

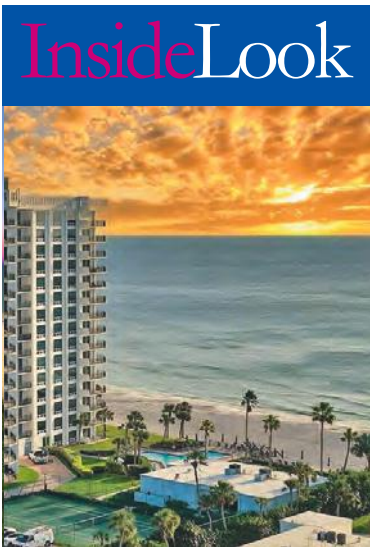


Longboat Key News

November 24, 2023

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FREE



InsideLook
Island sunsets top the market ...page 9



Where France meets Germany ...page 13



Getting approval proves tricky ...page 13



LBK boat found upside down ...page 10

Following decades of debate, Bobby Jones ready to reopen

Sarasota City Commissioners debated for more than a decade the fate of the course before reaching consensus to reduce the number of holes from 45 to 27 and turn some of the property into a park.

A new look, a new approach to the golf course and a new conservation effort will all be celebrated at the grand reopening for Bobby Jones Golf Club and Nature Park from 9 a.m. to noon on Dec. 15.

Decades of debate...

Sarasota City Commissioners debated for more than a decade the fate of the course, originally constructed by famous designer Donald Ross in the 1920s.

The consensus was to reduce the number of holes in the golf complex from 45 to 27 and turn some of the property into a park. They also voted to permanently conserve the property, ensuring that it will never be subdivided or developed.

"This will be a day to celebrate and remember," said Mayor Liz Alpert. "The new wetlands already are cleaning stormwater and attracting wildlife. And, the nature park and trails will be a destination for birders, bicyclists, and walkers. With a conservation easement on the property, it will be protected in perpetuity."

The Golf Course

The golf complex features:



- Restored 18-hole Donald Ross-designed course
- Renewed 9-hole adjustable Gillespie Course that can be played five different ways.
- 25-acre practice facility featuring: Driving range with 70 hitting stations, a 3.75 acre short game area with three chipping greens and two

teardrop target greens and 21,000 square foot putting green

- Temporary clubhouse with food and beverage service

Intact masterpiece

"Bobby Jones Golf Club in Sarasota is as significant as they come because the land on which

Donald Ross created this masterpiece is still intact, allowing us to restore his original plan," said Richard Mandell, golf course architect. "The reintroduction of strategic mounding throughout the layout Ross planned long ago will be new and different from what many

See Golf, page 2

Longboat market booming with listings

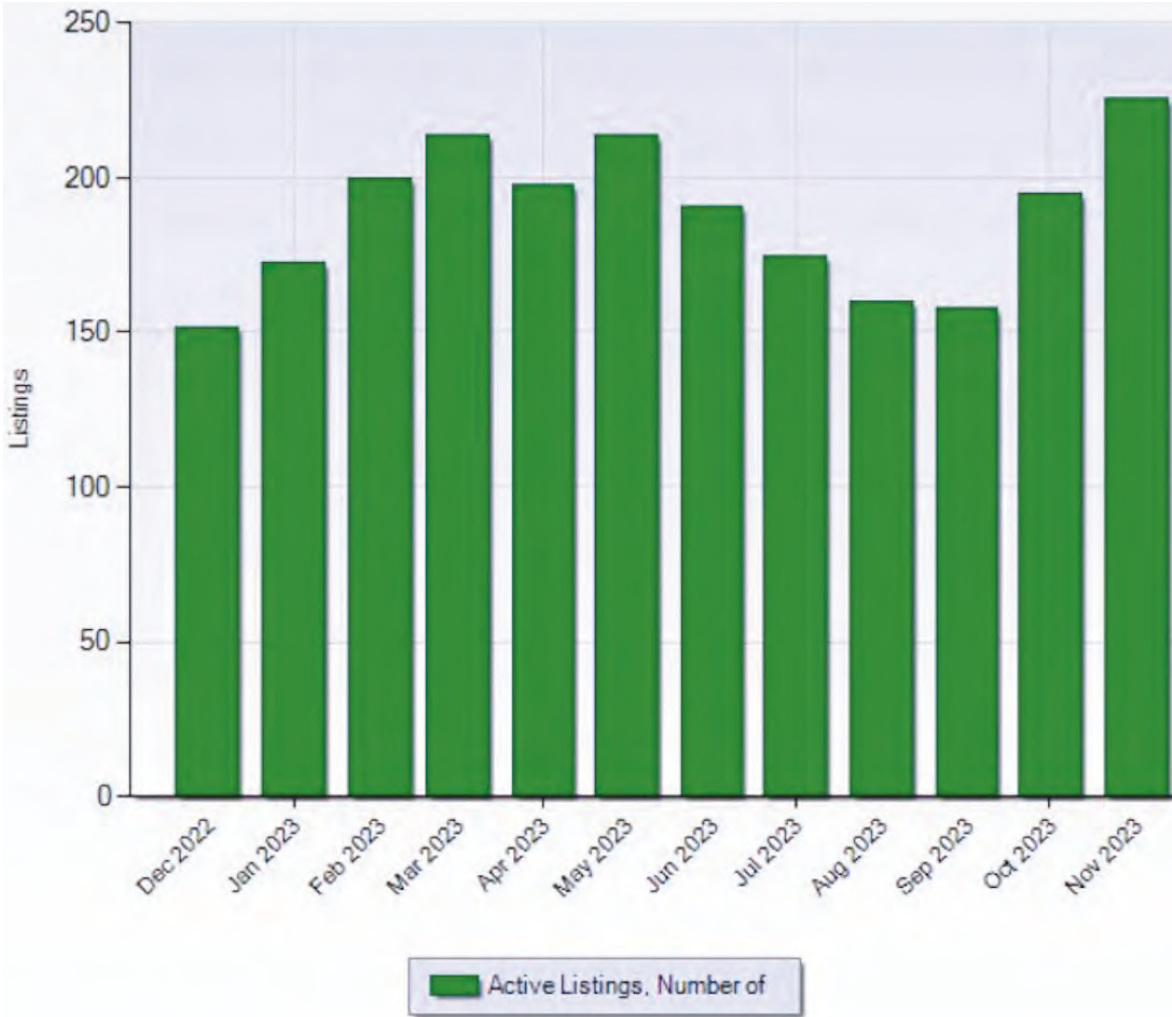
Longboat right now has a total dollar value of \$543,261,719.00 in active residential listings. This is an increase of \$199,334,000.00 in active Real Estate listings over last year.

