



# Longboat Key News

May 1, 2026

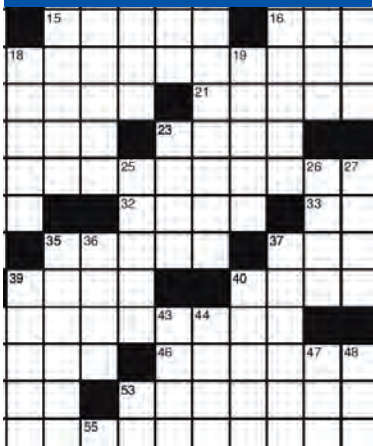
Serving Longboat Key, St. Armands, Downtown Sarasota & Anna Maria Island

FREE

## InsideLook



**\$17.5 Million Longboat Sale ...page 7**



**Let the puzzle begin on Key! ...page 13**



**Running for a true cause ...page 10**



**But we fished here before! ...page 10**

## A Draped Sign, a Litigation Threat, a Divided Town, and a Monday Vote That Could Change Longboat Key

*This is not a routine zoning dispute. This is a confrontation between two legitimate and powerful claims on the same small barrier island — the economic power of a half-billion-dollar resort that has fundamentally transformed Longboat Key, and the legal and moral authority of a community that built one of the most carefully preserved beach environments in Florida and intends to keep it that way.*

**STEVE REID**  
Editor & Publisher  
sreid@lbknews.com

It has been draped in fabric since code enforcement officers came calling — a 14-foot metallic arch bearing the unmistakable crown logo of the St. Regis hotel brand, standing at the end of a boardwalk jutting into the Gulf of Mexico, shrouded now like a piece of furniture in a house where someone has died.

On Monday, May 4, the Longboat Key Town Commission decides whether it stays or goes.

That simple sentence does not capture what is actually at stake. This is not a routine zoning dispute. This is a confrontation between two legitimate and powerful claims on the same small barrier island — the economic power of a half-billion-dollar resort that has fundamentally transformed Longboat Key, and the legal and moral authority of a community that built one of the most carefully preserved beach environments in Florida and intends to keep it that way.

See St. Regis, page 2

## Gulfside Road Under Siege: Longboat Key and a pair of storm victims

*Drive down Gulfside Road today and you will see a barrier island that, for the most part, has clawed its way back from the devastation of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.*

Fresh landscaping has reclaimed the storm scars. Rebuilt homes gleam in the Gulf light. But two addresses on the same stretch of mid-Key beachfront tell a very different story — and they are about to pull the Town of Longboat Key into what could become the most legally complex stretch of local government the island has seen since the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort saga.

At 6541 Gulfside Road sits the structure the island has come to know as the “Half Moon House” — a 1973 stilted bungalow with rotting pilings and a crumbling seawall, already placarded by the town’s Building Official, stripped

See The Demo, page 13



## Mira Mar’s Revival Anchors Sarasota’s Downtown Renaissance

*There are buildings, and then there are landmarks. Sarasota’s Mira Mar has long been the latter — a structure so woven into the city’s founding narrative that its fate became a matter of civic debate, not just real estate economics.*

Now, with a formal construction permit issued by the City of Sarasota and crews mobilizing along South Palm Avenue, the century-old building has cleared what may have been its highest hurdle yet.

The timing is notable. Downtown Sarasota is in the middle of one of the most intense luxury residential building cycles in its history, with major projects rising or selling from The Quay to Main Street. Cranes mark the skyline. Branded towers carry names associated with global luxury hospitality. Into that environment comes the Mira Mar project that started not with a glass curtain wall and an international brand, but with a century-old building on the verge of structural failure — and a developer who chose, after initial resistance, to restore it rather than replace it.

### A City in the Middle of a Residential Renaissance

Downtown Sarasota is in the midst of a luxury residential building cycle with few precedents in its modern history. It is reshaping downtown’s upper residential tier. Mira Mar Residences enters that marketplace with a fundamentally different value proposition — one rooted not in brand licensing but in the specific history of the block it occupies.

See Mira Mar, page 15



**St. Regis, from page 1**

It is a story of big money, big principle, and a footnote in a law firm’s application letter that no one has talked about publicly — a footnote that turns Monday’s vote into something far more consequential than a planning board recommendation.

A lawsuit is waiting in the wings. The question is whether the Town Commission opens that door or closes it.

**Where This Started: The Old Colony Groin and a Crown Logo**

Before there was a St. Regis on Longboat Key, there was the Colony Beach Resort. And before there was a St. Regis arch, there was the Colony’s groin — a rock structure extending into the Gulf from the Colony property, which by the time Unicorp National Developments purchased the site was, in the company’s own words, “in very poor condition.”

Unicorp CEO Chuck Whittall repaired it. He added a pedestrian boardwalk with rope railings on top. And in August 2025, he topped that boardwalk with a gleaming metallic arch bearing the St. Regis crown logo and the words “ST. REGIS — LONGBOAT KEY” in polished lettering framing an open view to the Gulf horizon.

He did not have a Town permit for the arch or the sign.

The State of Florida, for its part, had approved it. When Unicorp applied to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 2024 for groin repair permits, those application materials included the archway and sign. The DEP issued the permit. The sovereign submerged state lands on which the groin sits — because all land seaward of the Erosion Control Line belongs to Florida, not to Unicorp — were cleared for the structure by the state agency responsible for them.

What was missing was Town approval. Town staff informed Unicorp that the arch and sign needed to be added to the Town’s own permit — and that, in staff’s reading, the Town Code did not allow this type of structure. The remedy, staff advised, was to apply for amendments to the Town Code itself.

So Unicorp did. Two companion ordinances — Ordinance 2026-07, amending the Zoning Code, and Ordinance 2026-08, amending the Sign Code — are before the Commission Monday on first reading. Both must pass for either to take effect. Both are being considered over the explicit denial recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Board, which voted against them 4-1 and 3-2 in March.

**The Litigation Threat Nobody Is Talking About**

Here is the sentence that changes everything about Monday’s vote.

Buried in footnote 2 of the January 23, 2026, application letter submitted by Unicorp’s attorney, Brenda L. Patten of Berlin Patten Ebling PLLC, is this: “Unicorp and SR LBK do not agree that the Town Code prohibits the groin sign and arch, but are applying for the Zoning Code amendments to avoid further delay. In the event the proposed amendments are denied by the Town Commission, Unicorp and SR LBK reserve all rights to challenge the application of the Town Codes to the groin sign and arch in any subsequent Town or circuit court proceedings.”

Read that carefully. Unicorp is not conceding the Town had the right to require them to cover the arch in the first place. They are pursuing the ordinance amendments as the path of least resistance. If the Commission says no, they are explicitly notifying the Town that a circuit court lawsuit follows.

This transforms Monday’s proceeding. The Commission is not simply deciding whether a

14-foot arch looks right on a Longboat Key beach. It is deciding whether to resolve this dispute through the legislative process — or to walk into an expensive, prolonged circuit court fight against one of the most well-resourced developers in Florida.

Unicorp’s legal theory, if they litigate, would likely be that the existing Town Code does not expressly prohibit the arch in the first place. The 150-foot ECL setback, they argued at the March P&Z hearing, applies landward — it was not written with the expectation of governing structures extending into the Gulf. Whether that argument prevails in court is impossible to predict with certainty, but the cost of finding out would fall on Longboat Key taxpayers regardless of the outcome.

**The Arch Itself: What You’re Actually Looking At**

For months, the arch has been discussed in the abstract — a “14-foot metallic structure,” an “embedded sign,” an “archway.” The application photos now in the Town’s public record make the reality concrete.

