down by structural damage and a tax-rebate program for significantly damaged homes that, as Town Manager Howard Tipton noted in his budget transmittal, alone cut more than \$268,000 from General Fund property tax revenue, "mostly from Manatee County." What saved the FY26 budget was Sarasota: the new St. Regis Resort came onto the 2025 tax rolls, adding an estimated \$540 million in taxable value and lifting the Sarasota side 13.53%. The combined result was a healthy 5.96% increase that generated \$1,029,235 in new revenue.

This year the mirror flips. The storm-scarred Manatee homes are coming back onto the rolls — hence the 10.81% rebound — while the Sarasota side, having already banked its once-in-a-generation St. Regis windfall, settles back to earth and slips about 1.3%.

Nowhere is the cooling more visible than in new construction. On the Sarasota side, the market value of new construction in the Town fell to just \$52,917,900 this year — less than one-tenth of last year's \$546,945,100. The crane-driven growth that powered the FY26 budget has, for now, gone quiet.

The fine print: a quiet \$78,000 already gone

There is a second, less obvious wrinkle buried in the county worksheets — the darker-purple "Final 2025 Adjusted" values that Smith flagged.

After the FY2026 budget was already adopted, both counties revised their 2025 numbers downward through lawful corrections and Value Adjustment Board modifications. Manatee trimmed its 2025 base by about \$22.6 million (-0.85%); Sarasota by roughly \$17.4 million (-0.25%). Modest as percentages, those after-the-fact corrections quietly reduced Town revenue by \$44,313 on the Manatee side and \$34,020 on the Sarasota side — nearly \$78,000 the Town had counted on and will not collect.

It is the kind of footnote that rarely makes a headline but matters enormously to a finance director balancing a budget to the dollar.

Why the growth engine cooled

Three forces are pressing down on Longboat's tax base at once.

First, the one-time events have washed through. St. Regis can only be added to the rolls once; that 13.53% Sarasota surge was a sugar high, not a trend.

Second, new construction has thinned to a trickle — the lifeblood of "new" tax revenue that doesn't require raising anyone's rate.

Third, the state's own forecasts have turned cautious. Across the region, revised state estimates for the coming fiscal year came in dramatically below earlier projections, as multiple economic models replaced the single rosy forecast governments once relied on. Longboat is not immune to that broader chill.

The upshot: even with values up 2%, the Town is looking at roughly a third of the new revenue it enjoyed a year ago — at a moment when costs are still climbing.

A leaner budget, built for the squeeze

The good news is that the Town saw the squeeze coming. The FY26 General Fund budget Tipton recommended actually shrank — to \$24,126,852, a \$612,162 (2.5%) reduction — though that headline decline is mostly an accounting artifact of lower capital transfers (FY25 carried a \$2 million transfer for a fire ladder truck; FY26 required just \$234,000). Strip out capital, and operating expenditures rose about 5%, driven by the reality that wages and benefits make up roughly 80% of the budget. Even so, the Town built the plan so that revenues exceed expenditures by \$161,787 — money earmarked to begin rebuilding the reserves the hurricanes drained.

Resilience, by the numbers

If the valuation reports are the worry, the Town's mid-year financial update — delivered to the Commission on May 18 — is the reassurance.

Fiscal 2025 was, in Tipton's framing, a trial by fire. The unassigned fund balance plunged from a comfortable \$15.3 million to \$9.4 million — a near-\$6 million hit. But aggressive insurance recoveries, sharp contract bidding and departments operating under budget clawed back about \$2.3 million, and the Town's reserves still sit at 156 days of operating expenses — squarely inside the Commission's 120-to-180-day policy target.

Meanwhile the Town has played offense with outside money. It secured a staggering \$23.66 million to replace the aging Subaqueous Force-main — a \$9.58 million zero-interest loan, a matching \$9.58 million principal-forgiveness grant from the State Revolving Fund, and a \$3 million federal EPA grant — sparing residents the full weight of a critical infrastructure bill. Add \$1.2 million from the State Beach Management Program, \$924,897 for center turn lanes, and grants for police body cameras and pedestrian safety, and a picture emerges of a small town punching well above its weight in the grant arena.

The Police Department, when its deputy chief retired, reallocated the savings to hire two additional patrol officers without adding a dollar to the budget, and put new shallow-water Sea-Doos — funded by WCIND grants — into congested waters. The building department, in the wake of Florida's post-collapse condo-safety laws, logged 198 of 198 required milestone reports for older high-rise condominiums, with zero major structural issues found.

What it means for FY27

The timing is no accident. These June estimates land just as Tipton's team begins drafting the FY27 budget, and they sketch its central tension plainly: a tax base that is still growing, but slowly; a new-construction pipeline that has all but emptied; reserves that are healthier than feared but thinner than before the storms; and roughly \$366,911 in fresh revenue to absorb rising wage, insurance and public-safety costs — at an unchanged 1.9600 mill rate.

For Sarasota-side readers watching their own county's numbers, Longboat is a useful cautionary tale: a single-county snapshot can badly mislead. For Longboat residents, the message is steadier. The island did not lose ground this year — it gained a little, on a two-county ledger that the early reports missed. But the era of effortless, construction-fueled windfalls is, at least for now, behind it.

The character of a town, as the mid-year report put it, is measured not when the seas are calm but in the aftermath of the storm. By that measure, Longboat Key enters its next budget season bruised, disciplined, and — on the only number that counts the whole island — still moving forward.

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EditorLetters



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Meeting agenda

To: Longboat Key Commission

Attached are the Mayor's Notes for the June 1, 2026, Regular Meeting. The notes include the following amendments to the Consent Agenda items that were circulated yesterday and today:

- Agenda Item 5A – Amendment to the May 18 Workshop minutes (Commissioner Branham advised that he was referring to Lighthouse Point, not Sands Point (Item 5D on page 3).
- Agenda Item 5E – Amendment to the date referenced in the staff memorandum regarding the joint meeting with Sarasota County (Resolution 2026-17).
- Agenda Item 5G – Amendment to the meeting schedule and due date for the Charter Review Committee's final report (Resolution 2026-24).

Copies will be available on the dais. With these amendments noted for the record, the items do not need to be removed from the Consent Agenda unless a Commissioner requests further discussion. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Trish Shinkle
Town Clerk
Town of Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Destination

To: George Reenstra

Thank you for reaching out! I met with our Public Works Department onsite, and they have started the work to clean up all the ditch banks and the ditch itself. We also just met with our contractor last week about the wood bridge over the creek project. He is working up some numbers for that. As soon as we get that, we will forward your way.

As far as a memorial opportunity for the south bridge (New Pass Bridge) in Honor with Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crews, I did some research, and it is a little bit involved. Memorials on state roads or bridges are defined by Florida Statute. Below is my understanding of the statute:

Starts with a Formal Recommendation(s) from the local government showing support for the memorial designation. If the bridge or road is in more than one locality, it would require formal recommendations from both cities. In this case, the Town of Longboat Key and the City of Sarasota since the bridge connects the two cities.

Once Formal Recommendations are achieved, there would need to be a State Legislative sponsor (FL House or Senate).

That sponsor would then make sure to get actual formal Resolutions from both the Town and the City. Once the Resolutions are passed and obtained, the sponsor brings it to the State Legislature and the State Legislature votes on it.

Once approved, the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") designates the bridge with a memorial marker.

So, it all starts at the local Town level with a recommendation from the Town Commission. Then, if the Town Commission supported it, that recommendation would go to the City of Sarasota to see if their elected officials support it.

Another potential option is a memorial as part of the new Broadway Street at Gulf of Mexico Drive Roundabout that the state is helping us build at the north end. I am not sure, but it may have to go through the same process because Gulf of Mexico Drive is a state road (SR 789). The upside is that it is more of a Town requested project rather than an existing bridge between two cities. But we understand that a bridge designation is strong and very meaningful.