TRYLA LARSON
Guest Columnist
tryla@lbknews.com

As we come to the close of 2023, we look back over the past 12 month and ask ourselves how the Real Estate market on Longboat Key fared. As I look at the numbers, and numbers don't lie, we live in a booming Real Estate market.

A year ago in December 2022, there were 152 active residential listings in the 34228 zip code. If we

See LBK Market, page 15



Golf, from page 1

Ross golf aficionados are accustomed to playing. Bobby Jones has exceeded even my expectations as we approach opening day. I'm extremely excited to play the course myself."

Mandell introduced "tee shot distance equity" offering six tee boxes at varying distances to create an enjoyable experience for all players and maximize club selection for all talent levels. The golf course yardage extends from 4,583 yards to 6,714 yards.

"By adding forward tee distances, we're welcoming a wider range of golfers at different skill levels," said Sue Martin, Parks and Recreation team member who managed the golf course and shepherded the restoration. Traditionally, red tees have been the closest to a hole, then white and blue tees farther away. Golf is evolving. With three additional tee distances, more options are available for golfers at Bobby Jones to have fun and add variety to their game, whether they're a novice or lifelong player."

For those who want to experience the golf course as Donald Ross originally planned, a special set of "Ross tees" allow golfers to play from the Ross distance of 6,240 yards. The course plays to a par of 71.

The Ross Course will open for golf at 7 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 16. Reservations can be booked online at www.BobbyJonesGolfClub.com beginning Saturday, Dec. 2. The redesigned 9-hole Gillespie short course will reopen in early 2024 and feature adjustable holes, meaning the maintenance crew can rearrange holes. As many as 30 different hole combinations will be available, offering golfers distinct, new experiences. The permanent clubhouse is anticipated to be constructed and open to the public in approximately two years.

The City borrowed \$20 million to fund the golf course restoration and new clubhouse. Bobby Jones Golf Club will turn 100 years old in 2027.

Nature Park at Bobby Jones

The Nature Park at Bobby Jones encompasses 90 acres on the eastern portion of the property and features crushed shell and decommissioned golf cart paths repurposed into walking/bicycling trails around the newly created wetlands teeming with wildlife. The 1.57 mile Eagle Trail is the primary path with three offshoots: Prairie Trail (.4 mile), Hammock Trail (.12 mile) and Osprey Trail (.07 mile). Access to the trails is adjacent to the driving range.

The nature park is free and open to the public daily from dawn to dusk. The park will be closed when the golf course is closed.

Conservation Easement

Following extensive community discussion over five years, the City Commission in 2022 unanimously approved downsizing Bobby Jones Golf Club from 45-holes to 27. The non-golf green space, totaling nearly 100-acres, was designated a nature park.

The Commission also unanimously approved a conservation easement on the property in partnership with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. The agreement means the City-owned property will remain a protected, preserved green space in perpetuity.

Water Quality

Covering 307 acres, the Bobby Jones property is the single largest green space in the City of Sarasota. It is a significant floodplain in the Philippi Creek watershed and filters stormwater for 5,800 urban acres as far north as University Parkway.

To improve water quality, nearly 20 acres of wetlands were created, almost 14.5 acres of native grasses planted and 49,000 nutrient-filtering aquatic plants installed, including sawgrass, fire flag and pickerel weed.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) granted the City of Sarasota \$1.5 million to support the water quality improvements and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) provided a \$487,500 grant.

With the installation of new drainage pipes throughout the golf course and improved land grading, the property will drain quickly and efficiently following a rain event.

Golf Management

Daily operations at Bobby Jones will be handled by Indigo Sports LLC, a private management company. Green fees will be dynamic and include a 40% reduced rate on the Donald Ross course for City of Sarasota residents.

As part of the contractual agreement with the City, Indigo is expected to pursue certification for Bobby Jones in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, with the goal of becoming certified within two years after reopening.

During a recent annual bird count, the Sarasota Audubon Society documented 45 unique species on the property.

For more information about Bobby Jones Golf Club and Nature Park, visit www.BobbyJonesGolfClub.com.



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1325 WESTWAY DRIVE - LIDO SHORES



\$ 15,000,000

Modern marvel overlooking New Pass in Lido Shores! Step into this tropical escape through the hidden courtyard that connects the three-bedroom main home to the secluded, two-bedroom guest house with an expansive sundeck, 60-foot wet-edge lap pool lined with royal palms and unique fire bowls, as the perfect introduction to a contemporary masterpiece.



The reverse-style layout places the main living areas on the second level, optimizing the best of the views. The open concept of this level comprises the gourmet kitchen with its poured terrazzo waterfall edge island and Miele appliances, as well as the family room, living/dining room, and secluded master suite.

Boasting all the amenities required for luxury living, this SMART home's inspired style highlights spectacular water views that stretch out to the Gulf of Mexico from just about every room of the nearly 6,600 square-foot interior.



Stacked glass sliders create a seamless transition to outdoor living, opening to the glass-railing terrace, summer kitchen, built-in grill, and spiral staircase that leads down to the waterside hot tub. Boaters will appreciate the deep-water dock with multiple lifts.

NEW CONSTRUCTION TO BE BUILT



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\$8,995,000

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LONGBOAT KEY • 6489 GULFSIDE DRIVE

\$16,900,000

Fabulous Gulf front lot offering nearly 100 ft. of sandy beach, this gorgeous DSDG Architect designed home is a rare find. Boasting almost 6,000 AC/SF, this spectacular home is custom built with the finest details throughout. Architect designed landscaped exterior and 4-car garage.

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Currently under construction and scheduled to be ready Fall 2023, this breathtaking 8,964 AC/SF residence is one of a kind, designed by DSDG. Gulf front property on one acre and offers a 2,000 SF roof terrace. Separate guest house and 8-car garage. No expense spared on this remarkable home.



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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.