The arch is striking, elegant, and unmistakably commercial. It is a curved, polished metal span rising from the boardwalk surface on two tapered columns, at the apex of which sits the St. Regis crown — the same interlocked monogram that appears on hotel stationery, bathrobes, and key cards at St. Regis properties worldwide. Below the crown, in lettering that reads clearly from the public beach, the sign says “ST. REGIS” with “LONGBOAT KEY” beneath. It frames a direct view of open Gulf water. It is stunning. It is also, by any honest visual assessment, a luxury brand advertisement on sovereign state land.

Unicorp’s own application letter is candid about its commercial function. Attorney Patten describes the arch as something that “will draw attention to the property, promoting visitors and tourism,” providing “a focal point for photos and memories, drawing more visitors and tourists to the hotel or motel.” Beach walkers and boaters passing the property, she writes, “will also see the archway and sign, encouraging them to use the amenities of the hotel or motel.”

That is, word for word, the definition of commercial advertising.

**The False Hurricane Claim**

There is one more element of the application record that demands attention, because it is sworn, notarized, and factually wrong.

In Patten’s January 23, 2026, application letter — submitted under her notarized signature — she writes: “As an example, the archway and groin sign at the St. Regis Resort withstood hurricanes Milton and Helene without coming loose or causing damage to surrounding properties.”

Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton both struck the Gulf Coast in September 2024. The arch was installed in August 2025 — nearly a year after both storms. The arch did not exist when the hurricanes hit. It could not have withstood them.

At the March 17 P&Z hearing, board members called this out directly. Whittall apologized and said he had been misinformed by his team. The false claim remains in a sworn, notarized document in the Town’s permanent public record — submitted by a developer whose application was already the subject of community complaints about a pattern of acting first and seeking approval later.

**A Supreme Court, a Content Neutrality Problem, and a Clever Workaround**

The reason these two ordinances are drafted the way they are — why they never mention

See St. Regis, page 3



# CREATIVE KITCHENS & BATHS

YOU CREATE THE DREAM — WE CREATE THE REALITY

LEADING CONDO AND HOME REMODELING SPECIALIST LOCATED ON LONGBOAT KEY!



**941-925-3723** Transforming your home, one room at a time — bringing your vision to life on Longboat Key.

**Longboat Key Showroom**

By Appointment Only

5610 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL 34228

State Certified General Contractor CG-C-1531837

Serving Longboat Key, Lido Key, Bird Key and St. Armands

CKB has a team comprised of general contractors, designers, expert carpenters, project management and more. We will bring your vision to life from first conversation to job completion.

Full Condo & Home Remodeling

Custom & Semi-Custom Cabinetry | Custom Tile Work

Hardwood & LVP Floors | Solid Core Doors

Baseboards & Ceiling Molding/Trim



[www.CreativeKitchenAndBaths.com](http://www.CreativeKitchenAndBaths.com)

## St. Regis, from page 2

“tourism” or “resort amenity” or “wedding venue” — traces directly to a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case that most Longboat Key residents have never heard of.

In *Reed v. Gilbert*, 576 U.S. 155 (2015), the Supreme Court struck down unanimously a municipal sign code in Gilbert, Arizona, that classified signs based on their content — whether they were political, ideological, or directional. The Court held that content-based sign regulations require the most demanding constitutional scrutiny, a standard the Gilbert code could not survive. The Reed decision effectively established a national rule: sign codes must be content-neutral.

Town Attorney Maggie Mooney’s March 9, 2026, legal memorandum — addressed to Planning Director Allen Parsons and attached to the May 4 agenda packet — walks the Commission through the constitutional implications in careful detail. Longboat Key revised its own sign code in 2018 to comply with Reed. Since that revision, the code has not been amended once.

Mooney’s memo also analyzes a 2022 Supreme Court case, *City of Austin v. Reagan National Advertising*, 596 U.S. 61, which upheld the distinction between on-premises and off-premises sign regulations provided the distinction is based on “physical or locational criteria” rather than message content. On-premises vs. off-premises distinctions, Austin confirmed, are subject to the less demanding standard of intermediate scrutiny — easier for municipalities to satisfy.

The St. Regis arch is, legally, an off-premises sign. The hotel property sits landward of a public beach. The groin extends seaward. An intervening public beach strip lies between the hotel and the arch. Under current Town code, an off-premises sign is classified as an “Outdoor Advertising Sign” — prohibited.

Mooney’s constitutional solution is elegant. If the ordinance is drafted not to authorize “tourism advertising” but to authorize “content-neutral ownership identification for public safety purposes” — helping emergency responders locate the structure, and helping the public know who is accountable for the private groin they are walking on — then the amendment clears the Reed constitutional hurdle. Neutral identification signage, she notes, is routinely upheld: think building permit postings, health inspection grades, occupancy notices.

This is why the applicant’s original proposed language — which explicitly referenced “T-6 Zoning District” hotels and motels, and said signs could “identify a hotel, motel, and related amenities” — was stripped out by Town staff before the ordinances reached the Commission. Content-specific tourism references cannot survive Reed. Staff removed them. The applicant agreed to the modifications.

The resulting ordinances authorize an “archway structure with an embedded sign identifying the responsible entity for the structure and groin.” That is the legal frame that holds the whole thing together — and that the Commission, on Monday, must decide whether to accept.

## What the Ordinances Do

The two companion ordinances work in tandem, and only take effect if both pass.

Ordinance 2026-07 amends the Zoning Code in two places. First, it adds a new exception to the 150-foot Gulf waterfront setback requirement, allowing a single archway structure with an embedded identifying sign seaward of the Erosion Control Line on a privately owned and permitted groin with a pedestrian walkway. Second, it adds specific construction standards to the Structures Over Water section: the arch cannot exceed 14 feet in height; the columns cannot exceed 8 inches by 8 inches; the structure cannot form a wall, roofed shelter, or enclosed structure; it must withstand 150-mph winds; it cannot be illuminated; and maintenance is entirely at the owner’s expense.

Ordinance 2026-08 amends the Sign Code to create a new sign category — “Private Groin Sign,” defined as “an archway-shaped sign erected and maintained on a privately owned and permitted groin that includes a pedestrian walkway that extends over sovereign submerged lands in the Gulf of America” — with the same design standards mirrored from the Zoning Code ordinance.

Both ordinances apply town-wide. Currently, only the St. Regis has a privately owned groin with a pedestrian walkway. Planning Director Parsons notes that permitting any future such structure through DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers is “a very challenging process,” but the language is written to capture any that may come.

If both ordinances pass Monday on first reading, a second reading and final public hearing is scheduled for June 1, 2026.

## The Planning Board Said No. The Planning Director Says Yes.

One of the most striking tensions in Monday’s agenda is this: the Town Commission’s advisory Planning and Zoning Board voted to recommend denial of both ordinances. The Town’s professional Planning Director is recommending the Commission approve them anyway.

The P&Z Board’s March 17 hearing was pointed. Board Member Lapovsky called the public safety justification for the sign “silly.” Board Member S. Jay Plager, a retired federal judge, said he had written “BS” in the margin when he read the safety rationale, “because it was so obviously bull.” Plager then immediately said he personally found the arch tasteful and would have voted yes regardless. Board Member Gladding led the denial push, warning that approval set dangerous precedent and could turn the island into the “Jersey Beach.” The formal denial recommendations passed 4-1 and 3-2.

Planning Director Allen Parsons, AICP, came to a different conclusion. His April 9, 2026, memo to Town Manager Howard Tipton recommends forwarding both ordinances to the Commission for approval, finding them consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan goals of promoting health, safety, and the welfare of the community — and with specific Conservation and Coastal Management policies requiring that structures in the Coastal High Hazard Area meet safety standards. “Staff can be supportive of allowing a structure with an embedded identifying sign,” Parsons writes, “provided the public purpose is to identify the entity responsible for both the private groins.”