Another idea is that the Town has historical markers in Town right-of-way or property like the one below. These are usually tied to some historical event in connection with Longboat Key, but maybe there is a connection that can be considered. These are just some initial thoughts and research. As far as the wood bridge over the creek is concerned, I will send the construction estimate once we have it in hand.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Destination

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Thanks for your thoughtful comments. Since I rarely go north, the New Pass bridge is my choice. I doubt either town would object. This is above my pay grade, does Gulf of Mexico have such a designation? Sounds easier and would work for me. Can you recommend someone

See Letters, page 6

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 4

I can meet with and retain to act as my representative? Thanks, when I get back you, Gary and myself can grab lunch.

George Reenstra
Longboat Key

Sarasota-Manatee MPO Governing Board Meeting

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps and Assistant Town Manager Issac Brownman

Below is a brief summary of the above-referenced meeting. There was a quorum of the voting members. However, the voting members from the City of Sarasota and the Town of Longboat Key were not in attendance. The MPO will be mindful of the Commission schedules for the City and Town for next year's May meeting to avoid conflicts. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Dave Scarpelli was introduced as the new FDOT Community Liaison with MPO.

Presentations were made by Manatee County Area Transit and Sarasota County Breeze Transit which included their quarterly updates.

Items that were voted on all passed by the Board:

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments

Fiscal Year 2026/27 to 2030/31 Transportation Improvement Program - Note here that it was mentioned that this includes the LBK 12-ft wide multi-use trail. Jenn had noticed that it was originally not shown, in the FDOT Work Program, and worked with MPO staff on this. MPO was able to track this project down and ensure it was included for FY30.

Joint Transportation Regional Improvement Program (TRIP) Project Priority List – Note the TRIP has lost funding over the past 10-years and funding is very limited.

Advancing Organizational Safety Culture – This is an MPO endeavor and a presentation by the MPO was made for this project.

Vice Chair Mast brought up the discussion of e-bikes

She requested that this be a topic that the Board delves into.

It was mentioned that Marco Island has an e-bike ordinance that may be helpful.

The success of the City of Bradenton and City of Bradenton Beach ferry system was discussed. It was also mentioned it would be nice for Sarasota County to participate with a ferry system. Jenn's Side note: The City of Sarasota is working with a firm named Benesch to advance the Water Transit Landside Access and Mobility Study, which will evaluate how residents and visitors will travel to and from proposed water transit dock locations, with a focus on first/last-mile connectivity, parking, curb management, transit integration, and multimodal access. The study is intended to build upon the ongoing water transit planning and conceptual dock design work currently underway. There is also a Water Transit meeting on Wednesday, June 10 from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. at the Bayfront Community Center in Sarasota to learn about proposed docking locations at Bayfront Park and Ken Thompson Park. Jenn and Charlie are both attending.

AAM/eVTOL efforts were discussed. FDOT highly supports these efforts and future of this program. There was a regional working group meeting that was held on April 24th at SRQ and this was mentioned. Jenn and Charlie had attended on behalf of the Town. Other attendees were members of FDOT, SRQ, SRQ's consultant, and other local government entities. Discussion at the Board Meeting included that this working group is working toward a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the goal of completing that MOU within 60-days. Comp plan amendments, zoning ordinances, etc. should be evaluated by local governments to determine how they may or may not align with AAM/eVTOL. Statewide, Phase IA of the AAM is located within the I-4 corridor. Suntrax is also testing technology in support of advancing AAM/eVTOL.

See Letters, page 7



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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 6

Jennifer Fehrs
Town Engineer
Town of Longboat Key

Dinner request

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams
Rabbi Mates tried to call but couldn't reach you, she is copied on this email.
Would you like to join us for dinner following June 5 services? It will be casual, warm and friendly.
Services start at 5:30, and Rabbi wondered if you prefer to be "interviewed" or speak directly to the congregation? We are looking forward to having you!
Jennifer Shaw
Temple Beth Israel

Street light inquiry

To: Stephen Spotte
Mr. Spotte, please see the map and, if you can, indicate which light may need a shield. You mention a light just of you location. Those lights have been in place for 2 years now and may not be the issue, so please help us identify the potential culprit.
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Street light inquiry

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charles Mopps
Thanks so much for responding. I know the lights have been in place a couple of years, and I've been trying to ignore this one, but ultimately without success. I can't identify its location from your map. However, the offending lamp is just south of our property and stands at the southern end of Sarah and Paul Karon's front yard next door. Their address is 6225 Gulf of Mexico Drive. A photo facing south from our deck is attached. The unit looks nearly hidden and unobtrusive — until it turns on at dusk.
Actually, night sky pollution from urban and suburban lighting has become a worldwide issue, and all outdoor lighting should properly be aimed downward allowing as little illumination as possible to leak upward. Something to think about: of the approximately 9 billion people on Earth, an estimated one million of them have never seen the stars. Please stop by if you want a personal look, and thanks again.
Steve Spotte
Longboat Key

Street light inquiry

To: Longboat Key Commission
A shield has been added to that light. We hope this helps. Thanks goes out to Guy, Mark, and Mike.
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Street light inquiry

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charles Mopps
Is this possible for a streetlight on GMD? We live at 6225. Let me know, thanks! Also, could you please ask the Town to put a downward reflector on the street lamp just south of our houses? As is, it's contributing to pollution of the night sky, not to mention shining in our eyes when we sit on the deck at night.
Stephen Spotte
Longboat Key

Property tax reform

To: Longboat Key Commission
The Florida League shared this morning that the Governor will be calling a special session for property tax reform for 6/1-3. The idea is that the Governor holds the veto pen over budget approvals during this timeframe which maximizes his leverage.
It was shared the Gov is proposing \$250k for homesteaded properties. 5% cap for non homesteaded properties. Now the Gov is including schools in his proposal which is also new. FLC estimates the impacts to be \$12b-\$15b statewide. All breaking news and more details to follow.
Howard Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Town of Longboat Key Officials Receive 2026 Home Rule Hero Awards

To: Longboat Key Police Chief Russ Mager
Thank you Chief. The Commission really gets all the credit.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 8



JEFF RHINELANDER

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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 7

Town of Longboat Key Officials Receive 2026 Home Rule Hero Awards

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
 Congratulations on being recognized for the Home Rule Hero Award!
 Russ Mager
 Police Chief
 Town of Longboat Key

Town of Longboat Key Officials Receive 2026 Home Rule Hero Awards

To: Longboat Key Commission
 The Florida League of Cities has recognized Vice Mayor Penny Gold, Commissioner B.J. Bishop, and Town Manager Howard Tipton with the 2026 Home Rule Hero Awards for their outstanding advocacy during this year's Legislative Session. These awards honor local leaders who champion municipal self-governance and ensure local voices are heard in statewide decision-making.

The attached news release includes full details, including remarks from the recipients reflecting on the honor and the importance of Home Rule in our community.

Please join us in congratulating them on this well-deserved recognition.

Tina Adams
 Fire Administration & Communications Manager/PIO
 Town of Longboat Key

Upcoming City Commission Schedule

To: Sarasota City Commission

Attached for your reference is a tentative schedule of upcoming City Commission items and public hearings which includes advertising deadlines and agenda submission deadlines.

Please let me know if any questions, concerns or changes are needed.

Reminder - the deadline for submitting agenda requests and backup material into peak for the July 6, 2026 meeting is Thursday, June 18 by 3 p.m.

Lori Rivers
 Deputy City Clerk
 City of Sarasota

Thanks!