Biography

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
It was a pleasure to meet you today and as discussed, I am willing to volunteer to fill Deb Murphy's position on the Town Commission.
My wife and I have been Longboat residents since about 2012, but last summer we sold our Chicago area house so we're now full time Floridians. However, both of us have been coming down here for many years before that. My parents were among the original pioneers of Lands End, having built our house in 1981.
Attached is a rather dated professional bio which was prepared, I believe, around the time that I retired in 2014. I'm 65 years old, in good health (thankfully) and we have three children ages 28, 30 and 33. If you need any further information, please let me know.
James Haft
Longboat Key

Biography

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I have attached a bio from Jim Haft, a District 5 resident with whom I met yesterday and who would be interested in our soon-to-be-open position on the Commission. Please feel free to circulate this among the other Commissioners as we consider how to move forward.
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Biography

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
Yes sir, once we have the Board direction on Monday we will include Mr. Haft's information and appreciate his willingness to be considered.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Annoying and Disturbing lights at Whitney Plaza

To: Longboat Key Commission
For those of you that may not know me, my name is Michael Drake. My wife Amy and I have lived on this paradise island since 1986 and dearly love it. We purchased our current property back in 1991 and built a new home at 6821 Longboat Drive South in 1995 and moved into the home in 1996. We were fully aware of purchasing our property in 1991 that a shopping plaza was directly behind our property. In fact, we loved that the plaza was there as we could walk to restaurants, post office, bank and much more at that time. We never in 26 years had any issues with the plaza, not one. Fast forward to early 2023 when the new owner of the plaza replaced the parking lot lights to a new fixture head. The new fixtures are so much brighter due to the fact that they are LED and they emit much brighter light not only downwards but also 360 degrees that lights up the entire area, both across Gulf of Mexico Drive and on all properties that are on the back side of the plaza as well as Whitney Beach Condominiums. All seven properties on Longboat Drive South are now and have for almost a year experiencing "Annoying" and "Disturbing" very bright light from dusk to dawn. I have attached some photos that were shot from our back yard, back porch, inside of your dining room and our owners suite. The stage is set.
So, I made a formal complaint with our code enforcement staff and a complaint was opened. The code enforcement officer at the time was Chris Kopp and Chris informed me several weeks after the complaint was registered that he made his informed decision that the lights were compliant and closed the case. Just for the record Chris never came to my property to make his "informed" decision.
After several weeks of talking with my neighbors that are all negatively impacted by these new fixtures we decided to register another complaint with the towns code enforcement. This time it wasn't just us making the complaint, rather we all sent in complaints individually. This time it was Bryan Wisnum that took over the case. Bryan basically looked into the file and responded to us by cutting and pasting into his emails back to each of us what Chris had sent some weeks prior. Again, no property visits to anyone of us.
Finally, I decided to make an appointment with our town manager Mr. Tipton. We had a

very nice meeting and he assured me that I would hear from the code enforcement staff. And indeed a week and a half later I received an email from Bryan Wisnum to set up visit to our properties. That was executed last night November 28, 2023 around 6 p.m. Present were Bryan Wisnum, David Woods, Amy and Michael Drake, Val and Ross Schniederman and David Price, these are most of the neighbors that are directly affected by the new brighter fixtures. Others were not available at the time. Bryan started the conversation by stating that the lights are much brighter and "Annoying" however, in his opinion are facing down and not at the properties adjacent to the plaza. The pictures attached show a different truth.
I have also attached the current town ordinance that we all feel is being violated but not being enforced by the code enforcement staff.
We all would like for the owner of the shopping plaza to install a similar valance to all the new fixtures as he has for the turtles.
We all "Thank you" for the great job you all do to keep Longboat Key a premier community and a wonderful place to live.
Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions you may have. And also, if any of you would like to personally visit our properties to see the situation, give me a call or email me at michael@psglbk.com
130.03 - Annoying spotlights or floodlights.
Outdoor lighting consisting of spotlights and floodlights shall be installed, regulated, and maintained by the owner and person in control thereof, so as to reflect the light away from any adjoining residential premises and avoid disturbance, annoyance, or interference to persons upon these adjoining premises.
Michael and Amy Drake
Longboat Key

Annoying and Disturbing lights at Whitney Plaza

To: Longboat Key Commission
Good afternoon. As you are all well aware, we have a staff driven process when we are addressing code enforcement complaints. They don't always follow the timeframe that the complainant would like to see, however staff will do their reviews and in this case a site visit.
In this instance, Code Enforcement Officers Bryan Winsom and David Woods visited the location and after meeting with PZB Director Allen Parsons, confirmed that the light coming from Whitney Plaza was brighter and it was as if the light was pointed at the complainants property which is a violation of Town Code. Code Enforcement staff will be working with the property owner to achieve voluntary compliance if at all possible. If not, we have a process for that too.
The issue of LED lights that can meet the current Town Code's tests of appearing to be directed at nearby properties and being annoying or disturbing is one that is likely to increase, including with the installation of LED street lighting. LED usage in recent years has significantly increased in cities, towns and communities across the world. This type of lighting is more energy-efficient and longer-lasting, which is good, but they are also typically whiter and brighter than the more traditional orange-tinged high-pressure sodium bulbs. According to a recent article in the Washington Post, scientists have found over the past decade that the night sky has become nearly 10 percent brighter each year because of artificial lights, mainly LEDs emitting too much glare. The Energy Department has estimated that LEDs made up about 19 percent of all lighting installations in 2017, saving about 1 percent of total energy consumed in the United States. By 2035, the lights are expected to comprise 84 percent of lighting installations.
While not applicable in this current Whitney Plaza case, staff does believe that, due to the increasing usage of LED lighting, the Town would benefit from the development of a new section of Town Code to more specifically address lighting standards. The Town Code addresses spotlights & floodlights that are directed to neighboring properties and there are provisions in the Sea Turtle Protection ordinance that address light sources that are visible from the beach, during sea turtle nesting season (May 1- Oct. 31). However, the Town does not have lighting standards that specifically address aspects such as maximum illumination levels & measures to reduce negative impacts from LED lighting such as shielding. There are many communities that staff can look to for good examples of regulations that address negative lighting impacts. However, due to the recently passed legislation, starting with "SB 250," which established a moratorium on "more restrictive or burdensome amendments" to comprehensive plans and land development regulations to October 2024 and, more recently, "SB 2-C: Disaster Relief," which expires on October 1, 2026, the addition of a new lighting code could be viewed as more

See Letters, page 7

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511 SPINNAKER LANE | LONGBOAT KEY - SOLD AT LIST PRICE
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\$5,000,000

648 BAYVIEW DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY

Boater's dream property on oversized (19,994 sf) rarely available cul-de-sac end lot with a 320-foot seawall located in Sleepy Lagoon, on the north end of Longboat Key. This location offers fantastic panoramic views of Bishops Bayou and the ICW. Situated on nearly a half-acre lot is a 3-bedroom, 4,157-SF home, which could be renovated or removed creating a build site for an incredible custom home.



KeyOpinion

Why is President Biden’s approval rating so low?

This loss of confidence in the Biden administration’s foreign policy capability appears to have followed the Afghanistan debacle. That chaotic withdrawal ushered in the Taliban’s takeover, resulted in the deaths of 13 Americans, abandoned thousands of loyal Afghans and billions of dollars’ worth of U.S. military equipment, and emboldened our enemies.