The professional planning staff supports it. The advisory planning board does not. The Commission decides.

## A Commissioner Has Already Drawn Her Line

Among the commissioners who will hear arguments Monday, at least one has made her posi-

tion unmistakably public.

Commissioner BJ Bishop began raising concerns about the arch when it first appeared, months before any ordinance was drafted. In a recent email exchange that became part of the public conversation, Longboat Key resident William Pepe wrote to Bishop placing the arch in context: “Many residents have already been troubled by the resort’s issues involving sea turtle lighting compliance and the circumstances surrounding its temporary certificate of occupancy. In that context, this latest action feels less like an oversight and more like part of a broader pattern of noncompliance.”

Bishop’s reply was unambiguous: “I first raised this issue when the sign went up and I will continue to urge my colleagues we follow our sign code and have this removed. I believe it is scheduled for our May meeting and I urge you to attend.”

One commission vote committed to removal means Whittall needs four of the remaining six. He is publicly confident he will have them.

## What Whittall Says

From the Sebring International Raceway pits, moments before strapping into a Ferrari 296 GTB, Whittall was characteristically direct.

“If someone else spends a half-billion dollars to build a resort, they should have the right to ask for a wedding arch. It will not be an issue.”

He dismissed the Planning Board’s Jersey Shore comparison as “ridiculous and unfair,” noting that the ordinance applies only to privately owned groins with pedestrian walkways — of which there is exactly one on the island. He called the board “not forward-thinking.” He described the arch as “an integral part of the wedding experience” that is “open to the public — anyone can walk up and take pictures there.”

On the resort’s inaugural season: “tremendously successful,” “doing huge,” with both room rates and occupancy “top of market.” On the economic ripple effect: the owner of The Met clothing shop on St. Armands Circle has told him business has tripled since the St. Regis opened.

Whittall is betting the Commission sees things differently than the planning board did. He may be right. He may not be. If he is wrong, his attorney has already told the Town what comes next.

## What Is Actually at Stake

Step back from the ordinance language, the Reed case, the 150-mph wind ratings, and the footnotes. Here is the

real question Monday’s vote puts to the Longboat Key Town Commission:

Does Longboat Key’s famously strict, carefully maintained system of land use controls — the regulatory architecture that has protected this barrier island’s character through decades of development pressure — apply equally to everyone? Or does a large enough economic contribution buy enough flexibility that the rules can be rewritten around a *fait accompli*?

The public interest in a pristine, uncluttered beach — free from commercial branding on sovereign state land — is real and legitimate. It is not NIMBYism. It is the accumulated civic will of a community that has chosen, consistently and deliberately, to preserve what it has. The residents who oppose the arch are not wrong to worry that this precedent, once set, does not stay contained.

The economic interest the St. Regis represents is equally real. A half-billion-dollar resort that is full, that is driving business up and down the island’s commercial corridors, that pays taxes, and that has put Longboat Key on the international tourism map — that is not nothing. Whittall built something extraordinary here, and the community is better for it. That is also true.

Both things are true simultaneously. And that is why it is consequential — not just for Longboat Key, but as a case study in what happens when a community’s strongest legal tools meet an opponent willing to test them all the way to a courthouse.

The Longboat Key Town Commission Regular Meeting is Monday, May 4, 2026, at 1:00 PM, Town Hall, 501 Bay Isles Road.

The St. Regis arch ordinances — Ordinance 2026-07 (Zoning Code) and Ordinance 2026-08 (Sign Code) — are Agenda Items 6-C and 6-D.

The meeting is live-streamed at [longboatkey.org](http://longboatkey.org). If both ordinances pass on first reading, a second and final public hearing is scheduled for June 1, 2026.

*That is why this is hard. And that is why it is consequential — not just for Longboat Key, but as a case study in what happens when a community’s strongest legal tools meet an opponent willing to test them all the way to a courthouse. Monday is when Longboat Key decides what it stands for.*

## Transform Your Interior For Less

Save up to 35% All Products Now!



Blinds  
Shades  
Shutters  
Drapes  
and More...

Call for a Free Quote **941-251-1924**

Visit our Showroom

4201 N. Washington Blvd. Sarasota

Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm & Sat 10 am to 2 pm



[www.blindsanddesignsofflorida.com](http://www.blindsanddesignsofflorida.com)

# EditorLetters



Longboat Key News and Sarasota City News encourages Letters to the Editor on timely issues. Please email to: [letters@lbknews.com](mailto: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.

## 2027 CPF Requests

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop  
Here are some contacts at FEMA that should be helpful if you or the town would like to do some direct outreach.

Main Region 4 Inbox:  
FEMA-R4-Info@fema.dhs.gov  
Intergovernmental Affairs:  
FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov

I should also note that the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) is such a core part of FEMA's payment model that it may be worth reaching out to them on Monday.  
Adam Cross  
Longboat Key

## 2027 CPF Requests

To: Adam Cross  
Thanks Adam - good info. I am wearing multiple hats in DC in June - one being the Chair of the FL League of Cities Federal Task Force so there may be some opportunities to see some of our other FL representatives.

BJ Bishop  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

## 2027 CPF Requests

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop  
The CPF process is uniquely Member-driven and district-focused, but I have had conversations with a few friends on staff at the THUD Subcommittee to highlight the Buchanan projects. Rep. Steube's request is with the Interior-Environment subcommittee, so we mentioned Longboat's request to Subcommittee Chairman Simpson at lunch last month.

Rep. Mario-Diaz-Balart is the Committee's Vice Chair. Rep. Scott Franklin is the only other Florida Republican on the Committee. Democrats from Florida will likely be thinking about prioritizing competing water projects in South Florida (they have a few), but they include Rep. Wasserman-Schultz and Rep. Frankel.

Last year and the year before, nearly all requests were funded at a lower amount than the original request. The only exceptions to this were projects that were essentially State requests being routed through a single Member, but with the support of a larger group. This is due to overall spending cuts and the self-imposed rule that only 0.5% of all discretionary funding

can be used for CPFs. However, Democratic requests saw the biggest cuts, while Republican requests were mostly preserved.

Because this process is so Member-driven, many Committee Members are reluctant to promote one over the other unless the pressure comes from the Requesting Member's office (i.e. Sami). So staying in contact with Sami is the right way to go.

Adam Cross  
Longboat Key

## 2027 CPF Requests

To: Adam Cross  
Any House Appropriations members I can reach out to? I have not pulled up the committee yet. Sami is in regular contact with me so I will let you know if there is any other news.  
Thanks, BJ Bishop

Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

## Visit Sarasota update

To: Longboat Key Commission  
Please find below our March tourism performance update for Sarasota County, provided to us from Downs and St. Germain Research.