City Commissioner
 City of Sarasota

Upcoming City Commission Schedule

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

I will speak to the Transportation and Planning teams and Ms. Friling about the request and get back to you.

Jennifer Jorgensen
 Interim City Manager
 City of Sarasota

Upcoming City Commission Schedule

To: Sarasota City Interim Manager Jennifer Jorgensen

Hope you are having a lovely holiday weekend. Now that we are on break, I started to read some important items that I put off until I had more time. One of those items is the Transportation Chapter and the proposed changes for this chapter. This is a 500-ish page document that is as dense as they get. I will need to read through this carefully and have the opportunity to meet with members of the community, staff, and others.

My request is to not place it on the July Agenda schedule or even the August Agenda Schedule - please, please, please. I am trying to help with over scheduling our meetings and a flag raised in my mind when I started to dig into this and have discussions about it. While I will be able to finish reading this over "the break," I will need time to schedule meetings and have important discussions with folks, many who are away some portion of the summer. This is a large and important document, I do hope you can accommodate this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Jen Ahearn-Koch
 City Commissioner
 City of Sarasota

Upcoming City Commission Schedule

To: Sarasota Interim City Manager Jennifer Jorgensen

For your reference.

Shayla Griggs
 City Clerk
 City of Sarasota

Upcoming Palm Ave Board Discussion on The Well Development

To: Rob Chelseth

Thanks for the email and invitation. I have copied the City attorney, Mr. Polzak, on this email to advise. I am not sure which path this project is going to take and so will defer to the attorney for advice on my ability to participate in meetings. He will reach out to us with a response.

Jen Ahearn-Koch
 City Commissioner
 City of Sarasota

Upcoming Palm Ave Board Discussion on The Well Development

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

I hope you're doing well and your campaign makes good progress. You may recall we met at your Laurel Park meet and greet a couple of weeks ago when we shared the Morgan Bentley letter regarding the proposed development 'The Well.'

Several members from South Palm Avenue condominium board of directors will hold a Zoom conference call next Tuesday at 4:00 PM to further discuss the proposed development, The Well, and its potential impact on our neighborhood.

I wanted to share two requests for your consideration:

You are cordially invited to join the meeting virtually to share your perspective and provide any updates regarding the status of The Well application currently under review by the DRC.

Alternatively, if your schedule does not permit attendance, I would greatly appreciate any updates you can provide before next Tuesday's meeting so that I may share them with board members from our neighboring condominium associations.

Thank you for your continued attention to and support on this important matter.

Rob Chelseth
 Sarasota



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367 W ROYAL FLAMINGO DR	5,257	\$3,995,000	4 4 0	310	\$3,795,000
1617 PALMETTO LN	2,812	\$2,580,000	3 2 1	38	\$2,250,000
111 GOLDEN GATE PT Unit#402	2,314	\$2,300,000	3 3 0	518	\$2,100,000
711 S PALM AVE Unit#303	1,815	\$1,595,000	3 3 0	170	\$1,500,000
800 N TAMIAMI TRL Unit#505/507	2,981	\$1,599,000	3 3 1	160	\$1,450,000
301 QUAY COMMONS Unit#1707	1,578	\$1,499,000	2 2 1	95	\$1,425,000
209 COSMOPOLITAN CT	1,680	\$899,000	2 2 1	77	\$830,000
1111 N GULFSTREAM AVE Unit#16D	1,736	\$875,000	2 2 0	31	\$800,000
514 HOWARD CT	1,606	\$749,000	4 2 0	278	\$710,000
516 HOWARD CT	1,622	\$749,000	4 2 0	279	\$710,000
33 S GULFSTREAM AVE Unit#507	820	\$275,000	1 1 0	8	\$275,000
3533 FAIR OAKS LN	3,909	\$2,995,000	4 4 2	84	\$2,850,000
775 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#408	2,122	\$1,995,000	3 3 0	7	\$2,208,000
415 L AMBIANCE DR Unit#B202	2,385	\$2,150,000	3 3 0	162	\$2,125,000
2425 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#6D	1,470	\$1,850,000	2 2 0	53	\$1,750,000
340 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#124	2,365	\$1,725,000	3 3 0	333	\$1,690,000
615 BUTTONWOOD DR	2,080	\$1,250,000	3 2 0	151	\$935,000
5635 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#202	1,786	\$1,050,000	2 2 0	59	\$900,000
1904 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#204	2,135	\$850,000	3 3 0	0	\$850,000
2295 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#115S	1,235	\$895,000	2 2 0	166	\$820,000
1445 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#103	1,933	\$865,000	3 2 1	64	\$800,000
225 SANDS POINT RD Unit#7101	642	\$699,000	1 1 0	67	\$677,500
1965 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#G5-400	1,257	\$506,000	2 2 0	0	\$506,000
1912 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#602	1,590	\$549,900	2 2 1	362	\$496,500
2039 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#G3-203	1,214	\$499,999	2 2 1	21	\$470,000
2045 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#M1-502	928	\$469,500	2 1 0	493	\$422,500
4840 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#Villa 15	1,084	\$445,000	2 2 0	304	\$399,999
620 SPANISH DR N	1,357	\$370,000	2 2 0	134	\$320,000
3710 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#E3	680	\$175,000	2 1 0	765	\$135,000



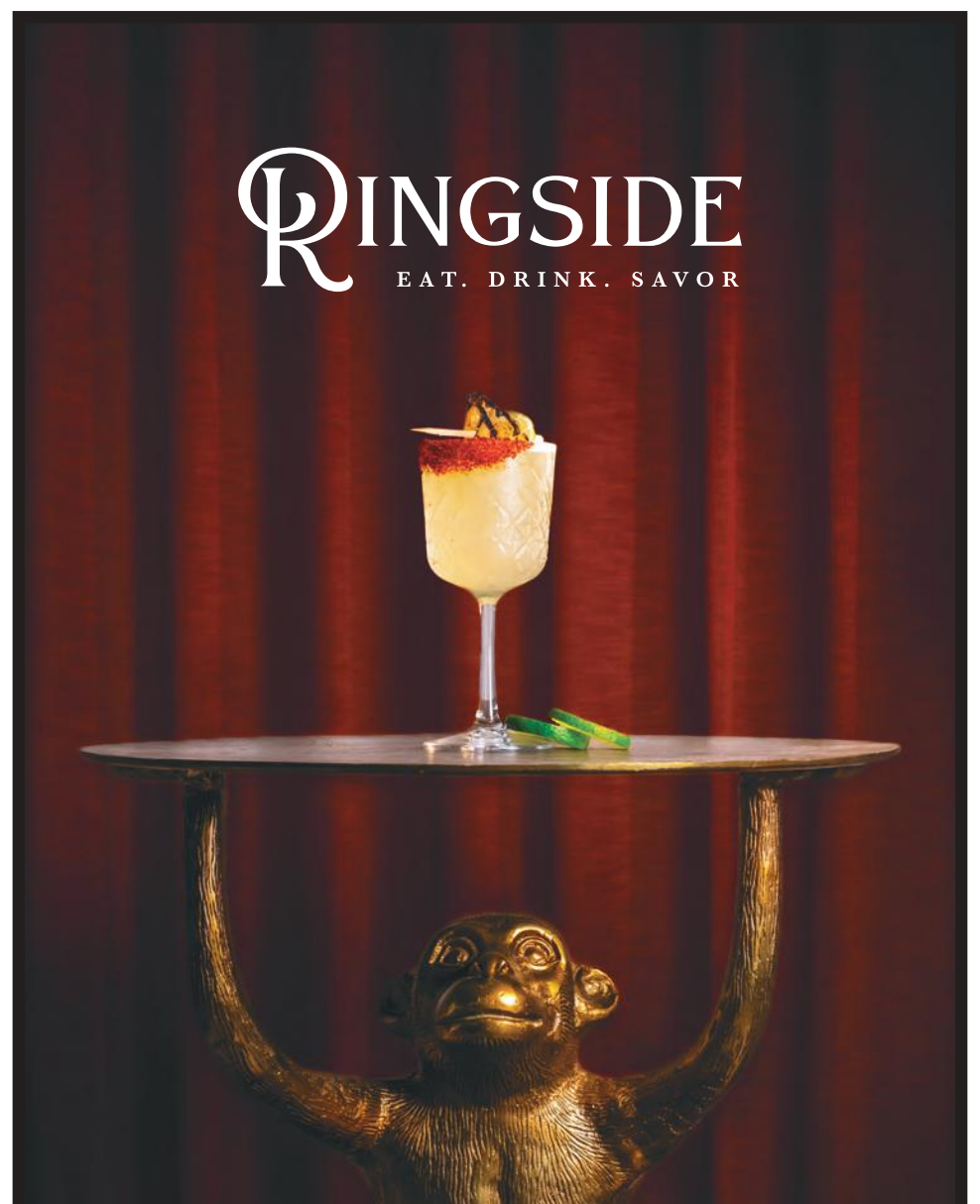
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OnPatrol