GREGORY RUSOVICH
Guest Writer
rusovich@lbknews.com

Why is President Biden’s approval rating so low? The president’s poll numbers on a wide range of issues are certainly in the tank. But more concerning for Democrats may be the public’s overall assessment that Biden is simply no longer up to the task of leading the country.

In its most recent compilation of polls, FiveThirtyEight reported Biden’s job approval rating at a dismal 39.2%. By comparison, at the same time in respective presidential terms, every other president since Jimmy Carter held higher ratings. Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush were all above 50%, and Barack Obama was at 44.4%. Even Donald Trump had a 41.2% rating. Only Carter’s performance was reported at a lower number (36.6%).

Biden performs even more poorly on a wide range of issues important to voters. As Americans pay more for groceries, gas and mortgages, the president is held accountable. Voters are aware that the administration poured trillions of unnecessary dollars into the economy, prompting an inflationary spiral. As a result, the Federal Reserve has significantly raised interest rates – thus punishing anyone seeking to borrow money. The most recent Fox News Poll reports a lamentable 29% approval rating for Biden on inflation and a 33% rating on the economy.

How about voter opinion of Biden’s handling of immigration? Only 33% approve of the president’s track record on the border crisis. This number is hardly surprising as a record-breaking 2.5 million migrants have surged across the border in fiscal year 2023. And the terrorist watch list includes 169 migrants who were apprehended while trying to cross the border in 2023. But U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas admits that 600,000 overall illegal ‘gotaways’ also crossed the border in the fiscal year, and we have no way of knowing how many of those were on the terrorist watchlist. Meanwhile, Secretary Mayorkas has his own serious problems because of the border chaos. Rasmussen Reports finds that 55% of likely U.S. voters approve of the current Republican congressional effort to impeach this struggling official.

Many American families are also directly suffering from the open border as Mexican drug cartels partner with Chinese manufacturers and smuggle poisonous fentanyl into the United States. A tragic 73,564 people died from a fentanyl overdose in 2022, more than double the number of deaths in 2019.

In the global arena, a foreign policy crisis usually prompts a “rallying around the flag”



RUSOVICH

effect as Americans show support for presidential leadership. Not this time. A meager 39% approve of Biden’s handling of the Israel-Hamas war. Stuck between principled support for our stalwart ally, Israel, and his own radical base, poor Joe can’t win. His handling of the situation in Ukraine, another attacked ally, is also below 40% despite his ongoing leadership on the world stage in support of the besieged nation.

This loss of confidence in the Biden administration’s foreign policy capability appears to have followed the Afghanistan debacle. That chaotic withdrawal ushered in the Taliban’s takeover, resulted in the deaths of 13 Americans, abandoned thousands of loyal Afghans and billions of dollars’ worth of U.S. military equipment, and emboldened our enemies. It portrayed American weakness on the world stage and indelibly stained our nation’s view of Biden’s global leadership.

Biden’s age is the source of another underlying concern among the public. It’s certainly not too much to demand that a U.S. president be alert, sharp and energetic, but multiple polls suggest that Biden is anything but. A Monmouth University poll reports that 76 percent of voters think he is too old to effectively serve another term. A CBS News/YouGov poll shows that only 34% of registered voters think Biden would complete a second term if re-elected. Even 56 percent of Democrats agree that he’s too old. Moreover, the age issue aligns with the competency problem for the president as just 25% believe he can handle his job, according to a CNN survey earlier this month. Less than a third of respondents in a Yahoo News/YouGov poll believe Biden has “the competence to carry out the job of the president.”

And finally, 65% of Americans believe that the country overall is moving in the wrong direction, compared to only 26% who think it’s headed on the right path.

The last president with such poor poll numbers was Jimmy Carter. Like Biden, Carter also had to deal with soaring inflation, higher gas prices, crime fears, and threats from Iran and Russia. Sensing a feeling of anguish in the nation, the former president delivered his famous “malaise speech” in 1979. He explained that there was a crisis of confidence in America and described “the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.” But today, just as in 1979, that lack of confidence lies not within America’s spirit, but rather in its presidential leadership.



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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 4

restrictive/burdensome. Staff will continue to look into this issue.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Annoying and Disturbing lights at Whitney Plaza

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
This all makes sense, but the language of the ordinance as it currently stands seems more than adequate to justify a remedy in this case. Thanks.
Ken Schneider
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Annoying and Disturbing lights at Whitney Plaza

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Think this is great progress.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Withdrawal of Buccaneer Restaurant Bldg. Permit

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
We received a request this morning from the Columbia Restaurant Group to withdraw their building permit for the previously planned Buccaneer Restaurant at 4120 GMD (site of the former Patti George’s Restaurant, immediately north of Bayfront Park). The Site Development Plan and Special Exception entitlements are also considered expired, based on the restaurant’s May 21, 2021 approval & a code required expiration of 24 months from that date unless commencement of the use is being actively pursued.
Allen Parsons
Director Planning, Zoning & Building Department
Town of Longboat Key

Withdrawal of Buccaneer Restaurant Bldg. Permit

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Are they walking away from Longboat Key? Is site going on the market?
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Withdrawal of Buccaneer Restaurant Bldg. Permit

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
No, they didn’t share a reason. In our meeting this spring with Mr. Gonzmart, he indicated this was a very important project to him personally. We can imagine based on increased construction costs that we are all seeing that potentially the project as imagined came in too far over budget. I wouldn’t assume he is giving up on a Longboat location.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

State of the water

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
Over the past few years, we’ve primarily focused on communicating the health of the bay in terms of what we call indicators of eutrophication – things like how much microscopic algae (aka phytoplankton) is in the water, how much macroalgae is on the bottom of the bay, etc. This has traditionally been the focus of ecosystem-scale restoration efforts, such as is seen with EPA’s Chesapeake Bay Program, and the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay Estuary Programs. Why a focus on nutrients? The exceptionally high death rates of manatees in the Indian River Lagoon, for example, is not because of metals contamination, or pesticides, but because of starvation due to a lack of seagrass food sources due to nutrient-fueled algal blooms that are clouding the water.

However, “water quality” also includes another important indicator – the amount of pathogens. The word pathogen refers to “disease-causing” organisms. These organisms can be bacteria or viruses, or protists (such as the horrible, but very rare – and restricted to freshwater – “brain-eating amoeba”). In Florida, we don’t sample for specific pathogens, we sample for what are called “fecal indicator bacteria” or FIBs. The idea being that if levels of FIBs are elevated, perhaps the amount of pathogenic bacteria and/or viruses would also be elevated.

