



Longboat Key News

February 20, 2026

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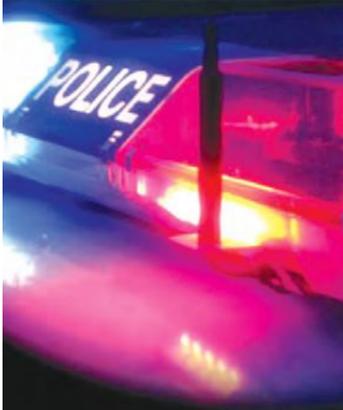
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State Pushes Mega-Bridges Forward as Longboat Loses Battle for ‘Modest’ Spans

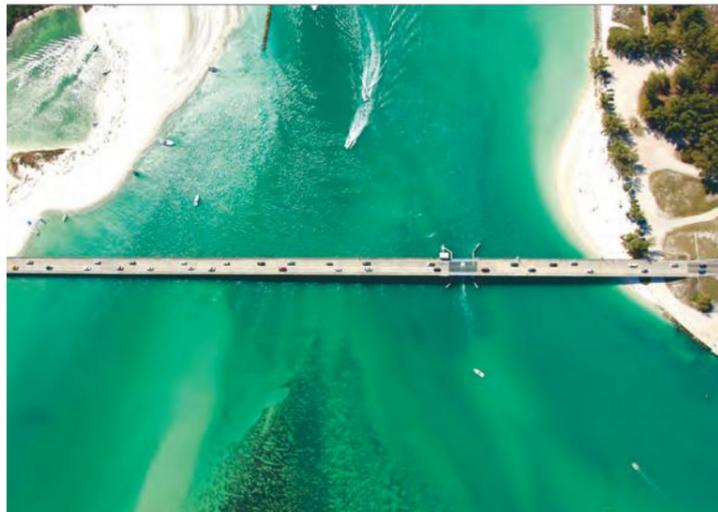
State budget math trumps community character.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The era of the quaint barrier island drawbridge is rapidly coming to an end, and local officials are finding out the hard way that state budget math trumps community character.

At a Longboat Key commission workshop last week, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) outlined its aggressive push to replace both the Cortez Bridge and the Longboat Pass Bridge with massive, high-clearance fixed spans.

While the state touts these projects as significant regional investments that will eliminate traffic bottlenecks, the updates served as a bitter pill for Longboat Key commissioners and north-end residents who spent the last year fighting—



and ultimately failing—to keep a mid-size drawbridge at Longboat Pass.

Here is where both massive infrastructure projects currently stand.

Cortez Bridge: The \$130 Million

Reality

The replacement of the functionally obsolete 1956 Cortez Bridge is no longer just a concept; it is weeks away from going out to bid.

See Bridge, page 3

Trojan Horse on Circle: How a ‘Visioning’ Session Could Pave Way for St. Armands Hotelization

To resident leaders and watchful locals, it looks more like a Trojan horse—a maneuver that could rewrite local zoning laws, spark widespread hotelization, and forever alter the region’s charm and traffic flow.



STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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A city-run “visioning session” scheduled for next Thursday is being billed as a community discussion on the post-hurricane future of St. Armands Circle. But to resident

leaders and watchful locals, it looks more like a Trojan horse—a maneuver that could rewrite local zoning laws, spark widespread hotelization, and forever alter the region’s charm and traffic flow.

The stakes for the barrier island

have rarely been higher. At the heart of the controversy is a high-profile push by developers, notably the team seeking to rebuild the Shore restaurant, to add density and controversial third-floor boutique hotel

See St. Armands, page 2

BreakPoints Why the Women’s Game is the Secret to Longevity on Longboat

The women’s matches showcase beautiful point construction, strategic placement, and the kind of high-IQ tennis that wins club championships without requiring an ice bath afterward.

STEVE REID
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Fifty-three years ago, the air in the Houston Astrodome was thick with cigar smoke and chauvinism as Billie Jean King was carried onto the court like a modern Cleopatra. Armed with a wooden racket and an iron will, her historic 1973 “Battle of the Sexes” victory over Bobby Riggs didn’t just change tennis; it altered the cultural landscape, validating women’s sports on a global stage.

Fast forward to December 2025 in Dubai, where the tennis world watched a sequel nobody really asked for: Nick Kyrgios versus Aryna Sabalenka. While the King-Riggs showdown moved society forward, the Kyrgios-Sabalenka exhibition felt like a gimmicky spectacle. Despite playing on a court shrunk by 9% and both being restricted to a single serve, Kyrgios—plagued by injuries and ranked outside the top 600 at the time—breezed past the WTA World No. 1, 6-3, 6-3.

The match bluntly highlighted what anyone who regularly steps onto the immaculate Har-Tru clay at the Longboat Key Club or the Public Tennis Center on Bay Isles Road already knows: the biomechanical differences between men and women dictate entirely different styles of play.

But here on the Key, where the average age is a vibrant, active 68, those differences take on a fascinating new dimension. As sheer, masculine strength begins to wane, the women’s game actually becomes the ultimate blueprint for longevity and club-level dominance.

Physicality and Strength: Power’s Expiration Date

At the professional level, the biological gap is undeniable. Men possess a significant advantage in muscle mass, bone density, and fast-

See Tennis, page 4

St. Armands, from page 1

units or short-term rentals to the Circle.

Because of the nature of municipal zoning, a concession made to revitalize one commercial property would legally apply to the rest. If the city yields to developers on density or height, the doors will be flung open for massive commercial buildup across the entire historic district.

“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?” asked Chris Goglia, President of the St. Armands Residents Association. “Once zoning changes are made for this one property, they then apply to all properties. Is that what the community wants for the future of St. Armands?”

A Highly Restricted “Public” Meeting

Despite the massive regional implications, critics are pointing out a glaring irony: while the City claims it wants community input, Thursday’s meeting is far from an open-door town hall.

The session will be held at a venue with limited capacity and requires an RSVP through an Eventbrite link, a setup critics have likened to registering for a wedding. With pro-development stakeholders highly motivated and well-aware of the event, there are mounting fears that developers will pack the room, potentially leaving passionate residents locked out of the very meeting designed to dictate the future of their own neighborhoods.

The FEMA Factor and a History of Pushback

The current push for density is deeply tied to the devastating 2024 hurricane season. Developers of the proposed “Shore flagship” at 24 and 28 N. Boulevard of the Presidents are facing strict FEMA “50% Rule” guidelines, which require extensively damaged buildings to be elevated to modern flood codes. Faced with those exorbitant costs, developers are looking to expand upward to make their investments pencil out.

However, this is not the first time development interests have tried to reshape the Circle. In 2021 and 2022, an effort to authorize hotel use and increase commercial height limits was unanimously rejected by the City Commission. A separate plan to build a hotel on the Fillmore Parking Lot also collapsed.

Residents argue that what developers couldn’t achieve through direct proposals in the past is now being repackaged under the guise of post-storm “visioning” and resilience planning. Goglia and others emphasize that adding high-density commercial spaces and hotels to a bar-

rier island with already-strained evacuation routes and notorious traffic congestion is a recipe for disaster.

What is at Stake?

The outcome of this process will fundamentally determine the future of St. Armands. If the visioning sessions are allowed to quietly endorse increased density without a massive showing of community opposition, the charm, traffic, and scale of the region will be permanently transformed.

Anyone who cares about overdevelopment, traffic congestion, and the preservation of St. Armands Circle is being urged by resident advocates to secure a seat, attend, and make their voices heard.