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

May 22

False Paw-larm

10:00 a.m.

Officer Castro responded to Longboat Club Road regarding an animal complaint. The complainant called the police department to report a dog at Longboat Club Road tied up on the side of the residence and appearing to be in distress. Officer Castro made contact with the owner who was inside the residence. She advised that she put the dog out to go to the bathroom and tie him up because there is no fence. Officer Castro checked on the dog, who appeared happy and healthy and had water and food. Case clear.



Going Coconuts

10:55 a.m.

Sgt. Montfort and Captain Bourque responded to Gulfside Road for a trespassing complaint. The complainant stated he owns the property and that every few months two men enter his property and steal coconuts. The complainant stated he has conspicuously posted 'no trespassing' signs on his property and the subjects have disregarded his signage. Additionally, the complainant stated that he has contacted dispatch on several occasions after hours and was told that the matter would have to wait until the next day after the trespassers have left the area. Sgt. Montfort conducted a search of the records management system which yielded negative results for any contacts of the complainant. Furthermore, Sgt. Montfort contacted the Sarasota Sheriff's Office Communications divisions and spoke to the dispatch supervisor. Sgt. Montfort was advised to call back when he obtained the complainant's phone number and a historical search will be completed. Sgt. Montfort sent an email to the complainant requesting his phone number so they can discuss the situation. Case clear.

The Five-Year Itch

3:44 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to Jessmyth Drive in reference to a suspicious person. The complainant reported a suspicious man knocking on her door the day prior. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer met with the complainant who said a man approximately 6'2" wearing a teal shirt and dark colored shorts knocked on her front door. The complainant answered the front door and greeted the man and he asked her if she had a room for rent. She told the man no, and even so it would have to be for more than a month. The man told her he wanted to rent a room for five years. The complainant additionally told Officer Troyer that the man was driving a dark blue Mercedes, but she did not obtain any license plate information. The complainant also did not recognize or know the man. The complainant showed the officer the Ring camera footage of the incident which occurred and sent Officer Troyer the video on the phone. Officer Troyer uploaded the video footage to the case files of the report for documentation purposes if needed. Case clear.

Oar-deal on the Canal

8:36 p.m.

Officer Miano and Officer Pescuma responded to Bayview Drive for a verbal dispute between two men. Officer Miano spoke on scene with the complainant who said he was on his back patio, adjacent to the canal, when an unknown man operating a red kayak came into the vicinity of his dock and became verbally disruptive with him and his wife. The complainant further stated the unknown man was yelling at him about how this town belongs to locals and

to stop renting in the area, also stated he was waving his oar in the air in an aggressive manner. The complainant also related there was a woman aboard the kayak attempting to calm the man down, he also observed a boxer canine with them as well. They were observed departing the canal in an unknown direction. Officers searched the area surrounding the canal with negative results. Case clear.

May 23

Making Waves

12:20 p.m.

Officer Castro responded to a disturbance call at Greer Island on the beach. Upon arrival, Officer Castro made contact with the complainants who were involved in a verbal argument. The complainants said the man arrived at the beach on his boat at a high rate of speed while the complainant's children were playing in the water nearby. She confronted the man and told him to slow down, at which point a verbal argument began. The man recounted his version of events and said he approached the beach at a normal speed and did not see any children in the water. He further stated that the woman began yelling and insulting him so he responded and he attempted to calm her down during the exchange. The investigation revealed that the parties did not know each other and no physical altercation occurred. Officers conducted mediation for both parties which resulted in resolving the issue. Both parties were separated without further incident. No crime was committed. Case clear.

May 24

Bathroom Vanity Blunder

9:52 a.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to Marbury Lane in reference to a theft changed to a suspicious incident. The complainant contacted the Sarasota County Dispatch Center and he reported a theft. The complainant reported putting his wallet down on his kayak and then his wallet was missing. The complainant believed a worker at his house was the suspect. Upon his arrival, Officer Troyer met with the complainant who said he resolved the issue and found his wallet in his bathroom vanity. The complainant said there would not be any issues with the worker either. Case clear.

A \$100 Soundtrack

7:37 p.m.

Officer Miano and Officer Pescuma were dispatched for noise complaint coming from the vicinity of Jewfish Key waterway. Police went to Longboat Pass Bridge to investigate further, Officer Miano observed loud music potentially originating from four possible vessels that were stationary on the Jewfish Key sandbar. Police went to Broadway and into the boat to investigate the noise complaint further. Once on scene, Officer Miano observed four watercrafts stationary at the sandbar. Officer Miano further observed the watercraft farthest to right playing extremely loud music and clearly violating Longboat Key's sound ordinance. The music was heard more than 50 feet from its place of origin. Officers located the owner of a water vessel and she was advised that she was warned earlier in the day for the same issue and now was being issued a town ordinance violation. Officer Miano issued a Longboat Key town ordinance violation for sound regulation with a fine of \$100. Case clear.

May 25

Mellow Yellow Water

9:59 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 4200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of drinking water that was coming out yellow in color. Officer Maple contacted Public Works and they recommended they flush the system. Officer Maple informed the Public Works employee that the complainant would like to be contacted by someone to assist. The employee was given the contact information and he said he would reach out with recommendations. Officer Maple determined law enforcement was not needed on site. Case clear.

May 27

Lizard Needs a Miracle

4:50 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort while on patrol in Lyons Lane was flagged down by a distressed woman reporting a Jesus lizard was stuck in some fencing. Sgt. Montfort pulled in front of her residence and exited his vehicle to see if he could assist. The woman stated that the lizard was stuck in a chicken wire type fencing. Sgt. Montfort approached the fencing and observed the large lizard who did not like the officer's presence. Sgt. Montfort attempted to dislodge the lizard and was unsuccessful. Sgt. Montfort then spoke with Officer Troyer who was experienced in reptile handling and summoned him to the scene. Officer Troyer donned his bite proof gloves and was able to safely assist the lizard out of the fencing. The complainant thanked the officers. Case clear.



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BreakPoints



French Open, from page 1

out-charming every human in the building. There was also Jannik Sinner, the Italian who hits the ball flat and straight and obscenely hard, like a ball machine that gained sentience and, as we'll get to, a lawyer. For two years the men's game was those two and a list of polite extras.

And Then the Wheels Came Off, All of Them, at Once

Then came 2026, the year Roland-Garros looked at all that lovely order and said: no thank you.