At Visit Sarasota County, we share these monthly insights to provide visibility into current market conditions and trends. Our sales and marketing teams actively use this data—alongside ongoing collaboration with our industry partners—to refine strategies in real time, ensuring our marketing investments are deployed as efficiently and effectively as possible to support our

**See Letters, page 6**

*A Generous & Joyful Community*

Growing in Jesus' Name

**Dr. Julia Wharff Piermont, Pastor**  
**Join Us For Worship!**  
Sunday, 10:00 AM

Watch live or livestream:  
[www.christchurchoflbk.org](http://www.christchurchoflbk.org) (follow YouTube link)

**CHRIST CHURCH OF LONGBOAT KEY PRESBYTERIAN (U.S.A.)**

6400 Gulf of Mexico Dr. • 941.383.8833 • [www.christchurchoflbk.org](http://www.christchurchoflbk.org)

BREAKFAST • BRUNCH • LUNCH • DINNER • CATERING • GOURMET DELI & BAKERY • CORNER STORE

**HARRY'S**  
Continental Kitchens  
EST. 1979  
LONGBOAT KEY

**WEEKLY SPECIALS**  
**BEST BRUNCH ON LONGBOAT KEY**  
20% OFF BOTTLES OF WINE DAILY  
RESTAURANT & DELI  
**HAPPY HOUR 3-6**  
NIGHTLY DINNER SPECIALS

525 ST. JUDES DRIVE • LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228 • [HARRYSKITCHEN.COM](http://HARRYSKITCHEN.COM) • (941) 383-0777

For a limited time at

**THE LAZY LOBSTER**  
LONGBOAT KEY

**MIX | MATCH and MAKE IT LUNCH!**

Choose Any Two For **\$13.50**

AVAILABLE MONDAY-FRIDAY | 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM | THROUGH MAY 8TH

ENJOY ANY COMBINATION OF SELECT SOUPS, SALADS, AND HALF SANDWICHES—JUST THE RIGHT SIZE FOR A RELAXED LUNCH.  
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN. OUR SEASONAL LUNCH SERVICE ENDS MAY 8TH!

**CHOOSE TWO COMBO CHOICES\***

**SOUPS & SALADS**

- Cream of Tomato Bisque
- Gazpacho
- Garden Salad (choice of housemade dressings)
- Caesar Salad
- Spinach Salad (warm bacon dressing)

**HALF SANDWICHES**

- Shrimp Salad on Croissant
- Egg Salad on Croissant
- Club Sandwich on Grilled Sourdough
- BLT on Grilled Sourdough
- Grilled Cheese on Grilled Sourdough

Add a glass of our housemade Red or White Sangria **\$6** Enjoy a complete lunch for under **\$20!**

*\*Served together for your enjoyment. At this special price, we kindly ask for no substitutions. Dine-in only.*

5350 GULF OF MEXICO DR. | 941-383-0440 | [LAZYLOBSTEROFLONGBOAT.COM](http://LAZYLOBSTEROFLONGBOAT.COM)

**Let us 'Bringle' the Showroom to You**  
**CALL BRINGLES BLINDS TODAY**

**SALE! \$500 OFF all Custom Interior Shutters & Shades**

**Longboat residents and business owners Chris & Dana Bringle**

**Bringles Blinds provides affordable blinds, shutters, shades, and master installation services to the Longboat Key, Sarasota, Bradenton, Lakewood Ranch and surrounding areas.**

**CALL FOR A FREE QOUTE — 941-320-7019**  
[BRINGLEBLINDS.LBK@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BRINGLEBLINDS.LBK@GMAIL.COM)  
[BRINGLESBLINDS.COM](http://BRINGLESBLINDS.COM)  
\*Offer valid with minimum purchase of three

# hotworks.org Sarasota Fine Art Show™

At Sarasota Art Museum - outdoors in the Parking Lot  
May 30 & 31, 2026



@hotworksartshows

www.facebook.com/hotworksartshows

Craig Sheffield, Photography

**Juried Fine Art & Craft Show - Something For Everyone**  
**Free Admission ~ Sat 10-5, Sun 10-4**

**Sarasota Art Museum Parking Lot, 1001 S. Tamiami Trail**

*While at the show, be sure to visit the Budding Artist Competition for grades 6-12 or ages 9-19!*

**More info [www.hotworks.org](http://www.hotworks.org)**



# EditorLetters



## Letters, from page 4

local economy.

March numbers comparing 2026 to 2025:

Visitors were 158,500 compared to 155,800 in 2025

Visitor direct expenditures were \$234,302,600 compared to \$234,521,100 in 2025

Lodging occupancy was 81.5% compared to 83.3% in 2025

Lodging average room rate was \$402.36 compared to \$386.00 in 2025

There were 365,800 room nights sold compared to 373,000 in 2025

Additional Reports: You can view our latest measurement reports and quarterly recaps on demand at [www.VisitSarasotaCountyTransparency.com](http://www.VisitSarasotaCountyTransparency.com). (Quarter Two Report will be live next week.)

Invite: If you're interested in connecting directly with our tourism and hospitality industry, we'd also be delighted to host you at our National Travel & Tourism Week Celebration on May 7 at The Ringling from 4:30-6:30 p.m. If you'd like to attend as our guest, please let us know and we'll gladly reserve a ticket for you. At this event we will be bestowing our annual Voice of Sarasota Award to Maestro Victor DeRenzi who has helped define Sarasota Opera and our identity as Florida's Cultural Coast. As always, if you have any questions or need anything from our team, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Erin Duggan  
President/CEO  
Visit Sarasota

## Public hearing

To: Longboat Key Town Commission

On behalf of S.R. LBK, LLC, this e-mail is to inform you that I will attend the May 4, 2026 Commission meeting to request continuances of the following public hearings:

Agenda item 6C regarding proposed Ordinance 2026-07 amending the Zoning Code to allow an archway on a groin in the Gulf of America; and

Agenda item 6D regarding proposed Ordinance 2026-08 amending the sign code to allow a sign on a groin.

Unicorp and the St. Regis are reexamining their options regarding the sign and whether a sign code amendment is necessary. If the sign code amendment is unnecessary, we will request withdrawing Ordinance 2026-08, amending the terms of proposed Ordinance 2026-07 and revising the staff memo. Also, the public purpose of "identifying the party (or parties) responsible for maintenance and liability of the private groin structure" needs to be changed to a more appropriate public purpose. In addition, we do not want to proceed until the St. Regis development has a final CO. We are working on issues with DEP, so final sign off may not be until mid-June. Thank you. See you on Monday.

Brenda Patten  
Berlin, Patten, Ebling  
Sarasota

## Bradenton Area EDC Announces Shirar O'Connor as President and CEO

To: Longboat Key Commission

The Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation (BAEDC) today announced the appointment of Shirar O'Connor as its next President and Chief Executive Officer. O'Connor was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors following a comprehensive national search process led by Winner Partners, a St. Petersburg, FL based executive search firm with an expertise in economic development.

See Letters, page 9



# SECUR-ALL INSURANCE AGENCY

---

*Sandra Smith* | 941.383.3388

**VISIT US ACROSS FROM TOWN HALL! 510 BAY ISLES ROAD SUITE 1, LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228**

CHUBB, AIG, UNIVERSAL, UNITED, SAFECO, PROGRESSIVE, FRONTLINE, VAULT, FLOOD, WE HAVE YOU COVERED!



**MEMBERSHIP:** *Come Test the Waters.*



LONGBOAT•KEY•CLUB



**DIVE IN!**

Prospective members can explore several tiers of membership, providing access to various high-end amenities. Contact [membership@longboatkeyclub.com](mailto:membership@longboatkeyclub.com) or (941)387-1661 to learn more.