Meeting Details:

- **What:** St. Armands Visioning Workshop (First of two sessions)
- **When:** Thursday, February 26, from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- **Where:** Mote Marine Keating Marine Education Center (the elevated building on City Island) 1599 Ken Thompson Pkwy, Sarasota, FL
- **Parking:** Limited parking under the building; additional parking near the Save Our Seabirds/Mote Marine lot.
- **Registration:** Due to limited seating, registration is strictly required. Residents can secure a ticket via Eventbrite using this Direct Link. Alternatively, those wishing to attend can also go to Eventbrite.com and put the words “St. Armands Visioning Workshop” in the search bar.
- **Make Your Voice Heard:** If the event fills up and registration is not available, or if you are unable to attend and wish to make sure your opinion is heard, it is recommended to email Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice at: debbie.trice@sarasotafll.gov

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Bridge, from page 1

FDOT has invested \$6.7 million in engineering and design since late 2019 to replace the aging bascule drawbridge with a towering fixed-span structure built immediately adjacent to the current bridge.

FDOT Project Manager Amy Blair provided the latest timeline and figures for the Cortez project:

- Bidding: Project advertising is in progress, with bid openings scheduled for late March 2026.
- Construction Start: Targeted for September 2026.
- Timeline: The build will take 1,200 days (three years and four months), with a tentative completion date of late 2029 to early 2030.
- Total Cost: An estimated \$129.9 million.

The state insists the fixed span will create a “free-flow condition,” drastically improving vehicular movement in and out of peak season by removing the frequent, lengthy drawbridge openings that currently paralyze State Road 684.

Longboat Pass: A Lost Battle for Community Character

While the Cortez Bridge is fully funded and ready to break ground, the Longboat Pass Bridge (connecting the north end of Longboat Key to Coquina Beach) is wrapping up its \$2.125 million Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study.

For the past year, Longboat Key leaders and residents fought fiercely against FDOT’s proposed 78-foot-high fixed bridge. The town formally recommended a 36-foot mid-level bascule (drawbridge) instead, arguing it would minimize openings while maintaining the island’s low-profile aesthetic.

However, FDOT ultimately cited massive cost disparities, cementing the 78-foot high-span as its preferred alternative. The state’s estimated cost breakdown revealed a gap too large for local sentiment to overcome:

- High-Span Fixed Bridge: \$138 million (FDOT’s Preference)
- Low-Level Bascule Options: \$176 million to \$185 million
- Mid-Level Bascule Options: \$184 million to \$194 million

Choosing a drawbridge would have cost the state an additional \$38 million to \$56 million upfront, not factoring in the long-term expenses of maintenance and bridge tenders.

Resident Backlash and Ignored Pleas

The decision is a significant blow to the commission and residents of the Northgate condominium complex. Because the new Longboat Pass bridge will be built directly west of the existing 1957 structure, the massive 78-foot span will creep within 36.5 feet of Northgate—a sharp decrease from the current 95-foot buffer.

In a letter sent to FDOT District 1 Secretary Lakshmikanth Nandam last summer, Mayor Ken Schneier explicitly laid out why the high span was the wrong choice. Schneier noted that forcing a 78-foot elevation over a mere 0.15-mile distance creates a slope steeper than the John Ringling Causeway

The Steep Reality of a 78-Foot Bridge on a 792-Foot Footprint

When Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier warned the Florida Department of Transportation that a 78-foot-high fixed-span bridge over Longboat Pass would present a “significant challenge,” he wasn’t just talking about the visual impact on the town’s skyline. He was talking about basic geometry—and the toll it will take on anyone not driving a car.

The core of the town’s safety argument lies in the bridge’s proposed grade. To understand why local officials are sounding the alarm for pedestrians and cyclists, you have to look at the sheer math of the incline.

Here is how the proposed Longboat Pass fixed-span stacks up against the iconic John Ringling Causeway:

Feature	Proposed Longboat Pass Bridge	John Ringling Causeway
Clearance Height	78 feet	65 feet
Total Bridge Length	792 feet (0.15 miles)	3,097 feet
The Incline Profile	Abrupt and steep	Gradual and sweeping

Because the Longboat Pass spans a relatively narrow waterway, the new bridge has less than 800 feet of total runway to achieve an elevation 13 feet higher than the Ringling Causeway. Ringling, by contrast, has over half a mile of length to gradually distribute its 65-foot climb.

The Human Impact on Multimodal Travel

FDOT consistently touts “multimodal improvements” as a primary benefit of these massive bridge replacements, but squeezing a 78-foot peak into a 0.15-mile span creates distinct localized hazards:

- The Cyclist’s Climb and Descent: For casual riders, scaling a grade this steep requires immense physical exertion. Conversely, the descent creates a steep, high-speed downhill slope, raising serious safety concerns for cyclists trying to maintain control alongside vehicular traffic.
- Pedestrian Exhaustion: Walking the bridge will transition from a casual, scenic stroll to a grueling uphill hike. For Longboat Key’s older demographic, this incline could easily become a barrier to foot traffic entirely.
- Accessibility Hurdles: A severe slope challenges the limits of ADA compliance, making wheelchair navigation or mobility-assisted travel across the pass incredibly difficult, if not impossible, without a vehicle.

While the state’s \$138 million preferred option saves money by eliminating drawbridge mechanics and bridge tenders, local critics argue those savings are coming at the direct expense of the community’s cyclists, walkers, and the very multimodal connectivity FDOT claims to champion.

(which is 65 feet high but stretched over 3,097 feet). He warned the incline would be a significant challenge and safety hazard for pedestrians and cyclists.

“A 78-foot-high fixed span would be inconsistent with the character of Longboat Key,” Schneier wrote at the time. “One of the area’s few remaining residential communities immune to high rises and hotel houses, Longboat has always been connected to its neighbors to the north and south by modest drawbridges over relatively narrow passes.”

Despite the town’s pleas to reduce the bridge’s width and stick to the mid-level drawbridge, the state is moving forward with the most cost-effective, high-span option.

What Happens Next?

While construction for the Longboat Pass Bridge currently remains unfunded, the finalized PD&E and alternative analysis results will be presented to the public next month.

FDOT will hold final public meetings on March 12 (in-person) and March 17 (virtual). Town officials are urging residents and business owners to attend, though the town’s focus will likely now shift from stopping the high-span bridge to mitigating its impact on local property owners as the design phase begins.

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Tennis, from page 1

fast-twitch muscle fibers.

- **The Serve:** ATP players routinely launch first serves over 130 mph. WTA powerhouses like Sabalenka typically max out around 115 to 120 mph.
- **Topspin and RPMs:** Men generate violent racket head speed, creating heavy topspin that makes the ball kick aggressively and unpredictably off the court.
- **Movement:** ATP pros rely on explosive lateral quickness to retrieve balls that would be clean winners on the women's tour.

Yet, as we age, Father Time becomes the great equalizer. The explosive fast-twitch muscles that once fueled a booming flat serve inevitably quiet down. Shoulders get cranky; knees demand respect. For the men on Longboat Key, relying on brute force eventually leads to unforced errors and physical burnout. When that masculine strength diminishes, the finesse, consistency, and early ball-striking typical of the women's tour become incredible, enduring assets.

Play Style: Heavy Artillery vs. Masterful Precision

Because of these physical realities, the tactical approaches on the pro tours diverge, a dynamic that trickles all the way down to our local courts.

- **The Men's Game:** Built heavily around the "serve-plus-one." Men use massive serves to elicit weak returns, dictating the point with heavy, spin-loaded forehands.
- **The Women's Game:** Without the extreme topspin to pull the ball down into the court, WTA players hit flatter. They rely on precision, depth, and taking the ball early to rob their opponents of time. Sabalenka's baseline dominance is a masterclass in aggressive, flat ball-striking and geometry.