Let us take attendance. Alcaraz, the two-time defending champion, did not make it to the starting line — out with a wrist injury, meaning the man could not defend a title he had won twice, which is roughly like the reigning hot-dog-eating champion phoning in with a sore jaw. Fine, you think. That clears the runway for Sinner, the world No. 1, who showed up in Paris on a 30-match winning streak as a minus-300 favorite, meaning the betting markets rated his victory somewhere between “sure thing” and “law of physics.”



REID

How to Lose a Match You Have Already Won

I am not making this up, and I would like that on the record, because what follows is hard to believe even with photographs.

Sinner won the first two sets. He went up 5-1 in the third, serving for the match — which in tennis is the part where you have, for all practical purposes, already won and are mentally selecting a postmatch beverage — and then his body resigned, cleaned out its desk, and left the building. He lost fifteen consecutive points. FIFTEEN. He stood doubled over the clay looking dizzy and nauseous, wearing the exact expression I last achieved at a Sarasota Golden Corral.

The Rules Apply to Everyone (Some Restrictions May Apply)

This is where it gets, as my grandchildren say, spicy. Because only last week, in this very column, I noted that Jannik Sinner appears able to cramp on demand — the way other people can cry on cue or suddenly produce a doctor's note. At the Italian Open he cramped against Daniil Medvedev, called for a timeout, got it, recovered, and won, after which Medvedev more or less suggested the tour treats its marquee names like Fabergé eggs. And here in Paris: same gag, sadder ending. Sinner asked the chair umpire, on a live microphone, whether he was permitted a medical timeout — a question carrying real “is it cool if I head out early, I'm not feeling great” energy — and then vanished off court for eighteen minutes, which is not a timeout, it is a layover.

Jim Courier, watching from the TNT booth and declining to be a good sport about it, called the whole performance “absolute baloney.” He observed that cramping is not technically an injury, that the rules theoretically apply to all 128 players in the draw, and that they nevertheless seem to relax, stretch, and recline whenever the gentleman who moves the merchandise is in trouble. Which brought to mind the last occasion on which the rulebook did yoga on Sinner's behalf: the doping business. He tested positive — twice — for clostebol, a banned anabolic steroid. The official explanation, which I am not making up and frankly could never have invented, is that his physiotherapist sprayed the steroid onto his own cut finger and then gave Sinner a massage, transmitting the substance the way one might transmit a head cold. The authorities accepted that he never meant to cheat and handed him a three-month ban — a ban so exquisitely scheduled, so artfully draped across the one stretch of the calendar containing exactly zero Grand Slams, that it qualifies less as a suspension than as a wellness retreat. Three months off, no majors missed, back in plenty of time for the clay. The Church hears the confession, assigns three Hail Marys, and books them for a Tuesday afternoon when you weren't doing anything anyway.

None of it saved him. Sinner dropped the final three sets 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 to a man named Juan Manuel Cerundolo, ranked somewhere in the mid-50s, who had never won a match remotely this big and is now the most famous Cerundolo on Earth — narrowly edging out his own more successful brother, Francisco, a development I assume is landing beautifully at the family dinner table. Sinner's postmatch diagnosis? He hadn't slept well. We have all slept poorly, Jannik. Most of us do not respond by coughing up a two-set lead on international television.

Old Man Yells at Clay, Loses to Child

This left precisely one legend upright: Novak Djokovic, who is 39, which in tennis is roughly 73, and in clay-court tennis in direct sun is roughly Methuselah. And here I must confess a humiliating fact about my entire demographic. We — the Longboat Key crowd, the men who still mist up over Federer's backhand the way other men mist up at weddings — have developed a sappy, indefensible tenderness for elderly athletes, including the ones we openly loathed in their prime. I rooted for Tom Brady at the bitter end. I have caught myself thinking, heaven help me, well, I'm 57, and if Novak can still do it at 39, perhaps it is not too late for me — a thought I have while physically struggling to open a jar of pickles. When a fellow on the courts asked, “Think Novak's got one more in him?”, three of us went silent, thought of Roger, and a man in a visor finally said, “I sure as hell hope not.”

The day after Sinner imploded, Djokovic kindly imploded too. He went up two sets on a nineteen-year-old Brazilian named Joao Fonseca — a teenager, a child, a person who has never once paid a property tax — and then, over four hours and forty-nine minutes in ninety-degree heat, the most famous legs in tennis quietly became linguine. Fonseca won in five. It was Djokovic's earliest French Open exit since 2009, back when Fonseca was in roughly first grade, and it made the kid the first teenager ever to beat Djokovic at a major, where the old man had previously gone 18-0 against opponents who cannot legally rent a Camry.

Now Hiring: World's Best Tennis Player, No Experience Necessary

So let us tally the carnage. The three best men alive are home on their respective couches, and Roland-Garros is now contractually obligated to manufacture a first-time champion. The new betting favorite — and he got the gig the way you get promoted when everyone above you quits on the same chaotic afternoon — is Alexander Zverev, the most decorated bridesmaid in the sport, a man who has blown a two-sets-to-love lead in a major final and lost another final to Alcaraz, and who now finds the door to greatness not merely open but unhinged, sold for scrap, and the frame hauled off too. Is this, at long and weary last, the Year of Zverev? Nobody knows. That is no longer a turn of phrase. Nobody, anywhere, knows anything.

The Women's Bracket Is Also a Dumpster Fire, Thanks for Asking

The women's draw, lest you suspect the chaos of sexism, is its own slow-motion building collapse. Aryna Sabalenka, the world No. 1, is still chasing a first French title after losing last year's final to Coco Gauff by approximately one atom; Gauff, the defending champ, is grinding forward; and Iga Swiatek — four-time champion, self-declared and widely ratified Queen of Clay — is somehow both a tournament favorite and a woman who appears to have misplaced her entire game over the spring, and who may now collide with Jelena Ostapenko in the third round. Ostapenko, I should note, is 6-0 against Swiatek lifetime. Six and oh. Watching Iga's path is like watching someone whistle cheerfully toward a visibly haunted house while the whole theater screams at the screen. Meanwhile Elena Rybakina, reigning Australian Open champion and Moscow-born howitzer, went out in the second round — confirming the ancient wisdom that nobody ever takes Moscow, especially in a war, although in this case Moscow appears to have self-deported before the enemy so much as arrived.

Naomi Osaka Will Be With You After the Costume Change



And then, blessedly, there is Naomi Osaka, who did not fly to Paris to play tennis so much as to stage a fashion intervention. For each match she emerges in a bespoke couture “walk-on” look layered over a gold sequined dress, one of them topped with an ivory train so colossal she had to unclip it and hand it to a small child before she could play tennis — a thing that physically happened, on a tennis court, in front of God and several thousand baffled French people. (At the Australian Open she arrived dressed as a jellyfish, with a parasol. A PARASOL. INDOORS.) Osaka, to her eternal credit, is fully committed to the bit: “Athletes are in show business,” she declared, explaining that because she doesn't much enjoy talking, she prefers to “talk through my clothes” — a sentence that quietly explains a great deal. Her first-round opponent, Laura Siegemund, was conspicuously less enchanted, grouching that this was “yet another example of big names being treated differently,” since the headliner gets ten leisurely minutes to disrobe at the net while everybody else is frantically unzipping a duffel to avoid a time violation.

It is, to be fair, a proud tradition. Serena Williams once returned to this very tournament after a dangerous childbirth in a black compression catsuit she said made her feel like a superhero — at which point the French Tennis Federation, displaying all the nerve and judgment for which French bureaucracy is justly famous, banned it, having gravely concluded that the single greatest threat to the dignity of clay-court tennis was a new mother in functional Lycra. So the runway, like the trophy, is wide open. The future of this entire tournament is on absolutely anyone's racket.