# KeyRealEstate

## Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath	Days On Market	Sale Price
865 LONGBOAT CLUB RD	9,328	\$18,700,000	6 6 2	203	\$17,500,000
5581 GULF OF MEXICO DR	8,529	\$15,000,000	10 11 11	0	\$14,000,000
655 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#1PH	3,139	\$5,250,000	3 3 1	49	\$4,950,000
610 YARDARM LN	4,138	\$3,999,999	4 4 1	107	\$3,950,000
5960 GULF OF MEXICO DR	2,624	\$3,050,000	4 2 1	0	\$3,050,000
3576 FAIR OAKS WAY	3,727	\$3,195,000	3 5 1	252	\$2,800,000
1135 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#605	1,503	\$1,650,000	2 2 0	44	\$1,600,000
601 NORTON ST	2,956	\$1,649,000	3 3 0	34	\$1,545,000
1241 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#203	3,045	\$1,999,000	3 4 0	168	\$1,537,500
2450 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#212	2,830	\$1,250,000	3 2 1	622	\$1,251,000
2675 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#403	1,896	\$1,200,000	3 2 0	84	\$1,200,000
100 SANDS POINT RD Unit#223	1,941	\$1,150,000	3 2 0	64	\$1,050,000
1000 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#402	1,290	\$1,045,000	2 2 0	139	\$995,000
6841 LONGBOAT DR S	1,380	\$1,050,000	2 2 0	97	\$900,000
2016 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#317	1,442	\$895,000	2 2 0	13	\$890,000
6951 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#14	1,170	\$899,000	2 2 0	362	\$840,000
636 TARAWITT DR	1,248	\$799,000	2 2 0	350	\$750,000
2155 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#804	2,119	\$775,000	3 2 0	160	\$740,000
4900 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#205	1,312	\$698,000	2 2 0	102	\$670,000
805 SPANISH DR N	1,405	\$399,000	3 2 0	47	\$358,300
3710 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#A20	640	\$199,900	1 1 0	344	\$195,000



### JEFF RHINELANDER

941-685-3590  
Jeff@jeffrhinelander.com



### COURTNEY TARANTINO

941-893-7203  
courtney.tarantino@floridamoves.com



443F John Ringling Blvd. • Sarasota, FL 34236



**BIRD KEY • SARASOTA**  
605 Wild Turkey Lane  
3BR/2.5BA • \$1,795,000



**BEACHES OF LONGBOAT KEY**  
775 Longboat Club Rd. #203  
3BR/3BA • Full Gulf View • \$1,750,000

**NOW PENDING**



**L'AMBIANCE • LONGBOAT KEY**  
435 L'Ambiance Dr #J703  
3BR/2BA/1HB • \$4,495,000



**BIRD KEY • SARASOTA**  
570 Spoonbill Drive  
5BR/6.5BA • FULL BAYFRONT • \$7,800,000



**BIRD KEY • SARASOTA**  
259 Robin Drive  
3BR/3FB/2HB • FULL BAYFRONT • \$7,900,000



**COUNTRY CLUB SHORES • LONGBOAT KEY**  
510 Wedge Lane  
4BR/3BA • Canal front • \$1,990,000

# **BOB PARRISH – YOUR TRUSTED LOCAL TAX FIGHTER**

**OVERCOMING THE ODDS, FIGHTING FOR YOUR FINANCES**



## **A LIFE OF RESILIENCE AND VICTORY**

After four years of battling an aggressive, stage four, inoperable cancer diagnosis where traditional options were limited, Bob Parrish is in full remission and stronger than ever. This same fighting spirit is now dedicated to your financial health, backed by a profound empathy that understands true hardship.

## **THE HEART BEHIND THE ADVOCATE: IN MEMORY OF A COMPANION**

**Her Oak Box**  
by Bob Parrish (c)

**The night I knew your gentle eyes  
You saw my tears of sorrow  
I felt my hugging goodbye  
That will be coming tomorrow**

**I do not want this what can be done  
To help your body heal and be warm  
You to be well and far from harm**

**The night before I saw your eyes  
soft and blue  
You looked at me as if you knew  
I saw you rest your chin  
As I had tears seeing you again  
Your life again to keep your life**

**But I will be lonely  
As I Walk out of a room  
With in my arms only  
Your oak box not you**

## **MAXIMIZE YOUR REFUND. PRESERVE YOUR WEALTH.**

Come ask Bob whether for a meticulously prepared Original Return, a professional Second Opinion on a previous year's filing, or expert guidance on making Amendments to recover lost funds. Don't pay more than you should. Put Bob's warrior spirit to work for you.

**CONTACT BOB PARRISH TODAY:**

12 Date Avenue | Bradenton, FL

**📞 Voice or Text: 941-302-2926    ✉ Email: [BobParrishlbk@gmail.com](mailto:BobParrishlbk@gmail.com)**

# EditorLetters



## Letters, from page 6

O'Connor brings more than 30 years of global leadership experience in economic development, business attraction, and foreign direct investment. She joins the BAEDC from the Financial Times, where she served as Director of Professional Development for their economic development unit, FT Locations, advising and training economic development organizations and government agencies worldwide on strategies to enhance performance and drive capital investment.

Previously, O'Connor served as Vice President of Marketing for Advance CT, the State of Connecticut's public-private economic development agency. Her career also includes executive leadership roles with Conway Data, UK Trade & Investment, and the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, where she managed North American markets and led international investment initiatives. Over the course of her career, O'Connor has advised more than 120 economic development organizations across the globe and has played a foundational role in shaping the industry, including serving as a founding architect of the SelectUSA Investment Summit and the Site Selectors Guild Annual Conference.

"Shirar is a world-class economic development leader with the rare combination of strategic vision, global connectivity, diplomatic leadership, and the local ties required to guide our organization forward," said Chris Cianfaglione, Chair of the BAEDC Board of Directors. "Her ability to build trust, navigate intricate stakeholder environments, and implement data-driven strategies will be instrumental as we strengthen our partnerships and expand economic opportunity across the Bradenton Area."

O'Connor is widely recognized for her composure and effectiveness in complex environments, with references consistently highlighting her ability to align diverse stakeholders and stabilize organizations during periods of transition. Her global network of decision-makers, combined with a clear strategy for diversifying revenue streams, positions the BAEDC to expand private-sector investment and ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

A Florida native, O'Connor grew up visiting Siesta Key and graduated high school on the Gulf Coast in Clearwater, before graduating from the University of Florida. Shirar and her family are relocating full-time to our community, and she already has established ties in the region.

"Returning to Florida to serve a place I call home is incredibly meaningful to me," said O'Connor. "The Bradenton Area has tremendous potential, and I look forward to working alongside our public and private partners to drive sustainable economic growth, support high-quality job creation, and build on the region's momentum."

O'Connor will assume her role as President and CEO on June 1, 2026.

About the Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation

The Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation (BAEDC) is a public-private partnership dedicated to driving economic growth and prosperity in Manatee County, Florida. The organization works to attract new businesses, support existing companies, and foster a diverse and resilient regional economy through strategic partnerships and targeted initiatives.

Amanda Parrish

Interim CEO

Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Thank you Commissioner for the thoughtful message. That means a lot to me and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to Longboat Key's commitment to excellence.

Sue Smith

Finance Director

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

Sue, what a fabulous example of determination and persistence. I respect all of you for what you've done to put this report together. Quite an accomplishment.

Gary Coffin

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

Congratulations on achieving such outstanding results. It is true that it takes a team effort, however your leadership and the many extra hours you have put into this was the driving force behind receiving the unmodified opinion. Well done!

Howard N. Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Commission

I am pleased to share the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for September 30, 2025, which includes both Federal and State Single Audits, along with the Management letter located at the back of the report. I'm delighted to report that there were no findings or reportable conditions noted, and the Town received an unmodified opinion audit report—the highest level of assurance possible from our auditors.

Along with the ACFR, you'll find the Auditors' Discussion and Analysis attached for your review. Mauldin & Jenkins will be joining us to provide a thorough review of the ACFR at the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 30th.

Additionally, I have submitted the ACFR to the GFOA for the Certificate of Excellence, to S&P Global (our bond rating agency), and have completed all required disclosures at the EMMA website through DAC Bond. These steps are important for maintaining our transparency and strong standing in financial reporting.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for everyone's time and effort throughout this process. Achieving a perfect record of compliance would not be possible without everyone's commitment to following our internal controls and staying attentive to the details. This accomplishment truly represents a team effort.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you again for your dedication and support.