If you wander down to the Longboat Key Public Tennis Center for the morning round robins, you see this play out in real-time. The guys often stubbornly try to recreate the baseline slugfests of their thirties, going for broke and ending points quickly with a forced error. Meanwhile, the women's matches showcase beautiful point construction, strategic placement, and the kind of high-IQ tennis that wins club championships without requiring an ice bath afterward.

Endurance: Sprints, Marathons, and Florida Sun

At Grand Slams, men play best-of-five sets—brutal marathons requiring extreme pacing and the ability to weather physical valleys. Women play best-of-three, turning matches into high-intensity sprints where every single game holds immediate urgency.

At the club level, everyone plays best-of-three. But let's be honest: surviving a 10:30 AM match in late April at the \$4.5 million Tennis Gardens isn't just about cardiovascular capacity; it's about heat management. Here, endurance levels out entirely. Matches are decided by who has the stamina to outlast the other, and very often, the strategic pacing and efficient movement inherent to the women's game preserve energy far better than macho baseline sprinting.

The Mental Game: A Level Playing Field

If there is one area where the gender gap completely vanishes, it is between the ears. The mental fortitude required to close out a Grand Slam or a heated 3:30 PM mixed doubles match knows no gender.

Billie Jean King needed unparalleled mental strength to carry the weight of a social movement in 1973. Sabalenka rebuilt her historically erratic serve into a weapon through sheer psychological resilience. The ability to compartmentalize errors, breathe through anxiety, and adjust tactics under stress is a purely human trait that defines the best players at both the professional and recreational levels.

Embracing the Blueprint

The recent Dubai exhibition proved that pitting an ATP player against a WTA player is a futile exercise in physics. They are two distinct, beautiful variations of the sport.

But for the smart, educated crowd gracing the courts of Longboat Key, there is a profound lesson in the women's game. As the raw power of youth fades, adopting the WTA's reliance on precision, court geometry, and unshakeable consistency isn't just an option—it is the absolute secret to dominating your age group for decades to come.

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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.

Editorial Opinion

To: Editor

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Well said - especially in the seemingly Republican enclave in which we live. The subject of your Editorial Opinion is an absolute disgrace to her position, profession and gender. Thank you for speaking out. I know you'll probably be receiving emails to the contrary opinion but rest assured, you are not alone in your opinion of this shill. She joins our legislative representation in her total disregard for the Constitution, empathy toward the victims, and the truth. The day will come when the orange man will be out of office and hopefully, there will be an accounting for her shameful and contemptible leadership of the DOJ.

Irene Schaller
Longboat Key

Touche'

To: Editor

Your editorial on Pam Bondi and this admin is spot on unfortunately, for all Americans.

Gail Gilvey
Sarasota

The Implosion of Florida's Star

To: Editor

I so appreciate you putting it out there so directly and unvarnished. I am sure you will receive a raft of hate mail, or worse. But if people like you who are in a position to speak out publicly against Trump, his sycophant cabinet and mindless MAGA followers don't speak up now, loudly and often, then I fear that our nation is headed into the dustbin of history. The damage is already so severe that it may not be reversible; but at least you, me and millions of other ethical citizens are trying.

Chase Curtis
Sarasota

Editorial

To: Editor

Wow your hatred for our president is truly shameful. I read your article couple of times and just don't get it. Cost to constitution, humanity?? Trumps policies deregulation, energy independence, American strength overseas, end to the trillions wasted on "green energy initiatives" strengthening our military, and many others that make America stronger and economically better off. Your personal hatred clouds everything you see. He has more female leadership in top positions than previous administrations but you hate them when they are republicans. Chief of staff, Bondi, Noam, etc. Biden's press secretary got up there and blatantly lied day after day and the liberal press never called her out. 'Border secure' come on? You may not like him but he certainly loves his country and is doing everything he can to promote America dominance Militarily, economically, and leadership. Understood he may not be easy to like but I prefer a winning general leading me in battle. Also wondering how you are able to sell ads when a majority of us support our president.

Thomas Brown
Longboat Key

Pam Bondi Editorial

To: Editor

Thank you for your editorial this week regarding Pam Bondi's implosion. You touched on many of my own sentiments after watching her performance last week in front of congress. She did herself and her reputation as a prosecutor a great disservice. She demonstrated zero respect to the members of Congress but more importantly to the women victims.

Democrats, Republicans, Independents and all other parties should be appalled by how the Justice Department has put the protection of the wealthy associates of Jeffrey Epstein ahead of the interests of the women who are looking for accountability and justice. It is time for our elected representatives in Florida to speak out in support of the women. Silence is not acceptable.

Douglas Rohn
Longboat Key

Pam Bondi

To: Editor

At a time when the rule of law has been sacrificed for blind loyalty and obedience to a crude, immoral dictator- loving madman, Pam Bondi has abrogated her duties as a lawyer and as a purported "public servant." Your editorial opinion piece in the Feb. 13 issue couldn't have been more appropriate at this crucial time in the chaotic situation in which we find ourselves.

Thank you for your views.
Stuart Sinai
Longboat Key

Fish Wrap

To: Editor

Reading your article on Pam Biondi was despicable and you should be ashamed of yourself. It is amazing that your far left, liberal democrat slanted piece of garbage newspaper is still printing. Pam's contributions under Trump trying to monitor media scum polluting our society any further is exceptional. Standing up for MAGA makes you people who have TDS. Trump Deranged Syndrome) crazy. Please get some help.

Using your paper as fish wrap is an insult to the fish.
Robert Weingartner
Longboat Key

Longboat Key Tunnel

To: Editor

Put a tunnel from Longboat Key to the southern end of Sarasota, and Longboat Key could collect tolls. Elon Musk has a tunnel machine.

Michael Abene
Longboat Key

Country Club Shores Water System Information

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

On behalf of a constituent, you had asked about the history, project next steps, and point of contact regarding the watermain systems of Country Club Shores southern phases. Below and attached are brief historical notes, project next steps, and contact information for the Town Public Works Utility Manager, Jessie Camburn, who put this together. Please feel free to forward this along, and Public Works can answer any follow up question she may have.

Country Club Shores past to present...

Country Club Shores starts back in the early 1960s when the community was just beginning to take shape. A private developer saw the potential of this new neighborhood and recognized the importance of having a dedicated water supply. This led to the creation of a private utility that would serve the community for decades.

Back then, the water infrastructure was built using the
See Letters, page 6

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

best materials available. The network was mainly made up of asbestos-cement pipes, along with some Ductile Iron and PVC pipes, all ranging from 3 to 10 inches in diameter. While these materials did the job initially, they weren't designed to last forever, and over the years, the pipes began to show their age—becoming brittle, cracking, and sometimes breaking. These issues increased maintenance needs and raised concerns about service reliability and safety.

In 1963, the water system officially transferred into the hands of the Longboat Utility Company, Inc. (LUC). Though privately owned, the utility operated under the close oversight of the Town of Longboat Key. Over time, the community grew, and the utility expanded its services to include wastewater collection, initially serving a handful of developments.

But as the community expanded further into the late 1960s and early 1970s, it became clear that relying on a private utility wasn't sustainable in the long run. The aging asbestos-cement pipes, which had been installed decades earlier, were showing signs of deterioration. The capacity of existing facilities was becoming insufficient, and the community needed a plan for the future.