To understand assessments of the status of waterbodies, in terms of pathogens, you have to know two things: 1) what is the water body classification, and 2) does the water body meet the FIB criteria levels developed for that classification. In Sarasota Bay, we have three relevant water quality classifications, but one of them is further modified as to the degree of human use. The three classifications are Class 3 Marine, Class 3 Freshwater, and Class 2. Class 3 waters are referred to as “fishable/swimmable” waterbodies. For Class 3 Marine waters, the FIB is now enterococci bacteria (bacteria within the genus Enterococcus) while it used to be fecal coliform bacteria. For Class 3 Freshwater, the FIB was fecal coliform bacteria, but is now E. coli. For Class 3 Marine waters that are designated as “bathing beaches” the indicator is enterococci bacteria but at a more stringent level than Class 3 Marine waters as a whole. Class 2 waters are those where the “designated use” is for shellfish harvesting and consumption. Class 2 waters use fecal coliform bacteria, and they have the most stringent values of all classifications.

Class 2 waters are basically those portions of the upper bay north of the Ringling Causeway and also on the west side of the ICW channel, plus Palma Sola Bay. Class 3 Marine waters are areas that are brackish to marine, and not included within the Class 2 boundaries. Class 3 Freshwater are the typical stretches of creeks upstream of any tidal influence, but do not include agricultural drainage canals, which have a separate classification.

Complicated enough? We’re just getting started! The criteria for each of these classifications depend on the sampling frequency – higher values for infrequent sampling (as in “never to exceed” values) and lower (stricter) standards with more frequent sampling. But generally, “impairment” is based on an expectation of monthly sampling (except for bathing beaches) and the threshold for impairment is typically based upon the 10th percentile exceedance value. In other words, if you sample 10 times in a month, you have a more restrictive standard to meet. If you sample once a month, then impairment is typically based upon not having ANY values higher than the 10th percentile exceedance value, which will be lower (stricter) than any “never to exceed” threshold, but higher (less restrictive) than the average of – for example – 10 samples taken in a month. Regardless of the FIB, values are in units of the numbers of bacterial colonies determined to be present in a 100 ml sample of water.

Let’s put this in a table, with the classifications, the indicators used, and the range of exceedance values used to determine impairment. The number in red is the level most often used to determine compliance with existing water quality standards (typically the 10th percentile value):

As you can see, there are three FIBs used in the four classifications, so it’s hard to compare values between freshwater streams vs. bathing beaches, for example. And these values are not meant to protect against all people never getting sick. For example, FDOH estimates that 36 out of every 1,000 people would get ill from exposure to waters at a bathing beach that had 70 enterococci colonies per 100 ml - not that nobody would get sick at 60, but that fewer people would get sick at 60 than 70. That is an important thing to keep in mind – the number of people “experiencing the water” in various ways is brought into these standards. For example, a bathing beach such as Siesta Key or Coquina Beach would have more people more often fully immersed in the water on a typical weekend than the number of people who would be swimming off boats in the middle of Sarasota Bay, or the number of people who would have their heads underwater at a boat ramp or along the shoreline by downtown. That’s why bathing beach standards are stricter than those for Class 3 Marine waters – because there is the expectation that at a bathing beach, there would be more people more fully “engaged” with the water than what happens at various boat ramps or bay shorelines on the same days.

The strictest standard, by far, is for Class 2 waters, because clams and oysters are filter feeders, and they can accumulate bacteria to higher levels than what is found in the water itself. In other words, you could meet both Class 3 Marine AND Marine Bathing Beach standards and still not have low enough bacteria for consuming shellfish.

With this as background, what is the impairment status of Sarasota Bay?

According to FDEP, the open waters of Sarasota Bay meet Class 3 Marine standards for FIB, but not on a regular enough basis for the State to consider it safe for shellfish harvesting. In other words, it is safe to waterski, snorkel and swim in the open waters of Sarasota Bay, but not clean enough for anyone to consider it safe to eat clams and oysters you might

See Letters, page 8

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 7

collect in those same waters. The Class 3 Freshwater systems of Philippi Creek, Hudson Bayou, Clark Lake, Clower Creek, Matheny Creek, Hatchett Creek, Walker Creek, North Creek and Whitaker Bayou do not meet their Class 3 Freshwater standards – it is not advisable to swim in them, and care should be taken when engaging with those water bodies – as in, don’t get out of your kayak with an open wound on your leg in those creeks.

For Marine Bathing Beaches, FDOH samples 10 locations in Manatee County, and 10 locations in Sarasota County. They sample once a week, on average. As of today (11/29/2023) the latest samples (from two days ago) were in the “good” range (<35) for 19 of the 20 sites, while considered “moderate” at Bird Key Park. The value at Bird Key Park was less than 70, but more than 35, which would still be below the Class 3 Marine standard for the 10th percentile criteria.

So...is it safe to swim in Sarasota Bay? Yes, it is. But not at the outfall of a storm drain, for example, and not along the shoreline after a big rain event. In other words, use your common sense. I probably spend as much if not more time underneath the waters of Sarasota Bay than most residents, and I have no concerns doing so. But I wouldn’t snorkel too far away from the open waters of the bay up into Hudson Bayou or Philippi Creek, and I don’t typically spend time swimming around in the water at the boat ramps I might use. Rain events matter, and storm events matter even more. We found violations of the Class 3 Marine FIB standard all the way out in the middle of the ICW channel in Roberts, Little Sarasota and Blackburn Bays up to two weeks after Ian came through in 2022.

Is it safe to eat oysters or clams in Sarasota Bay? Nope. Is it safe to swim in any of our freshwater creeks? Nope, but you shouldn’t worry too much about kayaking in them, just be careful getting out of your kayak if you have any open wounds, for example.

We often get asked “why don’t you fix this?” Well, the problem is, none of the three FIBs we use in Florida are specific to humans, or mammals or even animals as a source! Which means, we don’t really know where the bacteria are coming from. They could be from human fecal material coming from lift station failures or leaky sewer pipes. Or they could be from someone not picking up after their dog, or from raccoons, or bird poop washing off bird colonies or docks, or even from decomposing seaweed or sloughed off seagrass blades. Basically, any organic matter in our bay, whether from sewage spills or piles of decomposing seaweed will be decomposed by bacteria that include species that can test positive as FIBs. A few years ago, while in the private sector, I led a study that found that we could produce tens of millions of “fecal indicator” bacteria by placing 10 grams of grass clippings into 5-gallon buckets of lake water. We got more FIBs, more quickly, from decomposing grass clippings than from freshly collected dog poop put into similar 5-gallon buckets.