Sue Smith

Finance Director

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

As retired CEO of a state CPA Society, I am all too familiar with the ever changing nature of government accounting standards and the exceptional effort it takes to ace an audit for an organization with this complexity. We all appreciate all that you do to help Longboat Key exemplify accounting excellence. Thank you.

Penny Gold

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

Congratulations on achieving such outstanding results. It is true that it takes a team effort, however your leadership and the many extra hours you have put into this was the driving force behind receiving the unmodified opinion.

Howard N. Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

Amazing. What an effort from Sue and the team. All along with doing this amazing task, if we called with a question about the upcoming budget process, an upcoming program, or a project, you took the time for us. Also, with a smile the whole time. Talk about beach, nailed it.

Charlie Mopps

Public Works Director

Town of Longboat Key

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

Great job! We appreciate the time and effort you and your team invested to make this happen, amongst the truck load of other financial matters you must juggle.

Truly amazing, congratulations and thank you!

Russ E. Mager

Chief of Police

Longboat Key Police Department

## 2025 Annual Audit

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Sue Smith

You put more hours in this report more than any of us realize. Working nights and weekends to get this completed, making the deadline...congrats to you and thank you!

Paul B. Dezzi

Fire Chief

Town of Longboat Key

## Cops Cars and Coffee

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Thank you Commissioner for your feedback (which I will share with PD) and for your attendance. Here's what I sent to the event organizers Officer Maple and Sgt. Smith earlier today.

Howard Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

## Job Well Done

To: Longboat Key Police Department

Congratulations again on the success of the inaugural event of Cops, Cars, and Coffee. The first time doing anything is always an interesting experience, but I will tell you that I was very pleased with what I saw Saturday morning. Great community policing is based on relationships, and this type of event was a perfect example of the interactions and relationships we want to build. Thank you again for your leadership and extra effort to make Saturday so successful!


Howard N. Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 11

*Come Find Your Joy...*



18 South Blvd. of the Presidents  
St. Armands Circle  
(941) 388-6402

GARDEN ARGOSY

# OnPatrol



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

## April 24 Vehicle

8:04 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Sands Point Road in reference to a suspicious vehicle left at the front entrance. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma met with the resort staff who stated that the vehicle was a gray Land Rover and had been parked out front for valet since 1:30 p.m. yesterday. The staff was unsure who the vehicle belonged to and the keys were not left with an employee. Following an FCIC/NCIC check, the vehicle did not come back stolen or abandoned. The registered owner's name was given to the staff to see if he is a guest. The staff confirmed that his is a registered member at the resort and are attempting to make contact with him. Case clear.



suspicious person. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke met with the caller and she advised that a man wearing a blue hat was observed smoking while fishing near the beach access. No further violations were observed. Officer Van Dyke then met with the man who was cooperative, apologetic and stated that was smoking cigarettes, but wasn't aware of the ordinance. Therefore, Officer Van Dyke educated him on the ordinance and gave him a verbal warning. The man departed the beach immediately after the interaction. Case clear.

## Noise 3:02 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort while on marine patrol in the area of Jewfish Key was dispatched to a noise complaint. The caller reported loud music coming from the sandbar from an unknown vessel. Sgt. Montfort began to patrol close to the shore of the sandbar and located a small center console playing loud hip hop music. Sgt. Montfort signaled to the subjects on the vessel and they immediately complied with turning down the music. Sgt. Montfort advised the subjects on the vessel of the noise ordinance and returned to service without incident. Case clear.

## April 25 Vehicle

2:44 a.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol observed a black GMC Yukon traveling southbound in the 3300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive with an expired license plate sticker. Officer Troyer performed a traffic stop and realized he had performed a traffic stop prior on the same vehicle with the same driver and had issued a warning citation for driving without a current registration. Officer Troyer The passenger revealed that the car was registered in the state of Florida and it had expired in Feb. 2026. However, the vehicle was bearing a Tennessee license plate which had a validation sticker of July 2025, and the number 5 was altered with what appeared to be a Sharpie to make the number 5 look like a number 6. The Tennessee license plate was registered to another person out of Tennessee. Officer Troyer placed the driver under arrest and transported him to the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Jail. Once there, Officer Troyer read him his constitutional Miranda rights, however, he did not wish to speak to the Officer. Officer Troyer seized the Tennessee license plate and entered the license plate to the case files of the report. Officer Mathis ensured the passenger was able to get the vehicle towed as she did not have a valid driver's license. Case clear.

## April 27 Dog

4:24 p.m.

Officer Nazareno was dispatched to the 3200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for an animal problem call regarding a small brown dog on the beach. Upon arrival, Officer Nazareno canvassed the area and made contact with the dog owner. The owner was advised that she was violating town ordinance and was given a verbal warning and escorted off the beach. Officer Nazareno also directed her to the closest dog park. Case clear.

## Person

7:33 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the area of 6100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a call of a suspicious person. Upon arrival to the area, Officer Martinson located the man walking northbound along Gulf of Mexico Drive. Officer Martinson pulled over and asked the man to come over and talk with him. The man has a California Driver's License said he is a Verizon sales employee. Officer Martinson advised the man of the town ordinance prohibiting door-to-door soliciting. The man apologized and said he did not know and said he was the only employee working out on the island at this time, but would advise the rest of the team. Officer Martinson ran the man through NCIC/FCIC and he came back clear of any wants or warrants. The man stated he would leave the island and walked away northbound. Officer Martinson attempted to contact the complainant via his department issued cell phone but it went straight to voicemail. Officer Martinson left a message telling the complainant of his findings and to call back if he had any further questions or concerns. Case clear.

## Incident

9:30 a.m.

Officer Miano and Officer Pescuma were dispatched to the 4000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a suspicious incident. Once on scene, the officers investigated the bathroom adjacent to the playground and they observed what appeared to be feces on the floor, adjacent to the toilet. The incident doesn't appear to be criminal, more accidental. Public Works was advised of the incident, case clear.

## Person

1:33 p.m.

Officer Butler responded to Firehouse Road and Broadway for a report of soliciting in the area by a man who was on foot and soliciting services door-to-door. The caller described the man as white, 30 years-old and about 5'11" tall and last seen wearing a gray shirt and black pants. A second subject was also reported to be in the area, described as wearing a navy blue shirt and a jean skirt. Subjects were reportedly near condominium properties. At 2:57 p.m., Sgt. Butler was dispatched and responded from the area of Bay Isles Road and arrived on scene at 3:09 p.m. upon arrival, Sgt. Butler located a man from Frontier/Verizon, walking in the middle of Broadway wearing a Frontier polo shirt and identification card attached. Sgt. Butler made contact with the man and advised him of the Town ordinance regarding solicitation as well as the Florida Statute regarding obstruction and solicitation in the roadway. The man stated that the company's solicitation permits had not yet been issued by the town but confirmed they were currently in the approval process. No further violations were observed at the time of contact. The men left the area. Case clear.

## April 26 Smoking

11:09 a.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to the 3400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a

## April 29 Vehicle

10:22 a.m.

Officer Miano received a license plate camera image for an expired tag. The vehicle was traveling northbound and the database confirmed that the Florida tag was expired as of Jan. 22, 2025. The vehicle was located and a traffic stop was conducted on a 2013 Toyota Tacoma. Officer Miano introduced himself and provided the reason for the traffic stop. During the stop, the driver said his Florida Driver's license was suspended due to a child support delinquency. When asked to provide a driver's license, he handed the officer a Florida Driver's license and an FCIC/NCIC query showed that the driver does not have a valid driver's license. Furthermore, Officer Miano inquired why he was driving and the operator stated he had to be a job interview on Longboat Key. Officer Miano issued a criminal citation for knowingly operating a vehicle while his driver's license is suspended. Officer Miano advised that the operator could not drive and to arrange for transportation. Case clear.