In 1970, the Town took a major step. It commissioned a detailed appraisal of LUC's assets and financial health to understand what they were working with and to determine a fair purchase price. This appraisal revealed some troubling facts: much of the infrastructure was aging and at risk, with the asbestos-cement pipes being a particular concern due to safety and liability issues. The water plant and wastewater plant were valued at just over \$200,000 each, but it was clear that substantial upgrades were needed to keep up with community growth.

Over the next decades, the Town worked steadily to improve and expand the system, aiming to move toward a more sustainable, publicly managed utility. Fast forwarding to recent years, in 2023, the Town applied for state funding to help replace more of the aging pipes. Unfortunately, the funding request wasn't approved, which meant the Town needed to get creative and plan carefully.

By 2024-2025, the community had made impressive progress. The first two phases of the pipe replacement project covering Country Club Shores neighborhood phases 4 & 5 were completed, focusing on the most critical parts of the aging infrastructure. These initial efforts addressed the most fragile asbestos-cement pipes, which had become prone to leaks and breaks. Now, construction coordination and procurement is underway on Project Phases 3 and 4 covering Country Club Shores neighborhood phases 1, 2, & 3 — a process expected to be finished by the end of 2026—that will ultimately replace the entire old system across the remaining phases of the subdivision.

Another key part of this effort involves using modern techniques like pipe bursting, a trenchless method that causes less disruption and takes less time than traditional digging. Murphy Pipeline Contractors, a specialist in this technology, has submitted a detailed estimate to replace around 8,100 feet of 6-inch water mains across ten streets. The plan also proposes using HDPE pipes—which are extremely durable, resist corrosion, and can bend to conform to the land—making the system more reliable and storm-resilient.

Additionally, the project is considering upsizing the water mains. This means installing larger pipes to increase water pressure and flow, which will improve firefighting capabilities, support future growth, and make the system more energy-efficient by reducing friction.

Thanks to these ongoing upgrades, the community of Country Club Shores is on a path toward a safer, more dependable water system.

Jessie Camburn
Utilities Manager Public Works
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores Water System Information

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager

Isaac, thank you for that progressive detailed report, movement in the right direction is obviously mission one and one of which we are accomplishing. I think with a lot of these projects people think what about me and what happened in the last five years, and what will happen in the next 5 years, when really it's about what happened in the past 50 years and what will happen in the next 50 years. Thank you all for thinking ahead and moving us in the right direction.

Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Transparency and good governance considerations regarding the canal project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Thanks for your prompt reply. I respect commissioners privacy and am not requesting their actual address. I am merely stating that the commissioners can affirmatively declare whether they have a property interest in a canal property.

Tim McDonald
Longboat Key

Transparency and good governance considerations regarding the canal project

To: Tim McDonald

We are unable to disclose the Commissioners addresses per Florida Statute, but I have forwarded your concern to the Town Clerks office for documentation purposes.

Jamie Thomas
Financial Analyst, Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 11

MEMBERSHIP: *Come Test the Waters.*

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KeyRealEstate

Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath	Days On Market	Sale Price
148 N POLK	3,115	\$3,299,000	3 3 0	338	\$2,850,000
1810 LINCOLN DR	3,743	\$2,448,000	4 4 1	98	\$2,400,000
1716 9TH ST	3,780	\$2,150,000	4 5 0	157	\$2,100,000
1800 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#A1003	1,350	\$1,500,000	2 2 0	49	\$1,433,000
1255 N GULFSTREAM AVE Unit#1104	1,822	\$1,499,999	2 2 0	189	\$1,100,000
1255 N GULFSTREAM AVE Unit#402	2,064	\$1,499,000	3 3 0	250	\$1,420,000
554 S POLK DR	1,422	\$1,495,000	3 2 0	26	\$1,345,000
1 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#116	1,389	\$1,490,000	2 1 1	66	\$1,400,000
100 CENTRAL AVE Unit#5	1,707	\$1,300,000	2 2 1	0	\$1,300,000
988 BLVD OF THE ARTS Unit#414	1,729	\$1,295,000	2 2 0	89	\$1,170,000
1800 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#B208	1,023	\$900,000	1 1 1	328	\$850,000
1990 MAIN ST Unit#10	1,573	\$650,000	2 2 0	264	\$632,000
750 N TAMIAMI TRL Unit#1018	1,055	\$395,000	2 2 0	2	\$396,000
750 N TAMIAMI TRL Unit#208	1,045	\$299,900	1 1 0	268	\$260,000
4765 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#B202	3,368	\$5,895,000	3 3 1	233	\$5,300,000
1701 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#109	1,551	\$1,585,000	2 2 0	112	\$1,500,000
3540 BAYOU CIR	2,758	\$1,575,000	3 3 0	13	\$1,350,000
513 BAYPORT WAY Unit#513	2,186	\$1,400,000	2 2 0	8	\$1,400,000
2110 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#558	2,550	\$1,195,000	2 2 1	11	\$1,100,000
2721 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#408	884	\$950,000	2 2 0	65	\$900,000
2075 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#T1-108	1,690	\$749,000	3 2 1	179	\$735,000
723 BAYPORT WAY Unit#723	1,486	\$685,000	2 2 0	6	\$675,000
755 SAINT JUDES DR N	1,294	\$625,000	2 1 1	141	\$575,000
5055 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#411	1,484	\$499,000	2 2 0	4	\$490,000
3810 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#F105	698	\$336,000	1 1 0	94	\$321,000



**JEFF
RHINELANDER**

941-685-3590

Jeff@jeffrhineland.com



**COURTNEY
TARANTINO**

941-893-7203

courtney.tarantino@floridamoves.com



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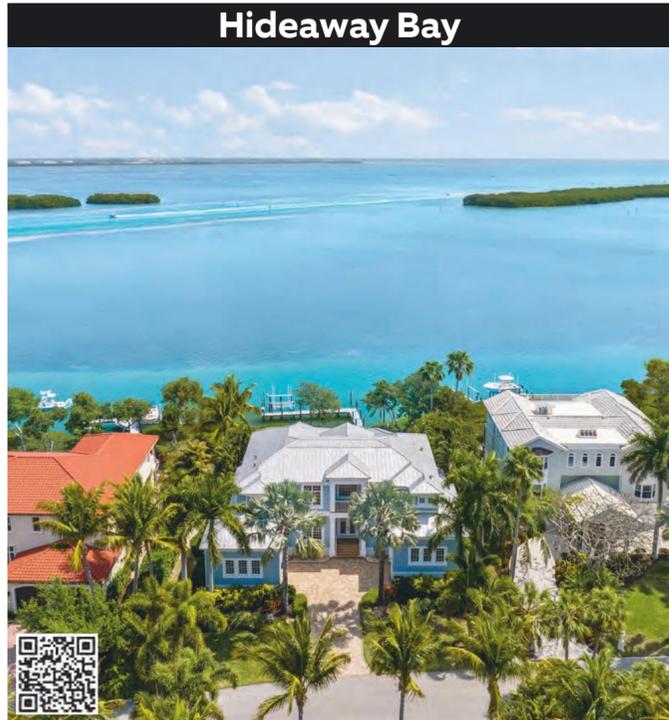
Leah George
941-780-0597