To Watch Any of This, Please Consult an Accountant

Which leaves the one mystery that keeps me up at night: how does a person actually watch this thing? In America, the matches are flung across TNT, truTV, and TBS, while every match streams on HBO Max — which used to be called Max, which used to be called HBO Max, and which I fully expect to rename itself twice more before the trophy is lifted. Or you can get it through YouTube TV, or Sling, or DirecTV, or Hulu, at prices running from eleven dollars to eighty-five dollars a month — unless you happen to have Fubo, in which case you are simply out of luck, out of tennis, and apparently being punished for something you did in a past life. There is also, the listings note with a perfectly straight face, free radio.

Free. Radio. For a sport whose entire dramatic appeal this fortnight consists of watching beloved millionaires fall over in the heat.

I'll sort it out eventually — probably the very afternoon they hand the trophy to whichever total stranger wins the thing. In 2026, your guess is exactly as good as mine, which, after thirty straight years of this tournament being the safest bet in all of sports, is the most fun I have had with it since Nadal's knees were still under warranty.

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Franklin, from page 1

bers as a racist attack.

Even though the City of Sarasota now legally concedes that the post was a complete hoax and she had nothing to do with it, the ghost of that accusation still haunts her daily. It surfaces in whispers, it lingers in search engine results, and worst of all, it remains permanently enshrined in the official city minutes. Now, as Franklin fights to clear her name from the historical record, a recent court ruling threatens to make that unjust stain permanent.

The Magistrate's Blow

On April 9, General Magistrate Medisa M. Turner issued a Recommended Order to Circuit Court Judge Dana Moss, advising that Franklin's case against the City of Sarasota be dismissed with prejudice.

Franklin, representing herself in the litigation, had filed a Petition for Writ of Mandamus seeking to force the city to correct the official minutes of the January 16, 2024, City Commission meeting. The minutes explicitly link Franklin's name to the fabricated, racist post.

In her order, Magistrate Turner stated that Franklin "has failed to demonstrate the existence of case law, statutory authority, constitutional provisions, or other binding precedent that explicitly establishes a citizen's right to compel the correction of meeting minutes." Turner determined that amending the minutes is not a "ministerial function" the city is legally obligated to perform.

A "Mash-Up" of Lies

The controversy dates back to a tense City Commission meeting over two years ago. During a presentation ostensibly about "civility, respect, and rhetoric," then-Commissioner Kyle Battie showed his colleagues and the public an alleged Facebook printout.

The image was a crude digital "mash-up." It combined Franklin's personal wildlife photography from Africa with a photo of Battie and Tanya Borysiewicz, co-owner of the Corona Cigar Co., who was identified as being half African American. The fabricated post was presented as a racist attack against them.

While Franklin's name appeared atop the printed copy displayed in the chambers—broadcast to anyone watching online or on television—neither Battie nor Borysiewicz actually spoke her name aloud during the meeting.

Despite this, Franklin's name was explicitly added into the formal, approved minutes of the meeting.

"Immense Pain and Damage"

For Franklin, the inclusion of her name in the city's official historical record was a devastating blow. During a February hearing, she explained to the court that the public display of the fake post was a calculated move meant to attack her family (her husband, Ron Kashden, was a political candidate).

She sought a narrow, simple relief: for the city to formally amend the minutes to correct what is now an admittedly erroneous authorship attribution. The city's own legal representation, Jay Daigneault, acknowledged during court proceedings that the city accepts as true that the post was a "hoax" not created by Franklin.

Yet, the city's defense rests on a technicality. The city argues that the minutes accurately reflect what happened at the meeting—that Battie presented the post—regardless of whether the underlying accusation was entirely false.

For someone who has endured years of public shaming, this legal distinction offers zero comfort. The uncorrected minutes serve as a haunting validation of a lie, forcing Franklin to continually defend her character against a smear campaign she never asked for.

Fighting Back Under the Sunshine Law

Refusing to be silenced, Franklin filed her Exceptions to the magistrate's order just days later, on April 10.

She argues that Magistrate Turner fundamentally misunderstood the law by relying on a strict interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order, which suggests minute corrections are entirely discretionary. Franklin forcefully countered in her filing: "[T]he discretion at issue ... is whether a commission member raises a motion to amend — not whether the commission, once faced with an undisputed error it has already accepted as true, may ignore it."

Franklin insists that Florida's Sunshine Law framework must offer citizens a recognized process to correct materially inaccurate records. To deny that, she argues, leaves residents utterly defenseless against political stunts and defamation from the dais.

What Comes Next

The final decision now rests with Circuit Judge Dana Moss. Moss will review the magistrate's recommendation alongside Franklin's newly filed exceptions.

If Judge Moss adopts the magistrate's order to dismiss the case with prejudice, Franklin will be barred from refiling an amended version of her petition.

"The City of Sarasota should have done that long ago," Franklin noted regarding a simple correction. "But it is never too late to apologize, and it is the beginning of making amends."

Until that apology comes, the official records of Sarasota will continue to tell a lie—and a Laurel Park resident will continue to pay the emotional price.

The Legal Anatomy of Franklin's Two-Front War Against City Hall

The controversy surrounding the fabricated Facebook post presented at the January 16, 2024, Sarasota City Commission meeting spawned a complex, multi-year legal saga. Laurel Park resident Kelly Franklin sought justice through two distinct legal avenues: one targeting the politician who presented the hoax, and another targeting the municipal record that enshrined it.

Both avenues ran headfirst into high-walled legal protections designed to insulate governments from liability. Here is a summary legal analysis of how both cases unfolded.

The Defamation Lawsuit (Franklin v. Battie) The Claim:

Franklin filed a civil lawsuit against City Commissioner Kyle Battie seeking damages in excess of \$50,000 for defamation, libel, civil conspiracy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. She alleged Battie knowingly and maliciously presented a fabricated, racially charged post and attributed it to her.

The Legal Hurdle: Absolute Immunity

The merits of whether Battie knew the post was a hoax ultimately did not matter in civil court. In mid-2024, 12th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Stephen Walker dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice. He based his ruling entirely on the established Florida doctrine of **absolute immunity**. Because Battie made the statements and presented the materials while seated on the dais during an official city commission meeting, he was legally shielded from civil defamation claims, regardless of the statements' truth or his underlying intent. Because he was acting in his official capacity, the city was also obligated to cover his legal fees, which exceeded \$25,000.

The Outcome: Dropped Under Financial Threat

Franklin initially appealed the dismissal. However, in December 2024, she allowed the appeal deadline to expire. Battie's attorney had utilized a Florida legal mechanism called a "proposal for settlement." If Franklin lost her appeal, this maneuver would have made her personally liable for paying Battie's ongoing attorney fees. Facing devastating financial exposure, Franklin dropped the case, publicly criticizing the legal tactic as an "extortionist maneuver" that forced her to abandon the appeal out of pragmatism.

The Public Records Fight (Writ of Mandamus)

The Claim:

Having lost the defamation route, Franklin filed a Petition for a Writ of Mandamus in late 2025. Representing herself, she sought a court order to force the City of Sarasota to amend the official January 16, 2024 meeting minutes to remove or correct the attribution of the "hoax post" to her.

The Legal Hurdle: Ministerial vs. Discretionary Acts

A Writ of Mandamus is an extraordinary remedy that can only be used to force a government body to perform a strict, legally mandated "ministerial duty" (a task where they have no choice).

The city's outside counsel, Jay Daigneault, acknowledged in court filings that the city accepts the post was a "hoax." However, the city successfully argued that under Florida's Sunshine Law, meeting minutes merely reflect a summary of what *occurred* at the meeting, not an assertion that what was presented was factually true. Furthermore, amending minutes is a **discretionary** act of the commission, not a ministerial duty.