## April 30 Person

12:33 a.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol doing security checks, observed three men fishing on the dock at Broadway Street. The location belonged to a restaurant and was private property. The dock was also marked by a sign saying 'No fishing' and the restaurant was also enclosed by a wooden privacy fence. Officer Troyer made contact with the three men who all stated they were just fishing and didn't know they were trespassing because they had fished at the restaurant property before. Officer Troyer provided them with information pertaining to trespassing laws, cleared them for wants or warrants and released them. Officer Troyer asked them where they parked, which they mentioned was at a house under construction. Officer Troyer followed them out and observed the location at Linley Street. The home was indeed under construction with cameras posted out front. The men left without incident. Case clear.

## Incident

10:02 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort while on patrol at the south entrance of the resort was flagged down by the gate guard who reported that a small white sedan ran the north end gate into the community. When the guard explained further that the vehicle did not actually run the gate but drove up on the grassy area and around the gate. Security requested Sgt. Montfort check the area as this was a suspicious incident. Security did not want a formal trespass if the subject was located, it rightfully beyond the gate for legitimate purposes. Sgt. Montfort checked the area with negative results, case clear.

# LBK Liquors



## 941.953.1835

The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits  
Come check out our competitive prices!

Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome

Locally owned & operated

Whitney Beach Plaza  
6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL




# EditorLetters



## Letters, from page 9

### Cops Cars and Coffee

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Tip, great seeing you this weekend. Just wanted to drop a note and express how impressed I was at this weekend's Cops Cars and Coffee event. Hats off to the brainchild who put this together. One on one contact, I believe, and accessibility, is the core reason behind the success of all of our public services. Congratulations on an event well done.

Gary Coffin

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

### The CAC 2026 Hurricane Season Forecast

To: Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Department

The local Climate Adaptation Center does some fantastic work and they put together a very comprehensive prediction. The big story for this season appears to be the expected El Niño conditions later in the season, which tend to shear apart storms. They do note though that Hurricane Andrew happened in an El Niño year.

Link to the forecast:

<https://www.theclimateadaptationcenter.org/2026/04/23/the-cac-2026-hurricane-season-forecast-what-you-need-to-know/>

I will be forwarding three emails per this topic and we can go over it tomorrow at our meeting.

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner

City of Sarasota

### City News/Update

To: Sarasota City Police Advisory Panel

I was just made aware that the city newsletter today contained information about applying for vacancies on the IPAP and PCC. Please note that while vacancies do exist on both boards, vacancies are not being filled currently due to our suspended status (still). The PIO is aware of the suspended status, but it's possible a staff member was not.

As I'm sure you are all aware, the city is still searching for a City Manager. However, we are planning to go ahead with bringing forward a proposal to keep both boards (with modifications) after the City Commission's break. I will be able to share more details after everything is approved by the City Attorney and Deputy City Manager. I believe we are in the final stretch.

Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss anything.

Heather Salzman

Police Advisory Panels Administrator

City of Sarasota

### Flock contract should be reviewed by the City Attorney

To: Alex Neihaus

Thanks for bringing this to my attention and for the email! I've copied Mr Polzak on this email so he has the materials and links and is able to respond accordingly. We are meeting tomorrow I believe, so maybe we can have a preliminary discussion.

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner

City of Sarasota

### Flock contract should be reviewed by the City Attorney

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

Thank you again for your time yesterday. I'm emailing to follow up on our discussion about the contract between Flock and the City. As you may remember, I believe the contract we have in place does not adequately protect the City and residents from Flock's potential misuse or loss of data SPD shares with Flock. Flock is, essentially, a law enforcement-focused data broker. There is a strong business incentive to monetize the data it collects, even in "anonymized" form beyond law enforcement uses.

Many citizens may not realize that the data SPD collects might be used or leaked by Flock. Instead, public attention is focused on the improvements in police productivity this sharing enables. That's a benefit nobody can deny — but we should also understand and control how the vendor of this information is managing the data it collects for SPD. Here is a link to a Guardian story about Flock. The tone is alarmist but the issues it raises are real.

I was only able to find a single contract between the City and Flock in our public records. Here is a direct link to the Flock contract. Astonishingly, it doesn't include any language, refer to a master agreement or refer to any other Flock agreement that details who owns the data supplied to Flock by SPD nor what can be done with that data. Instead, this contract appears to be solely focused on managing installation of the Flock hardware.

I requested confirmation (via this FOIA request) that this contract listed is the only agreement in place between the City and Flock. As you see in the message below, it appears that is the case.

Might I suggest that you ask the City Attorney's office to review the Flock agreement to ensure that contact complies with our standards for data ownership and collection?

Alex Neihaus

Sarasota

### Public Records Request

To: Alex Neihaus

Please be advised that Request Number: 328-2026 has been completed.

As per Procurement, "The contract referenced is the contract in its entirety. We do not have a separate license agreement."

In the event further clarification or follow-up is needed, please respond by replying directly to this email.

City of Sarasota, Records & Information Management Division

Debbie Trice

Mayor

City of Sarasota

### May 2nd Deadline

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

Hi Mayor, I've spoken with SPD and they will be communicating with Mr. McIntyre directly. I will forward the communication to you for reference once I receive a copy.

Joe Polzak

Sarasota

### May 2nd Deadline

To: Joe Polzak

Joe, what's the status of this? How are you handling it?

Debbie Trice

Mayor

City of Sarasota

### May 2nd Deadline

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

I am writing as a final follow-up to my correspondence of April 2nd and April 17th regarding Notice of Violation #2010200085016641.

I have not received a response to either communication. I want to respectfully advise that May 2, 2026 represents both the payment deadline and the expiration of my window to appeal the Final Administrative Order to circuit court pursuant to Florida Statute §162.11.

I remain hopeful that this matter can be resolved administratively prior to that date.

Gabriel McIntyre

Sarasota

### May 2nd Deadline

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

I am following up on my email of April 2nd regarding my red light camera citation and the constitutional concerns I raised in connection with the McFadden ruling.

I wanted to advise that I have since received the Final Administrative Order (Notice #2010200085016641, dated April 2, 2026, signed by Richard Ellis), upholding the violation with a total amount due of \$158.50 by May 2, 2026.

As that deadline also represents my window to appeal this Final Administrative Order to circuit court pursuant to Florida Statute §162.11, I am writing to respectfully request a response prior to that date.

See Letters, page 12

**RINGSIDE**  
EAT. DRINK. SAVOR

Sarasota's Newest Dining Spectacle - Now Open!

A fresh, inventive dining destination just a short stroll from St. Armands Circle, Ringside balances bold flavors and Gulf seafood favorites in the mesmerizing setting of Cirque St. Armands Beachside.

[opalcollection.com/cirque-st-armands](http://opalcollection.com/cirque-st-armands) 941.388.5555

# EditorLetters



## Letters, from page 11

I remain of the position that an administrative dismissal is the most appropriate resolution given:

- The McFadden ruling declaring §316.0083 unconstitutional as applied
- The City Attorney's formal notice of that ruling prior to the hearing
- The hearing officer's inability to cite the statute allegedly requiring a stop on yellow
- The city's own evidence placing my vehicle in the engineering-recognized dilemma zone at 0.201 seconds of red

I am not seeking conflict. I am seeking a fair resolution and would welcome the opportunity to resolve this without further escalation.

Gabriel McIntyre  
Sarasota

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

Thanks for the prompt response. Your support means a lot.

Do you have a feel for what time we should arrive if we want to speak in citizen comment but not be at the later end of the day?

Megan Howell  
Executive Director  
Second Heart Homes, Inc.

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Second Heart Homes Executive Director Megan Howell

I've been really impressed with what you've managed to accomplish over the past 2 years. (Thrilled about the new house for women!)