Judy Kepez-Hays
941-587-1700



Steven Kepez
941-376-6411



Hideaway Bay

757 Hideaway Bay Drive
\$7,488,000
757HideawayBay.com



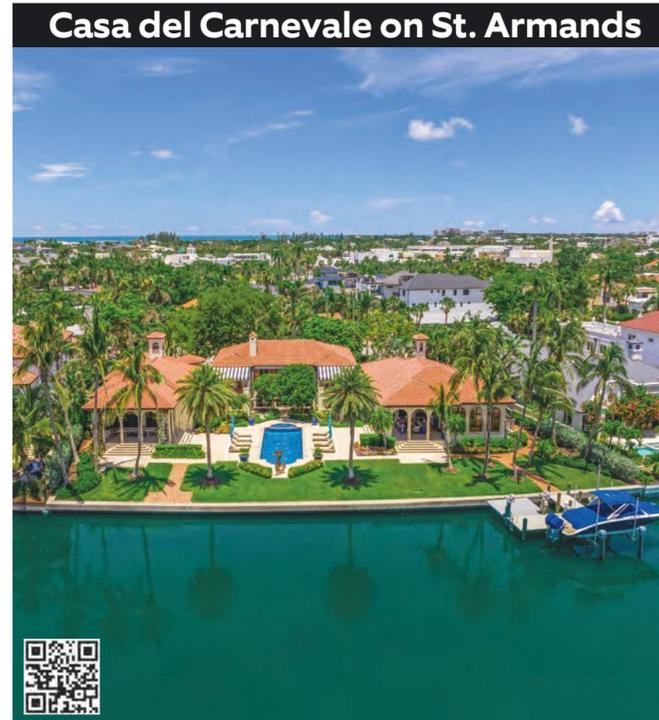
Longboat Key Towers

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\$1,299,000 | Furnished
LBKTowers402N.com



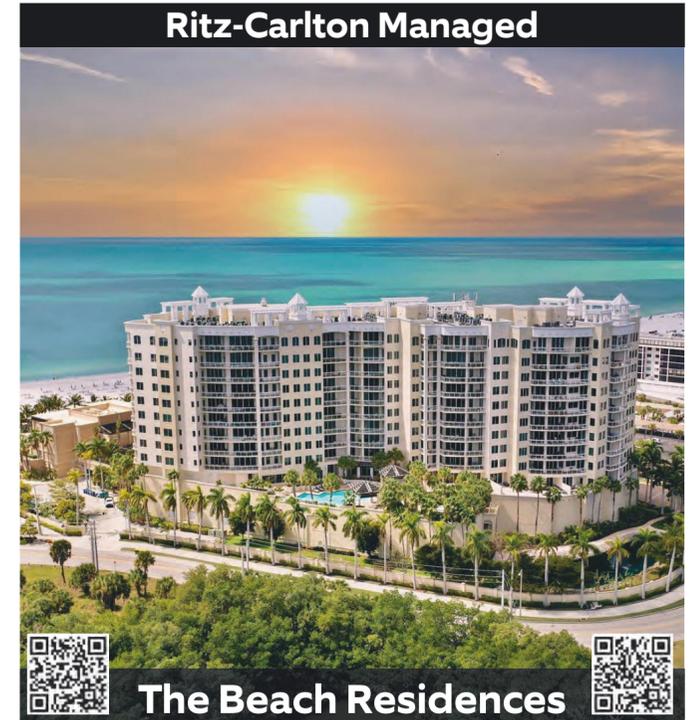
Islander Club

2301 Gulf of Mexico Drive #11N & #12N
\$2,488,000
IslanderClub11N-12N.com



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Sanctuary

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SanctuaryB506.com



Privateer

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\$974,500
Privateer403.com



Golden Gate Point

660 Golden Gate Point #32
\$799,000
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.

Civil

8:00 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a disturbance involving a guest payment dispute. Upon arrival, Officer Pescuma made contact with the hotel management who advised that a registered guest and rented a room for the duration of his stay. Management stated that during the stay, the man invited a friend who was not a registered guest of the hotel. According to management, the man mistakenly entered and utilized an adjoining room which was connected internally to the originally rented room. Management advised that the man remained in the adjoining room overnight but was not listed on the reservation and did not complete any registration paperwork. Hotel staff stated that upon checkout, staff approached the man but he left the premises in a 2022 gray Honda Civic without making payment arrangements for the adjoining room. Management initially believed this to be a potential theft of lodging incident. Officer Pescuma made contact with the man's friend in the lobby, and he said that the man believed the adjoining room was included as part of the original rental and did not intentionally occupy a separate room without authorization. He stated there was no intent to defraud the hotel and the use of the adjoining room was accidental due to confusion regarding the room configuration. During the investigation it was determined that the friend ultimately paid the outstanding balance for the adjoining room on behalf of the original guest. The guest then reimbursed the friend for the full amount owed which was \$730. Hotel management confirmed that the balance had been paid in full and no financial loss was sustained by the business. Management declined to pursue criminal charges and advised they considered the matter resolved. Based on the information obtained, this incident appears to be a civil dispute resulting from a misunderstanding regarding room occupancy and payment responsibility. No further action. Case clear.



Citizen assist

12:56 p.m.

Officer Mathis was dispatched to 4400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a citizen assist. The complainant had contacted the police in reference to realtor signs on the right-of-way. Upon his arrival, Officer Mathis canvassed the area and observed several realtor signs near the front office in a pile. Officer Mathis contacted multiple realtors and advised of the town ordinance and the location of the signs that had been removed from the right-of-way. Case clear.

Feb. 16

Citizen assist

10:55 a.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the area of Gulf of Mexico Drive and Longboat Club Road on a call of a suspicious person who was hitch hiking. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson made contact with the man as he walked southbound along Gulf of Mexico Drive in the bike lane in front of the Mobil gas station. The man stated he has a condominium but did not have a vehicle. The man said he left his cell phone at a deli in downtown Sarasota and was walking there. The man said he was hoping the trolley would come by or someone would pick him up and so he did not have to walk the six miles. Officer Martinson contacted Sgt. Puccio and he granted permission to transport the man to the deli. Officer Martinson aired both his starting and ending miles to dispatch over the radio and recorded the transport on Officer Martinson's starting and ending miles to dispatch over the radio and recorded the transport. Case clear.

Feb. 17

Citizen assist

12:21 p.m.

Officer Puccio while on patrol in the 4000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive was talking to a citizen who was parked next to the town electric car charging station and stated that the vehicle was parked, using the hargr for over the two hour limit and he had unplugged it so he could charge his vehicle. At that time, the owner of the Porsche who was playing pickleball asked if her car had been unplugged and stated she had been there since 10:45 a.m. and not over two hours. She proceeded over to the vehicle with her car keys as the owner of the other vehicle reconnected the charger back into the Porsche without incident. All parties went back to doing what they were doing and required no further assistance from the police. Case clear.

Resident assist

4:14 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 4200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a verbal disturbance. While on patrol in the area, Officer Mathis advised via radio that a woman had waved him down requesting assistance. Upon arrival, Officer Pescuma made contact with the complainant who said she needed assistance having a man help her exit her Jeep. She advised that the man had been helping her with her business and that the two became involved in a verbal argument. She said the argument escalated verbally but did not become physical. The woman further claimed the man had a 'No Contact Order' involving her, however she mentioned that she is trying to help the man out and he helps her with her business. She was unable to provide documentation of the alleged order at the time of the incident. A FCIC/NCIC check was conducted on both parties, which yielded negative results for any active injunctions, warrants, or no-contact orders. Officer Mathis made contact with the man. He stated he had been assisting the woman with business-related matters when they began arguing. He denied any physical altercation and advised he was willing to leave the area to prevent further issues. Both parties were advised that no active court order was found and that the incident appeared to be a civil dispute involving a verbal disagreement. Neither party alleged any physical violence, threats or criminal conduct. No signs of battery or injury were observed on either individual. The man exited the vehicle upon request. Both parties were separated and advised to cease contact for the remainder of the day to prevent further escalation. Both complied. Both parties departed the area separately without incident. Case clear.