Therefore, if you have a concern about elevated levels of bacteria, one of the things you can do to follow up is to conduct a “source molecular” study. There are gene sequences

in bacteria from humans that are not found in birds or dogs or horses – and if you find that sequence at high enough levels, you know what to focus your efforts on. However, if you don’t find that gene sequence, it could just be that the human influence was not present that day – not that it was never present. Why don’t we do these more often? Because they are expensive – much more expensive than traditional monitoring. That said, it’s a lot cheaper to do a study which might find that your bacteria were from birds pooping on boat docks that then gets washed into the bay when it rains than to assume high levels of FIBs were only from humans, and then replace all your septic tanks only to find out that those systems weren’t the source of your problem after all.

I’ll stop here, as this is a lot to digest (pun intended). But if you have questions or comments, please reach out to me (do

not hit “reply all”) and I’ll get back to you.
Dave Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Longboat Landings Mangrove Violation

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
I wanted to share what I consider the problem with having the State DEP handle mangrove violations and why I think it’s important to discuss Longboat Key taking over delegation. The violation at Longboat Landings was reported in March of 2022 and as of today the last action taken by the State (based

See Letters, page 11

Longboat Key News

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OnPatrol



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

Nov. 18

Suspicious person

4:09 p.m.

Officer Nazareno while on patrol at North Shore Road saw a man talking to himself by the dumpster in the parking lot. Upon arrival, patrol cars canvassed the North Shore and 7000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive area but were unable to locate the man. The caller was unable to give a clothing description or direction of travel. Case clear.



caller advised that they might have went out on their boat and will have his neighbor parked behind him to move his vehicle instead. Case clear.

Nov. 20

Agency assistance

10:58 a.m.

Officer Ferrigine responded to the 100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for an agency assist with the City of Sarasota Police Department. Dispatch advised there was a man that called into dispatch and stated they were going to jump off the New Pass Bridge. Upon his arrival, he was unable to locate any subjects matching the description. Sarasota Police Department

advised they were located at the 800 block of John Ringling Parkway. Case clear.

Nov. 21

Agency assistance

9:33 a.m.

Officer Pescuma while on marine patrol, provided assistance to Longboat Key Code Enforcement with transport to La Lanire Drive for a stop work order. Case clear.

Animal complaint

9:46 a.m.

Officer Mathis was dispatched to the 5500 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to an animal complaint. Upon his arrival, Officer Mathis was flagged down by a woman who advised Officer Mathis that there were two dogs unleashed in the park and she was in fear of her life because she could not use the park. Officer Mathis asked the woman for her driver's license and other information so he could list her as the complainant for the code violation. The woman refused to provide her information and insisted she wanted to remain anonymous and demanded the park be cleared of all animals. Officer Mathis then checked the park for dogs off their leash and had negative contact. Case clear.

Suspicious person

9:22 p.m.

Officer Butler was dispatched to Longboat Bridge for a report of a suspicious person. Upon arrival, Officer Butler met with the bridge tender who stated numerous individuals were fishing from the bridge violating the posted signs. The supervisor observed approximately 10 individuals in the No Fishing area. A verbal warning was made for all parties in which they complied.

Nov. 22

Agency assistance

8:56 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for an other agency assist due to traffic congestion on Longboat Key's South Bridge. Upon his arrival, he stood by to monitor traffic situation caused by construction on the Sarasota side of the bridge. Officer Maple relayed updated congestion information to dispatch and Sarasota Police Department. Construction delays minimized after approximately 30 minutes and normal traffic resumed. Case clear.

Fire

1:40 p.m.

Officer Nazareno responded to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a structure fire with smoke coming out of the electrical outlet on the patio area of the first floor. Prior to arrival the caller advised that the smoke/fire was extinguished. Longboat Key Fire units BN9, Engine 1, Truck 91, and Rescue 91 responded to the scene and conducted their investigation. Officer Nazareno was advised by the Fire Department Supervisor that there was minor damage on the exterior wall of the outdoor electrical outlet and that the fire was caused by the rainwater that got into the outlet. No injuries were reported on the scene. Case clear.

Noise

2:33 a.m.

Officer Martinson responded to Lois Avenue for a noise complaint. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson could hear people talking loudly in the backyard behind the fence and observed a large group of people in the living room through the front window. Officer Martinson knocked on the door and it was answered by the resident who was making the noise. Officer Martinson told the man that there had been a complaint about the noise and then advised him of the town's ordinance. The man apologized and stated they would all quiet down. The complainant did not want to meet with police. Case clear.

Injured animal

9:46 a.m.

Officer Nazareno responded to the 7000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for an animal complaint call regarding a possible injured possum at the parking lot. Upon arrival, Officer Nazareno canvassed the property but was unable to locate the injured animal at the parking lot. The caller did not wish to be seen or contacted. Case clear.

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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 8

on the Oculus link they provided me) was on May 5th. I was out riding my bike yesterday and took this picture of the site on my way by. I have reached out to the State for an update but have not heard back yet.

Rusty Chinnis
Suncoast Waterkeeper

Longboat Landings Mangrove Violation

To: Suncoast Waterkeeper Chair Rusty Chinnis
What was supposed to happen there?
Ken Schneider
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Landings Mangrove Violation

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider
Good question. I can't see where any restoration has taken place dating back to violations reported as far back as 2020. Check out the dates these were initiated and where they stand now. I would suggest code enforcement follow up.

Rusty Chinnis
Chair, Suncoast Waterkeeper

Gulfside Solution

To: Longboat Key Commission
As a resident of Longboat Key, I'd like to share my thoughts on Gulfside Road and perhaps a reasonable path forward for this troublesome area. Hurricane Idalia certainly affected this strip of 16 properties, exposing continuous rows of old seawalls, but this should not be viewed as a new problem. These seawalls date back a half century - well before sea rise concern and put in place for a reason. (see enclosed power point and dating of Ohana seawall) My fear is that taxpayers are going to be asked to bail out 16 owners of multi-million-dollar properties who made a choice to live/build in an area that has historically endured erosions.

Here are some bullet points that may help guide your future decisions on what to do with Gulfside Road as well as Ohana.

In a public meeting held June of 2022, one of the Longboat Key commissioners expressed my exact concerns regarding potential unfairness of taxpayer funding for the 16 properties. I know there is some support for this sentiment already.

The Ohana seawall roadblock is unfortunate from a beach walker standpoint, but I believe this affects very few people, which includes me. Yes, I'd like to continue walking south of Ohana like I used to, but there is still a very good amount of beach to walk north of Ohana and I think the vocal minority has gone through their "grieving process" and unhappily accepts the laws regarding beachfront property ownership.

In a candid conversation with the coastal engineer who had input on the enclosed Power Point, he mentioned on a phone call that he did not know how successful the groins would be in holding the sand. He was confident that this area would be a challenge given how far the groins would jet out from Ohana wall (200'+) creating a very unnatural peninsula. He also questioned whether FDEP would actually allow such a project that would extend out that far into the gulf.