The Outcome: Pending Final Dismissal

On April 9, 2026, General Magistrate Medisa M. Turner agreed with the city, issuing a Recommended Order to dismiss the case with prejudice. Turner noted Franklin failed to provide any case law or statute giving a citizen the "clear legal right" to compel a city to correct meeting minutes.

Franklin filed formal Exceptions to the magistrate's order, arguing that a record containing an "undisputed error it has already accepted as true" cannot be considered a lawful minute. On May 26, 2026, Franklin presented these arguments during a hearing before Circuit Judge Dana Moss.

The legal community is currently awaiting Judge Moss's final decision on whether to adopt the magistrate's recommendation to dismiss the case permanently.

The Legal Takeaway:

Franklin's saga illustrates a chilling reality of municipal law: elected officials possess near-bulletproof immunity for what they say on the dais, and cities have vast discretion over their own historical records. Even when a municipality legally concedes that a resident was the victim of a fabricated hoax presented during a meeting, the judicial system offers virtually no mechanism to force the city to correct the record or compensate the victim.

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St. Armands, from page 3

to Lido Key and Longboat Key. Introducing high-turnover lodging to the Commercial Tourist (CT) district—where hotel usage is currently explicitly prohibited—is viewed by many as a fatal blow to the area’s livability.

“If this concept is financially successful for this one developer, why won’t more and more commercial properties on St. Armands do the same thing?” Goglia warned residents. “Once zoning changes are made for this one property, they then apply to all properties.”

A ‘Trojan Horse’ and the Visioning Backlash

To address the growing friction, the City of Sarasota initiated a series of “visioning sessions” in early 2026 to chart the district’s future. However, to resident leaders, the municipal framework of community roundtables looked less like an olive branch and more like a Trojan horse designed to manufacture consent for density increases that have historically been fiercely opposed.

Tensions flared after it was revealed through public records requests that city planning staff had initially attempted to hold an invite-only meeting with a select group of commercial property owners before public outcry forced a pivot to an open workshop.

When the first public session convened on February 26 at the Mote Marine Keating Education Center, roughly 150 stakeholders gathered under the guidance of independent sociologist Dr. David Brain. Asked to envision the Circle in 2046 using sticky notes and voting stickers, the community delivered a unified, resounding directive that sharply diverged from the developers’ proposals.

Attendees overwhelmingly rejected the concept of “hotel houses” and high-density lodging. Instead, they demanded the preservation of the Circle’s century-old tradition: a quaint village-center feel defined by small boutique shops, strict code enforcement, and improved storm resilience.

Echoes of Past Proposals

The fierce pushback is rooted in a well-established history of residents defending the island from commercial expansion. Just four years ago, development interests lobbied the City Commission to authorize hotel use and increase commercial height limits across the Circle. The Commission voted 5–0 to reject the idea. Around the same time, a separate, highly contentious plan to build a hotel on the publicly owned Fillmore Parking Lot behind Alvin’s Island also collapsed under the weight of resident opposition.

Despite these past victories, residents remain on high alert. The upcoming summer months—when many seasonal homeowners migrate north—are widely viewed as a vulnerable window when developers might quietly advance zoning variance requests through the city’s Development Review Committee.

A Renaissance on the Street, A Blight on the Corner

What may ultimately work against the push for rezoning is the empirical reality currently playing out on the street. By all accounts, St. Armands is experiencing a massive post-hurricane renaissance. Buoyed by the recent opening of the St. Regis on Longboat Key and flawless seasonal weather, the Circle is replete with enthusiastic diners and throngs of visitors enjoying outdoor cafés and live music.

Yet, locals point to one glaring exception: the distressed corners where developers seeking new zoning entitlements have left their hurricane-damaged buildings in a state of disrepair.

To neighborhood advocates, the neglect feels less like a symptom of the storm and more like a tactic to leverage municipal zoning concessions.

Weathering the Storm: A \$13.5 Million Win for Resilience

While the zoning wars rage, the St. Armands Residents Association has successfully pivoted local government focus toward unglamorous, critical infrastructure.

Following a highly coordinated lobbying effort by the Association, Sarasota County recently allocated \$13.5 million in Resilient SRQ federal disaster recovery grants to St. Armands. The funds will prioritize vital stormwater triage, including pump station upgrades, permeable pavement elements, and the installation of tidal check valves to prevent seawater from backing up into the streets.

To complement the stormwater overhauls, the city is moving aggressively to bury overhead utilities. Power and telecom lines have already been successfully buried on neighboring Bird Key and Longboat Key, proving their worth during the 2024 storms when those underground grids lost power for mere hours instead of weeks. Last October, the City Commission approved a feasibility study for undergrounding utilities on St. Armands, a multi-million dollar cost that property owners appear overwhelmingly willing to shoulder to ensure safety and aesthetic uniformity.

A Demand for ‘Complete Streets’ Parity

With property owners poised to foot the bill for undergrounding utilities, the residential community is demanding civic investment to beautify the existing public realm. St. Armands currently suffers from a fragmented aesthetic, with commercial tenants responsible for maintaining a hodgepodge of varying sidewalks and planters.

While the city recently secured millions in federal and local funds to advance a “Complete Streets” redesign for downtown Sarasota’s Main Street, a similar project for St. Armands was shelved three years ago.

For an island that generates massive tax revenue and serves as the postcard image of Sarasota to the world, residents argue that uniform brick pavers, curated landscaping, and world-class streetscapes are not a luxury—they are the cost of doing business.

As new private investments—like a highly anticipated Pinchers seafood location—begin flowing back into existing retail spaces without demanding height or density increases, the message from the community is clear: St. Armands is open for business, but its historic soul is not for sale.



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Town of Longboat Key ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS

The Longboat Key Town Commission will be accepting applications for appointments to the Charter Review Committee.

Article II, Section 20(b) of the Town Charter states: The Town Commission, at its discretion, shall appoint a Charter Review Committee to review the Charter but in no event shall such review be less than once in a ten (10) year period from the date of adoption of this Charter.

Members selected to serve on this Committee will be responsible for review of the Charter and will provide recommendations to the Town Commission on any proposed amendments. Individuals appointed to this Committee are subject to Florida’s Sunshine Law as provided for in Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, and Florida’s Public Records Law as provided for in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and **MUST be available for in-person meetings during the months of July and August 2026.**

All applications must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk **by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on June 15, 2026.** The Town Commission will host a Meet and Greet on June 22, 2026, to meet interested individuals and will make final appointments at the June 29, 2026, Town Commission Special Meeting.

Applications are available at the Office of the Town Clerk or can be downloaded from the Town’s website at www.longboatkey.org.

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 941-316-1999. Applications may be sent via e-mail to tclerk@longboatkey.org, submitted in person, or by mail to:

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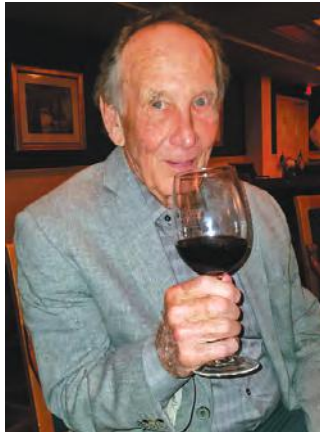
The Case of the Overcooked Snapper Francaise

Don't settle for ill-prepared food and drink. Diners deserve better. They can and should reject anything that fails to live up to the highest standards.

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

This article has two parts. The bad part happened at a restaurant in Sarasota Florida. We reserved a table for a holiday dinner.

We ordered starters from the regular menu. When we asked about sparkling wine, the server suggested Prosecco, not our favorite, and neglected to mention the Spumante on the menu. We ordered a Spumante with the starters, then a still wine with the entrees. Orders of entrees included a Snapper Francaise dish. When the dish arrived, the person who ordered it tasted the Snapper and made a face. The person called for the server and said that the dish had been overcooked and did not appear to be fresh. The server hesitated and returned the dish to the kitchen but quickly returned with it and told us that the chef had checked the dish and found it fresh and properly prepared.