Feb. 15

Dog

11:00 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 1100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a dog on the beach. The caller did not wish to meet and said that a woman was walking a small black and white dog on the beach and was last seen headed northbound. Upon arrival, Officer Pescuma located the woman who stated that the dog is a service dog and is properly documented and is marked visually as a service dog. Case clear.

Boat

2:00 p.m.

Officer Tillman was dispatched to General Harris Street for a submerged boat. According to dispatch, the vessel had recently taken on water and is now fully submerged. The complainant advised that the residence has been unoccupied since last year's hurricane. Officer Tillman arrived along with the Fire Department who assisted in case of possible fuel spillage. Officer observed the vessel to be fully submerged and tied off to a dilapidated boat dock. The vessel appeared to be an approximate 25-foot mullet boat with no Florida numbers showing due to being submerged. There did not appear to be a fuel leak and they would contact Public Works and advise them of the situation. Officer Tillman was advised by Sgt. Puccio that Officer Pescuma had been made aware of the situation. Officer Tillman was advised by Sgt. Puccio that Marine Officer Pescuma had been made aware of the situation. Case clear.

Feb. 18

Citizen assist

4:02 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to North Shore Road in reference to an alleged theft of trash cans. Upon arrival, Officer Pescuma met with the homeowner who stated that he believed his two Manatee County Waste Management trash cans were stolen on an unknown date/time. The homeowner stated he just got back into town and they were not in the same area he left them. Officer Pescuma conducted a canvass of the area and located the trash cans on the back side of the residence. The homeowner stated he did have friends staying at the residence and they could have placed them on opposite side of the home. No theft occurred. Case clear.

Feb. 19

Vehicle

2:41 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Bay Isles Parkway in reference to a suspicious vehicle. The caller who did not wish to meet said that she observed a gray Lexus with no tag and windows down with a dog inside parked for approximately 5 minutes. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma observed a vehicle that fits that description. The registered owner was in the driver seat. This officer made contact with the driver and he said that he drives for Instacart and had to run into Publix. Officer Pescuma inquired about the tag and he stated that he had to replace a magnet that hold the tag on the back of the trunk. Officer Pescuma ran a check through FCIC/NCIC yielding negative results. Case clear.

Welfare check

3:18 p.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to the 3700 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a welfare check. The complainant called and said she hadn't heard from her father for approximately two weeks, and a welfare check was requested. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke met with the father and he advised that his daughter hadn't called him. Additionally, his cell phone was in his vehicle. He appeared healthy and hygienic. Officer Van Dyke then called the daughter with the results, case clear.



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Editorial Opinion

A Bridge Too Far, A Span Too High: FDOT's Towering Disregard for Longboat Key

Although you may believe you're in the modern era, that is just a fantasy. In 2,000 years, they'll look back at these towering concrete monuments to bureaucratic budget math and they'll say, "Wow, how could those government leaders span one of the most beautiful island waterways in the world with a concrete ode to the ordinary?"

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

It was really the classical Greeks who started philosophical paradoxes. You could go all the way back to Heraclitus, but let's look at things like the myth of Sisyphus—everyone knows about pushing the boulder up the hill only for it to forever roll back down. Or what about Tantalus? His punishment was to be forever thirsty and hungry, with the fruit always just out of reach as a penalty for his extreme hubris. Or what about Prometheus, the bringer of fire, which can be extrapolated to technology—one could even say modern-day AI. For gifting us the ultimate tool, Zeus chained him to a mountain where an eagle would tear out and eat his liver every single day. Because he was immortal, the liver regenerated nightly, subjecting him to an endless loop of daily torture.

What is the paradox or perhaps punishment in dealing with the FDOT for the Town of Longboat Key?

Is the state agency the immovable object, the immutable government entity where you ask for something innovative, creative, or nuanced, and you get something you absolutely did not wish for, but that technically resembles a solution? As the front page of today's paper spells out, state budget math has officially trumped community character, and we are stuck in our own eternal cycle of bureaucratic punishment.

The "Bricklayer Hands" Approach to Longboat Key

We wanted targeted crosswalks in specific locations on Longboat, and we got these HAWK crossing systems that initially were dangerous and disorienting. We asked for a turn lane in Country Club Shores, and we ended up putting hardened medians in the middle of the road and taking away 15 feet of golf course and green space that forever added to the beauty of the island and its great entrance. One cannot imagine how you take 15 feet times almost a linear mile—it's a lot of land, and it's a lot of green.

And although the club will do everything they can to keep it and make it beautiful, it is a loss simply because former Commissioner Lynn Larson stomped her feet and kept talking about how someone would die if we didn't get a turn lane. But it's not really on her. They came back



STEVE REID

with the typical FDOT solution. In tennis, it would be like not having subtle hands at the net, but having what they call "bricklayer hands," where instead of hitting a beautiful drop shot or a well-placed slice, you simply bump the ball clumsily out of bounds.

A Looming Concrete Shadow

So, here we go again with a bridge too far, a bridge too big, a bridge that will not be beautiful. We begged for a 36-foot mid-level drawbridge to maintain our island's low-profile aesthetic, but because of a cost disparity, the state is pushing forward with a massive 78-foot high-span. To put that in perspective, FDOT is forcing a 78-foot elevation over a mere 0.15-mile distance. That creates a slope steeper than the John Ringling Causeway—a significant hazard for pedestrians and cyclists. And for the residents of Northgate? This massive concrete span will creep within 36.5 feet of their homes.

Meanwhile, just to the north, the Cortez Bridge is weeks away from going out to bid for its own \$130 million fixed-span replacement. We are staring down the barrel of a 1,200-day construction sentence starting this September.

A Wall of Gorgon Stone

This will not be the Ringling Bridge, which was designed through a community charrette using creativity and architectural renderings. This will be what we are stuck with. It will simply add to the imposing scale of the island, and while it will fix one thing—it will be nice not to have a drawbridge from a traffic point of view—the FDOT will not work in this nuanced capacity. They will not allow a "design bridge." This will not be the Brooklyn Bridge, or the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, or any bridge that crosses the Seine, and it certainly won't be the Ringling. Instead of a refined and architecturally defined entrance to Longboat Key, it will be as if the FDOT looked at the plan and took what could have been a graceful arc of beauty and transformed it into a wall of Gorgon stone.

So, when you read the story on page one and watch the news, think back on all the eons of history going back to pre-classical Greece, and realize we are yet again stuck in a mythological cycle. Although you may believe you're in the modern era, that is just a fantasy. In 2,000 years, they'll look back at these towering concrete monuments to bureaucratic budget math and they'll say, "Wow, how could those government leaders span one of the most beautiful island waterways in the world with a concrete ode to the ordinary?"

Editor Letters

Letters, from page 6

Transparency and good governance considerations regarding canal project

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

I believe the elected LBK officials, in the interest of transparency and accountability, must disclose publicly whether they reside or have a property interest in a direct canal access property or not. This does not imply wrongdoing because

I believe the elected LBK officials, in the interest of transparency and accountability, must disclose publicly whether they reside or have a property interest in a direct canal access property or not. This does not imply wrongdoing because every resident of LBK has an interest in the allocation method of distributing the cost of the canal dredging project. No one should care or be concerned if officials reside on a canal provided the distribution of the costs of the project are truly equitable. Such disclosure in the interest of transparency is just good governance.

Tim McDonald
Longboat Key

Sovereign Immunity

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Well done, BJ! Thank you.

Casey Cook
Chief of Legislative Affairs
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

Sovereign Immunity

To: Florida Senator Victoria Brill

We are continuing to follow the Sovereign Immunity bills. The Bill that the House has passed is of great concern to us -HB145 (McFarland). It doubles both the per incident and per person rates that exist today.