If the groins are installed taxpayers will be strapped with maintaining the renourishment at a potentially steep and unknown cost. Note - All of the cost estimates were done prior to recent inflation spikes.

Now that Hurricane Idalia has exposed seawalls and other hard structure - I believe Longboat Key code requires property owners to maintain seawalls (Seawalls shall be maintained plumb and in good repair, without visible deterioration, spalling of concrete, exposed reinforcements, ground holes, or other damage). Why not enforce current municipal code? This would also give property owners an opportunity to protect their properties and exhibit their willingness to do so without relying on others (taxpayers) to bail them out.

Casey Key Example:

Use Casey Key as a guideline. Very exclusive beachfront homes protected by natural rocks at homeowner expense. It does not seem to influence property values nor a desire to build beachfront. In fact, new home construction is built to withstand sea rise and as time goes on, people will build with the expectation of erosion and storm surge. I believe that LBK can make an investment and effort to help the 16 property owners with getting the necessary clearance to reinforce their properties. This might not be a perfect solution, but it does not strap taxpayers to a very questionable and expensive project. Here is an example of a Casey Key home:

In summary - Gulfside erosion is not a new problem as is evident with half century old seawalls. The owners of these properties are/were aware of the challenges in this area (or at least should have been aware with some due diligence) and Longboat Key can empower these homeowners by getting the necessary clearance to reinforce their properties, enhance the aesthetics, and help maintain property values. Taxpayers should not be asked to bail out 16 homeowners that have current property values of \$4 million (land only) to as much as \$17 million (i.e. spec home currently being built at 6489 Gulfside Rd) for an expensive experimental project that will require constant funding. In the best interest of the majority of LBK homeowners, wouldn't it make sense to at least explore and try this approach first before committing to such a large investment - what do we have to lose? Thank You for reading this.

Steve Weyl
Longboat Key

Gulfside Solution

To: Steve Weyl
Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the Gulfside Road beach erosion. Your email referenced a Powerpoint attachment, which was not attached. It could be that the town's email server stripped it off, but perhaps you can try to resend it?

Debra Williams
Commissioner
Longboat Key

Harbour Circle meeting

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider
I hope you had a good Thanksgiving. The annual meeting of the Harbour Circle Homeowners Association will be held on Jan 15, 2024 from 10 a.m. - noon at the Anna Maria Island offices. For the past two years, you have been the highlight of our meeting and I want to invite you to talk with our members again this year. We can fit you into the agenda at whatever time works for you. Are you still playing tennis on Mondays? In any case, I hope you can join us.

Don Stitzenberg
President
Harbour Circle Homeowners Association

See Letters, page 12

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Alsace: The banned wine shaped by German border

Alsace has a well deserved reputation for producing high quality white wines other than Riesling. Minimal intrusion by winemakers into the natural and traditional practice of producing wines lets the qualities of the grapes shine through.

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

Soon after the Romans invaded the Alsace region of France in 58 BC, they set about planting wine grapes on the hillsides. Wines made from these grapes soon rivaled wines produced in vineyards in what we now call Italy. Italian winemakers responded by having the Alsace winemakers banned from selling their wines in competition with Italian wines. These bans, as often happens, merely enhanced the reputation of Alsace wines.

Located within a fertile valley of rolling hills running parallel to the German border, with the Vosges Mountain Range to the west and the Black Forest Mountains to the east, the eighty mile long Alsace territory has stretches of fertile plains and south-facing hillsides that bask in sunshine. The mountains on either side protect the region from rainstorms and winter winds, making it one of the warmer and dryer areas of France. Farmers grow cabbage for choucroute (sauerkraut), hops, cereals, vegetables, herbs, quetsches (black and dark red plums used to make a dry, white brandy), and other fruits. The fifty-one Grand Cru plots of wine grapes occupy the best of the sunny slopes that rise above the plains.



Vineyards on the hillsides outside the walls tower over the city walls. Grape pickers have to use ropes to rappel down the steep slopes to gather the grape clusters.



Neighboring Germany has a strong influence on the wines of the Alsace. The Alsace region has shifted from French to German control and back several times. A local Alsatian dialect sounds like German and still exists alongside the official French language and the overlapping German language.

The prestigious wine of Alsace, Riesling, comes from Germany originally, and Alsatian Riesling attracts German buyers. They appreciate its dry and floral, yet sturdy, style. Riesling has a unique ability for a white wine: the premier Rieslings age beautifully for decades, taking on complex aroma and flavor nuances with extended age. These complex aromas include in some instances a whiff of petrol (gasoline). Some Riesling drinkers favor this nuance in aged Rieslings.

The 2021 Wolfberger Alsace Riesling (\$26) and the 2021 Famille Hugel Classic Riesling (\$27) have elegantly clean and lightly floral aromas and flavors. We tasted the aged 2012 Hugel Grossi Laue Riesling (\$80), but in the absence or aged cheese or pâté did not find its aromas and flavors a compelling upgrade. The Hugel tasting room has a choice location in the heart of the walled Commune of Riquewihr, famous for its Christmas market. Tourists pack Riquewihr and its markets during the Christmas season

Alsace has a well deserved reputation for producing high quality white wines other than Riesling. Minimal intrusion by winemakers into the natural and traditional practice of producing wines lets the qualities of the grapes shine through. The 2021 Trimbach Ribeauville Pinot Blanc (\$16) and 2021 Trimbach Gewürztraminer (\$27) earn high marks for their crisp and mellow tastes. The Gewürztraminer has stronger floral aromas that distinguish it from the Pinot Blanc. The Trimbach Sylvaner, from a grape widely planted in Austria, offers a pleasant surprise for anyone fortunate enough to find a bottle.

Wine drinkers who favor Pinot Grigio will find the 2020 Famille Hugel Classic Pinot Gris (\$24) a worthy upgrade. Italian winemakers, nonetheless, have stolen the march in this case. People tend to find Pinot Gree-Gio easier to remember and more fun to say than Pinot Gree.

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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Letters, from page 12

Comment from Resident of St. Armands Key

Thank you for following up on my earlier message. No, I have not gotten a response from your staff. Since last week was a holiday we could not find workers to replace our mailbox, we hope to rectify that situation today.

However, I am more concerned that until we enforce the city’s traffic laws that deem this road to be closed to large commercial vehicles we are endangering property and inviting injury to residents. I appreciate your concern and look forward to receiving a response from your staff that will help alleviate this situation.