Now it happened that the person who had ordered the Snapper Francaise had grown up in New Orleans and that person and others in the party had worked at four-star restaurants. They knew how Snapper Francaise should taste and, further, that a fine dining restaurant (one that charges over \$30 per entree on the menu) would not hesitate to accept the return of a dish that a diner did not find acceptable. Instead, the kitchen refused to replace or cancel the order. After settling a check for over \$100 per person, the dispute about the Snapper Francaise spilled over into the reception area.

The hostess at the reception desk began screaming at our party, other members of the restaurant staff came forward to confront us, and the chef came out of the kitchen brandishing an empty wine bottle and threatening harm. A man came from the back of the restaurant and began pushing us toward the front steps. He pushed a person in our party to the floor. We called the police as did the restaurant. The resulting melee left us bruised. The restaurant has banned us from returning to the restaurant. Not a chance of that happening unless one of us has a stroke and develops an uncontrollable urge for Snapper Francaise with a side of assault.

We won't name the restaurant since we don't pan a restaurant based on a single visit. We will say that their reviews on the web indicate infrequent but troubling conflicts with some customers. Not a good sign. We failed to check for that before making a reservation. Our search for a basis for comparison, another restaurant serving Snapper Francaise, led us to not one but two Sarasota Florida venues for

fresh finfish and shellfish. Kacey's Seafood and More on Lockwood Ridge and Kacey's Seafood on Fruitville Road offer friendly service and excellent food and drink at reasonable prices.

The starters include several tasty items: Chilled Ahi Tuna, sesame crusted and served over a seaweed salad (\$13) and Crab Cakes (\$15), not ideal but much better than the usual Florida attempts to match Chesapeake Bay standards. The Seafood Gumbo of shrimp and cod with Andouille sausage (\$7 cup) stretchg the range of gum-bos in that it lacks okra, and the Lobster Bisque (\$7 cup), light on the lobster meat, despite our quibbling prove tasty. The large Fried Shrimp and the Lobster Roll (\$29 but with the ominous MARKET PRICE note) have a devoted following. A longtime-member of the staff recalled that the Lockwood Ridge location where she worked was the original Lazy Lobster location before it opened on Long Boat Key. Owner Michael Garey, well regarded for his role in the Kiwanis Lawn Party on City Island, and his partners renamed the Lockwood Ridge location Kacey's Seafood and More.



It was under Kacey's Classic Entrees on the menu of the Fruitville Road location that we found the perfect foil to the overcooked Snapper Francaise. The Kacey's Snapper Francaise (\$29) presents a thick filet of meaty snapper dipped in egg batter and lightly seared in a sauce of white wine and lemon butter. The interior of the fish remains moist and succulent and redolent of salt air. The glaze of the sauce enlivens the flavor of this classic dish. Case closed.

Don't settle for ill-prepared food and drink. Diners deserve better. They can and should reject anything that fails to live up to the highest standards.

S. W. Hermansen has used his expertise in econometrics, data science and epidemiology to help develop research databases for the Pentagon, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture, and Health Resources and Services. He has visited premier vineyards and taste wines from major appellations in California, Oregon, New York State, and internationally from Tuscany and the Piedmont in Italy, the Ribera del Duero in Spain, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale in Australia, and the Otago Valley in New Zealand. Currently he splits time between residences in Chevy Chase, Maryland and St. Armand's Circle in Florida.

Rich Hermansen selected his first wine list for a restaurant shortly after graduating from college with a degree in Mathematics. He has extensive service and management experience in the food and wine industry. Family and friends rate him as their favorite chef, bartender, and wine steward. He lives in Severna Park, Maryland.

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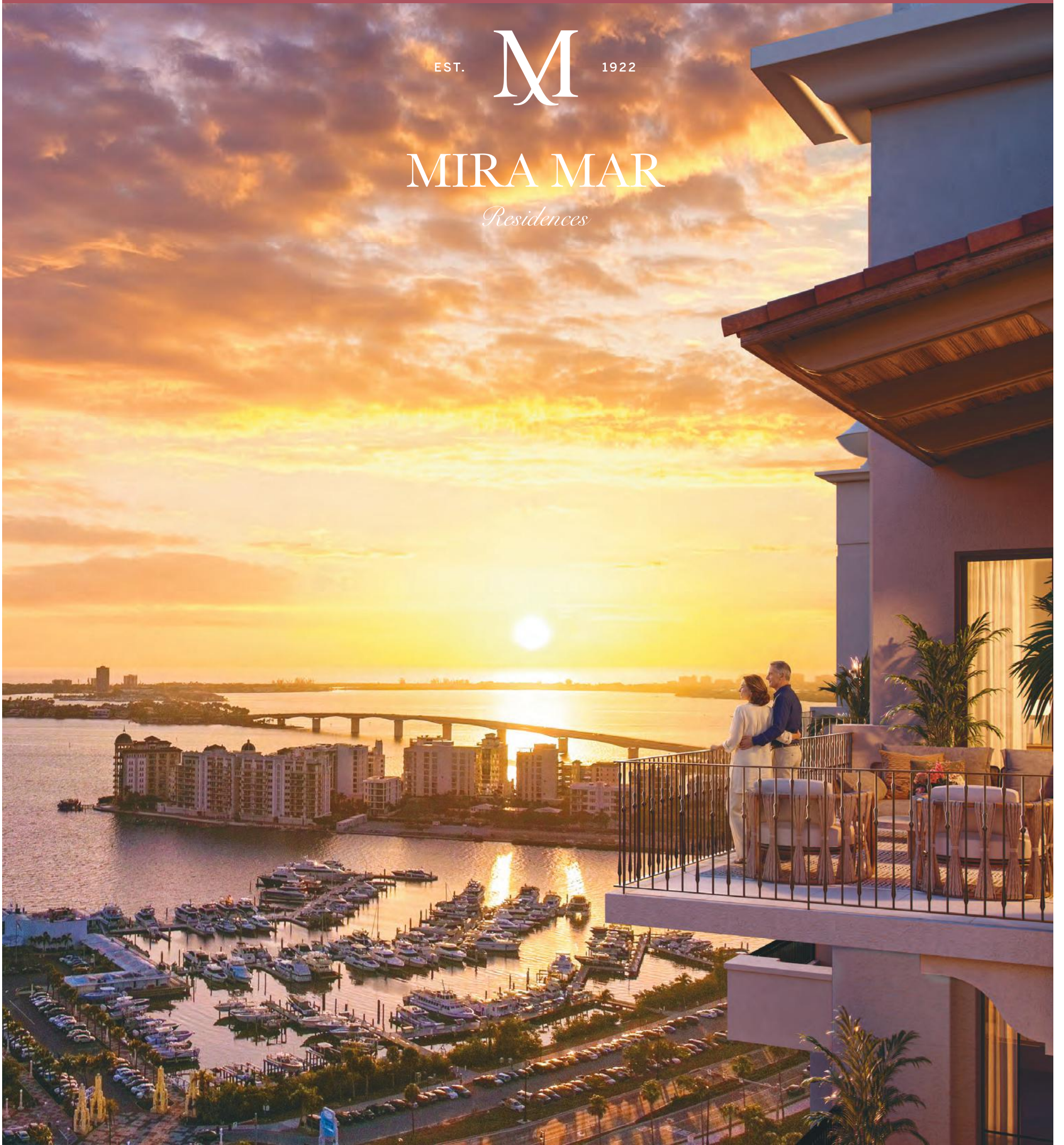
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