We are very pleased with Senator Brodeur's legislation

which is SB1366 - it takes the per incident and per person rates to numbers that would mirror the rate of inflation since Sovereign Immunity was last raised.

I hope Senator Gruters will do all he can to ensure that the Senate Bill prevails and remains in tack. This would be a serious hit on our budget to have to raise insurance to meet the House rates.

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Looking forward to connecting – Second Vice President Candidacy

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Thank you. I will call you on Friday. Yes. I am flying up on Friday March 13th. My board events start on Saturday and I am flying back on the 18th.

Greg Langowski
Vice Mayor
City of Westlake

Looking forward to connecting – Second Vice President Candidacy

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Absolutely! Is there a good day and time for you? I will work around your schedule.

Greg Langowski
Vice Mayor
City of Westlake

Looking forward to connecting – Second Vice President Candidacy

To: Greg Langowski
Can we find some time to chat in the next few weeks? This is the first week I have not had to travel in a month.

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 12

Longboat Key News Sarasota City News

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 11

Looking forward to connecting – Second Vice President Candidacy

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

I hope you're doing well. I'm reaching out to share my candidacy for Second Vice President and to thank you for your service on the committee.

It would be an honor to continue serving the League alongside leaders I deeply respect.

Through service in multiple League roles, the importance of collaboration across regions and the strength of our municipal network has become clear. The relationships built through this work and the collaborative spirit that define our organization are truly valued.

My letter of candidacy is attached for your review. I plan to reach out personally next week and look forward to connecting with you during that time. Thank you again for your service and thoughtful consideration.

Greg Langowski
Vice Mayor
City of Westlake

Country Club Shores

To: Catherine Cuthell

Can you send this out to all of your email addresses for Country Club Shores One & Two?

Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores raccoons

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

As you can see from the email chain below the raccoons are a big problem in our neighborhood. The town will not/ cannot help. I have spent over a thousand dollars on the problem but I am back in New York now. I would be happy to chip in for a community effort however. I urge you to bring this up at the meeting in hopes of stopping the population explosion.

Catherine Cuthell
Longboat Key

Country Club Shores raccoons

To: Longboat Key Commission

My husband and I have issues and have called town. There is another couple on Ketch who are having issues. We at this point have spent \$700 in trapping the raccoons. We will certainly bring up with Gary at the meeting. Feel free to send him a personal note.

Mary Keane
Longboat Key

Country Club Shores raccoons

To: Longboat Key Commission

Has anyone else reported problems with raccoons? I know others on my street have had them.

Please let me know.
Catherine Cuthell
Longboat Key

House Bill 1329

To: Florida Delegate William Robinson

HB 1329 by Rep. Benarroch relates to local government spending and will soon have its final hearing in the House State Affairs Committee. The Senate companion bill, SB 1566, was recently amended to include a provision that will prohibit municipal utilities from transferring any revenues to the municipal general fund.

This amendment would not be good for Longboat Key or any other municipalities in the Manasota League of Cities. I hope you will oppose a similar amendment being added to this legislation when it comes before your State Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

BJ Bishop
President, Manasota League of Cities
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Suncoast Waterkeeper Sampling Results for Feb. 9

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

On February 9, Monday, the enterococci survey was carried out during a rising to high tide, from 0.88 to 1.68 feet. There was no rainfall recorded in the 24 hours prior to sampling. The water was calm and clear in most sites. Sediments were in the water column at Sarasota Sailing Squadron. Horses were in the northeast corner (over half a mile away from our sampling location) at Palma Sola Bay. The results for sites sampled in the northern region (across Manatee & Sarasota Counties) are as follows:

Caples: 10/100 mL
Indian Beach: 30/100 mL
Sarasota Sailing Squadron: 10/100 mL
Herb Dolan Park: Undetected
Palma Sola Causeway North: 103/100 mL
DeSoto National Memorial Park: N/A
Braden River: 62/100 mL
Palmetto Bridge: 50/100 mL
Emerson Point: 41/100 mL
Terra Ceia Bay: 1,723/100 mL

Any count exceeding 71 is considered unsafe for swimming, indicating a potential health concern. The standard for enterococci in Class II and Class III Marine waters is "MPN or MF counts shall not exceed a monthly geometric mean of 35 nor exceed the Ten Percent Threshold Value (TPTV) of 130 in 10% or more of the samples during any 30-day period. Monthly geometric means shall be based on a minimum of 10 samples taken over a 30-day period," (62-302.500 F.A.C.). The two Longboat Key sites are located in Class II waters (<https://geodata.dep.state.fl.us/datasets/FDEP::surface-water-class-boundaries-areas/explore?location=27.336358%2C-82.433979%2C10.00>)

We are committed to bringing these critical issues to your attention and believe your active involvement is crucial. The official reports for this week's sampling activities, courtesy of Benchmark Environmental, are attached to this email.

Pia Ronquillo
Water Quality Specialist
Suncoast Waterkeeper

Public Hearing

To: Longboat Key Commission

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) invites you to a public hearing for the State Road (S.R.) 789 (Longboat Key) Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study from North Shore Road to Coquina Park Entrance in Manatee County. You can participate in the hearing in-person or virtually. The in-person event will be held on March 12, 2026, and the virtual component will be held on March 17, 2026.

Thursday, March 12, 2026
Christ Church of Longboat Key
6400 Gulf of Mexico Dr
Longboat Key, FL 34228

Anytime between 5 – 6:00 p.m. Open house
6:00 p.m. Formal presentation and comment

Displays will be available starting at 5 p.m. to review at your own pace and the project team will be available for discussion. The formal presentation and comment period will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Virtual option

Tuesday, March 17, 2026
Register in advance: <https://tinyurl.com/SR789LBK>
5:30 p.m. Project team available for discussion
5:45 p.m. Overview for how to submit a comment for the hearing record
6:00 p.m. Formal presentation and comment

Please review the materials on project webpage before attending the virtual event (<https://>

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See Letters, page 15

**Send us your best thoughts...
letters@lbknews.com**

WineTimes



Mardi Gras at Fogartyville

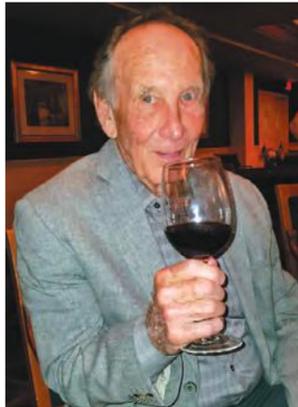
The Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center has a unique role in the Rosemary District close by downtown Sarasota in southwest Florida.

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

The Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center has a unique role in the Rosemary District close by downtown Sarasota in southwest Florida. Its mission: "...creative expression and community engagement that amplifies the voices of our diverse community, and promotes peace, sustainability, democracy, and economic & social justice".

The name "Fogartyville" comes from the 19th Century Fogarty family settlement on the banks of the Manatee River what became West Bradenton. The venue hosts music performances, community meetings, and the independent radio station, WSLR 96.5. Its ambiance reminds one of Old Florida cool outposts such as Key West, Captiva, Matlacha, and Lake Worth Beach.

The Mardi Gras celebration at Fogartyville had sold out days before we arrived. No more than two hundred guests sat at tables in front of a small stage to hear Kid Red (A.K.A. Larry Chiri) and the NOLAsota Krewe or Pontchartrain All-Stars (take your pick) pull out all of the stops on the Fat Tuesday carnival finale before the start of Lent. Kid Red hosts the Louisiana Gumbo segment on Radio WSLR Wednesdays 2-4PM, making him the obvious choice for the Mardi Gras gig.