Robin Palermo
Sarasota

Miss Susie’s Food Truck

To: Mr. Kriwitsky

Thank you for reaching out to the City with your questions. The City will be receiving ownership of a food truck due to a default on a loan the City gave. The City provided a loan to a non-profit organization (Tableside Cares); however, the non-profit is dissolving and have communicated they can no longer make the loan payments to the City. The food truck is the non-profit’s only asset; therefore, it will transfer to the City in lieu of repayment of the loan, provided in accordance with a loan settlement agreement. Any license or inspections would not be associated with the City as we do not own the vehicle or operate a food truck. To my knowledge, the food truck has not been in operation, but in storage, for some time. Any previous records should be associated with the non-profit Tableside Cares.

The future plan for the food truck is for it to be stationed at the Bobby Jones Golf Course that will be opening soon. The City will supply the food truck to the Bobby Jones Golf Course to be operated by the management company, Indigo. Indigo has been contracted to manage all operations at Bobby Jones, including concessions. Any future DBPR records for the food operation from the vehicle would be the responsibility of Indigo once they become operational. It is not the City’s intent to enter the restaurant business.

Wayne Applebee
Economic Development Manager
City of Sarasota

Roundup

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Debbie Trice

Hi Debbie it’s Barbara Johnson your neighbor at City Side. Back in 2020 I attended our Citizens Academy. There I asked if we used Roundup when caring for city grounds. I was disappointed to learn that we did but was told we were fazing it out. Debbie is this the case? Would appreciate if you could follow up and find out if we did truly stop using Roundup. We know it’s a carcinogenic. Thanks for your help.

Barbara Johnson
Sarasota



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LBK Market, from page 1

dissect that number, we get 78 of those active residential listings being less than \$1,000,000.00 and 74 of them were greater than \$1,000,000.00. That represented a total dollar value of \$343,927,719.00 in active residential listings.

Going into December 2023 on Longboat Key we have 226 active residential listings. When taking a closer look, we see that 90 of them are less than \$1,000,000.00 and 136 of them are greater than \$1,000,000.00. The represents a total dollar value of \$543,261,719.00 in active residential listings. This is an increase of \$199,334,000.00 in active Real Estate listings over last year. Very impressive! Just in time for our winter season.

There was some scuttlebutt that I heard saying there would not be as many listings because home owners want to hang onto their low interest rate mortgages. This appears not to be true. Not surprising considering the majority of real estate transactions on our little piece of paradise island are cash offers.

There was even an increase in active vacant land listings. December 2022 showed 13 active vacant lot listings. Going into December 2023 we have 16 active vacant lot listings. I think that is amazing considering all of the new construction underway on Longboat Key.

As far as interest rates are concerned, we do not have a crystal ball to see what the future has in store. I have heard some buyers say they are waiting for the interest rates to go down. I have also heard some lenders say they feel interest rates may creep up even higher. If I may use an analogy, when I was 25 years old, I thought I was overweight. Now that I am 56, I wish I was still my 25-year-old skinny self. In other words, things could always be worse. Be happy today. Life is short, buy the beach house.

All statistics and figures are from Steller MLS on November 30, 2023.

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Sherry ‘Nef’ Price is a USPTR certified professional. She played at IMG and Division 1 College.
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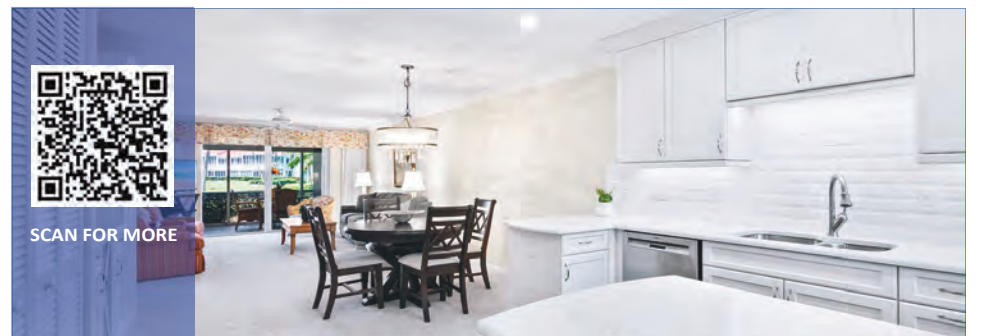
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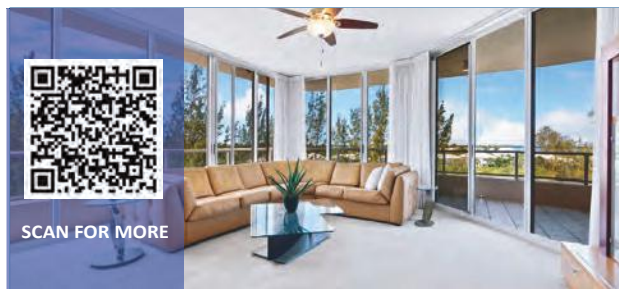
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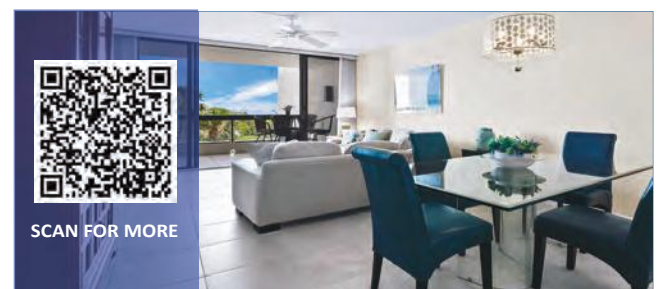
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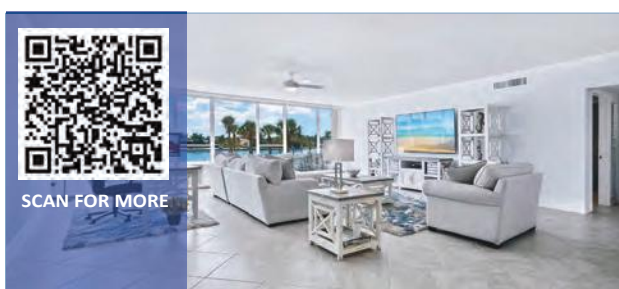
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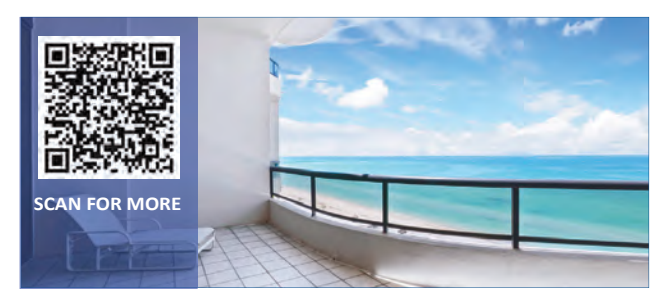
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