At the door we asked to observe the event from the wings. The staff invited us to sit at a table in the patio a few yards beyond the indoor seating. Fogartyville does not serve food or drinks by the glass. They did offer donated bottles of wine and wine glasses. We found a 750 ml bottle of an Oregon red wine, a 2022 Eola Hills Whole Cluster Pinot Noir from the Eola-Amity Legacy Vineyard, a fortunate find at a concert for \$30.

The concert began not long after we settled in the patio. Early on the theme from the HBO series Treme' set the mood. By the end of the first set, the partygoers were coursing through the aisles to the beat of When the Saints Go Marching' In. The All-Stars featured David Sowler, guitar; David Breckerd, baritone sax; Karen David, keyboard; Bart Delarme, bass; Scott Blum, drums; and Dorothy Blum, percussion. They created the energy of an impromptu New Orleans jazz session. An authentic Mardi Gras evening, we'd say.

Going past Lefty's on Lime and down 5th Street a block and a half from Arts and Central and Wink, Wink on Boulevard of the Arts, we could envision the Rosemary District as a compact version of the music scene in New Orleans. We fear that the intense development will



overwhelm the area instead of supporting it.

At Vino Bistro on 5th Street, we stopped to order a glass of the Sicilian Italian white Grillo while the Robbie Rose Trio played the Basin Street Blues. Reminds us of local bars along the Charles Street Trolley. Laissez les bon temps rouler.

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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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

www.swflroads.com/project/436676-1). Materials will be posted by Thursday, March 5, 2026.

This hearing is being conducted to present the preferred alternative and all analysis to date, as well as to give interested persons an opportunity to express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed improvements.

Project documents will be available for public viewing from February 18, 2026, to March 23, 2026, at Tingley Library, 111 2nd St N, Bradenton Beach, FL 34217 and at FDOT Manatee Operations Center, 14000 FL-64, Bradenton, FL 34212. They will also be available on the project webpage.

If you are unable to attend the hearing, comments can also be provided through the project webpage (<https://www.swflroads.com/project/436676-1>) or by email (David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us) or mail (FDOT District One, Attn: David Turley, 801 N. Broadway Avenue, MS 1-40, Bartow, FL 33830). While comments about the project are accepted at any time, they must be received or postmarked by Monday, March 23, 2026, to be included in the formal hearing record. All comments are weighted equally. Questions can be answered by calling the FDOT project manager David Turley.

The proposed improvements are adjacent to the Coquina Bayside Park/Boat Ramp. As proposed, the project will impact approximately 0.23 acres of property from this recreation area. As part of the project development process and in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, the FDOT is seeking comments from the public concerning the effects of the project on the activities, features and attributes of this recreation area. FDOT intends to make a programmatic Section 4(f) impact determination for this resource.

FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. People who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Cynthia Sykes, District One Title VI Coordinator, at (863) 519-2287, or email at Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us at least seven days prior to the public hearing.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

Adam Rose
Project Manager
Florida Department of Transportation

Mangrove cutting on Jewfish Key

To: Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Director Allen Parsons

Must the property owner be caught in the act in order to be cited? If that's the case, it seems unlikely that mangrove laws can ever be enforced. Wouldn't before/after pictures suffice? Incidentally, the clearcutting of mangroves on Jewfish occurred months ago (just before I first registered a complaint).

James G. Haft
Longboat Key

Mangrove cutting on Jewfish Key

To: James Haft

Thanks Jim. Code Enforcement staff investigated when the complaint came in (including going to the site 3 days in a row). Unfortunately, staff did not see anyone cutting mangroves. The complaint was also forwarded to FDEP at the time (as they are the state designated agency responsible for mangrove permitting & enforcement). An FDEP contact for follow-up, if you're interested, is Hannah.Westervelt@FloridaDEP.gov --

Allen Parsons
Planning and Zoning Director
Town of Longboat Key

Mangrove cutting on Jewfish Key

To: Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Director Allen Parsons

Has any progress been made on this complaint?

James G. Haft
Longboat Key

Mangrove cutting on JFK

To: Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Director Allen Parsons

Hi Allen & Charlie — Thank you both for coming to our LBK North meeting on Thursday. Just wanted to follow up on the Jewfish Key clear cutting of mangroves. I had reported this back in November. It was handed off to someone in code enforcement (whose name I forget) but nothing more happened as far as I'm aware. This is highly illegal and environmentally damaging action

According to another JFK Owner, the culprit is Jordan Mollenaur, who owns 5 properties on the island. (See message below from the JFK owner).

"I just spoke with someone working on the island. They are actively clearing now in the 'Preservation' area. It is Jordan Mollenaur that had hired the work to be done. He owns 5 properties now on the island. I can share his contact information with you. Other neighbors as well as me are upset about this, but feel powerless."

James Haft
Longboat Key

Mangrove cutting on Jewfish Key

To: James Haft

Jim, I am including Allen and Code Enforcement to check into this.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Mangrove cutting on Jewfish Key

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

It appears that the crew building a new house on the north end of JFK has clearcut well over 100 feet of mangroves from the beach. I'm told this is a house being built by Shaun Kaleta

I can't imagine that he received permits to do this. What recourse does the Town or the State have for this violation?

James G. Haft
Longboat Key

Incident on 17th Street

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

I hope you all had a great long weekend. I am writing to follow up on this issue. This past Sunday, when I passed by the area again, I noticed several golf balls on 17th Street. How can we prevent others from having their vehicles damaged, or worse, from being struck by these balls, which could potentially cause serious or even fatal injuries? Let's explore solutions to protect the citizens in this area.

Romina Uranga
Sarasota

Incident on 17th Street

To: Romina Uranga

Thank you for your email and making me aware of this very unfortunate incident! I am relieved you and your children are not harmed, nor do this cause an accident. I am so sorry this occurred!

I am not aware of this happening before, but I could be wrong, but even if it happens once and causes an accident, that is once too many.

We have a pro-active and creative team, and I am sure there are safety solutions available and I have copied the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Parks Director, and City Attorney on this email so they are also aware of the situation and can respond as well (and copy me please).

I am so sorry for your experience and thank you for taking the time to share this with me.

Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Incident on 17th Street

To: Sarasota City Commission

This afternoon at approximately 1:35 p.m., I was driving along 17th Street with my husband and our two children when a golf ball coming from the Bobby Jones Golf Club (1000 Circus Blvd) struck and broke our windshield. As a direct result of the impact, we nearly collided with the car traveling alongside us. Fortunately, we were able to stop the car safely.

I retrieved the golf ball, went to the golf course and spoke with an administrator who, to my surprise, told me that nothing could be done and advised me "not to drive on 17th Street anymore." I find this response inappropriate and frankly disrespectful. Telling residents to avoid a public city street because of a safety hazard originating from the golf course is not an acceptable solution.

While my insurance will likely cover the replacement of the windshield, it will not cover the shock of the impact, the risk my children were exposed to, nor the time lost speaking with an administrator who offered neither accountability nor solutions. I will now also have to spend additional time addressing an issue for which I bear absolutely no responsibility. My only "fault" was driving lawfully on a public street in the city where I live.

The administrator also suggested that I "complain to the city," which is precisely what I am doing by contacting you.

I can hardly believe that this is the first time such an incident has occurred. Moreover, had that golf ball struck my head while I was walking along that same street, we would be talking about a serious injury—potentially requiring hospitalization or even resulting in death.

I look forward to your comments and to understanding how this situation will be addressed to prevent future incidents.

Romina M. Uranga
Sarasota

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