May 18th is our last Commission Meeting before July, so the Agenda is bound to be very full. If you can reduce your update to 3 minutes or less, you should plan to present it as part of Citizen Comments. Otherwise, I'd recommend waiting until the fall.

Debbie Trice  
Mayor  
City of Sarasota

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

As we approach the anniversary of the proclamation recognizing May as Homeless and Mental Health Awareness Month for Second Heart Homes, I wanted to reach out and thank you again for your leadership in bringing that forward. It meant a great deal to our organization and especially to the residents we serve.

Since that time, we have continued to grow our impact, including recently opening two new homes and welcoming additional residents off the street into permanent supportive housing. We would be grateful for the opportunity to briefly share an update with the Commission on what has been accomplished since the proclamation, and how the community's support has helped make that progress possible.

If appropriate, would it be possible to be placed on the agenda for the May 18 Commission meeting for a short update?

Thank you again for your support and for helping bring visibility to this work.  
Megan Howell  
Executive Director  
Second Heart Homes, Inc.

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Second Heart Homes Executive Director Megan Howell

Thank you, Megan. The proclamation will be added to the agenda for May 6th to be presented at 9am. Who will be attending to accept the proclamation?

Christina Wollenberg  
Executive Assistant  
City of Sarasota

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

Thank you for the reminder. I have attached our suggestion. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Megan Howell  
Executive Director, Founder  
Second Heart Homes, Inc.

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Second Heart Homes Executive Director Megan Howell

We have not received a draft for the proclamation and the deadline to put this on the agenda is Friday.

Christina Wollenberg  
Executive Assistant  
City of Sarasota

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

Sorry for the late response but I accidentally deleted this email thread. We would love to do

May 6th. I will work on the proclamation and send to you on Monday. Thank you for this opportunity!

Megan Howell  
Executive Director, Founder  
Second Heart Homes, Inc.

## Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month

To: Second Heart Homes Executive Director Megan Howell

I just checked the calendar and discovered that April 19 is the deadline for putting the Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation on the Agenda of the May 6 City Commission meeting. (May 3 is the deadline for the May 20 meeting.) You, or your representative(s), would need to be present at 9 a.m. to accept the Proclamation. Let me know before the deadline which meeting to schedule this for.

Debbie Trice  
Mayor  
City of Sarasota

## Let's chat about housing

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

It was great to talk with you. Thank you for asking my opinion on where might be a next good step. Katie Ross is the new Executive Director of the CoC.

I spoke with my team and we are all excited about having a proclamation day. May is Mental Health Awareness month so we would like to try to pursue that if possible.

Megan Howell  
Executive Director, Founder  
Second Heart Homes, Inc.

## Let's chat about housing

To: Second Heart Homes Executive Director Megan Howell

As you know, I ran for Sarasota City Commissioner in November 2022 to help the City move forward on addressing the housing needs of Sarasota residents who are inadequately served. That, of course, includes those who are unhoused and/or without stable housing. Now that I've settled into the job, I'm trying to help accelerate progress.

At this point, I'm meeting one-on-one with people like you who share that mission. I'd like to hear your thoughts on obstacles and ideas for overcoming them. I'm hoping that bringing together "outside the box" ideas from many people will lead to creative, implementable solutions. I've copied Christina Wollenberg who will help you find a mutually convenient time to meet. (You can also reach Christina by phone at 941-263-6675.) I look forward to our conversation.

Debbie Trice  
Mayor  
City of Sarasota

## May 2nd Deadline

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

I am writing as a final follow-up to my correspondence of April 2nd and April 17th regarding Notice of Violation #2010200085016641.

I have not received a response to either communication. I want to respectfully advise that May 2, 2026 represents both the payment deadline and the expiration of my window to appeal the Final Administrative Order to circuit court pursuant to Florida Statute §162.11.

I remain hopeful that this matter can be resolved administratively prior to that date.  
Gabriel McIntyre  
Sarasota

## Citizen Due Process Concern

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

I am following up on my email of April 2nd regarding my red light camera citation and the constitutional concerns I raised in connection with the McFadden ruling.

I wanted to advise that I have since received the Final Administrative Order (Notice #2010200085016641, dated April 2, 2026, signed by Richard Ellis), upholding the violation with a total amount due of \$158.50 by May 2, 2026.

As that deadline also represents my window to appeal this Final Administrative Order to circuit court pursuant to Florida Statute §162.11, I am writing to respectfully request a response prior to that date.

I remain of the position that an administrative dismissal is the most appropriate resolution given:

- The McFadden ruling declaring §316.0083 unconstitutional as applied
- The City Attorney's formal notice of that ruling prior to the hearing
- The hearing officer's inability to cite the statute allegedly requiring a stop on yellow
- The city's own evidence placing my vehicle in the engineering-recognized dilemma zone at 0.201 seconds of red.

I am not seeking conflict. I am seeking a fair resolution and would welcome the opportunity to resolve this without further escalation.

Gabriel McIntyre  
Sarasota

Ads that work...

941.387.2200

## Demo, from page 1

of water, sewer, and electric service, and operating under a court-of-last-resort compliance agreement with a June 1 deadline to shore itself up before hurricane season returns. Its owner, Donda Mullis, who paid more than \$4 million for the property in 2023, has retained attorney Stephen Rees to fight any demolition order.

Sixty feet away, at 6601 Gulfside Road, the situation is nearly identical — and nearly simultaneous. That structure, owned by the LLC 9403 Gulf Drive, was declared “Unsafe and Unfit” by the Building Official on March 3, 2026. Like the Half Moon House, the damage traces directly to the 2024 hurricane season. Like the Half Moon House, the owner has hired a lawyer — Attorney Dave Levin — and negotiated a compliance agreement with the town. That agreement was signed just four days after Mullis’s own deadline was set, on April 24, 2026.

Now, on May 4, the Town Commission will be asked to do something that makes the parallel almost exact: hire the very same outside law firm to fight both battles at once.

## The Same Street. The Same Storm. The Same Lawyers.

Town Attorney Maggie Mooney is bringing before the Commission a request to formally engage GarciaDell, P.A. of Sarasota — led by veteran litigator Martin Garcia — as special litigation counsel for the 6601 Gulfside matter. In her memorandum to Mayor Debra Williams and the commissioners, Mooney is candid about why Garcia is the pick: he is already working the other side of the street.

“Attorney Martin Garcia represented the Town successfully in the prior Colony condemnation and demolition litigation,” Mooney wrote. “Mr. Garcia has also been engaged to represent the Town in a similar matter relating to another structure that has been designated as Unsafe/Unfit by the Town’s Building Official.”

That other matter is the Half Moon House. GarciaDell was retained by the Commission in March for that case. Mooney is now asking commissioners to effectively double down — placing the same firm’s firepower across both contested properties before either fight formally ignites.

The engagement terms are the same for both: \$375 per hour for attorney time — a rate Mooney’s memo flags as well below Garcia’s standard fees — and \$150 per hour for paralegal services.

## What the Town Is Looking at on 6601

The Building Official’s findings for 6601 Gulfside Road read like a structure the sea is actively reclaiming. According to Mooney’s April 24 memorandum:

The rear portion of the building is completely gone, open to the elements, accessible to passersby, animals, and vermin. The structure has shifted out of vertical alignment, with the front left corner and the missing rear section posing the most acute stability concerns. Engineers have flagged a significant risk of collapse under any combination of permanent loads, live loads, or environmental stress — including wind, rain, flood, or wave action. The building has been placarded with the town’s formal “Danger — This Structure Is Unsafe for Human Occupancy” notice, and the owner was originally given 30 days to abate, repair, or demolish.

When Levin reached out on behalf of 9403 Gulf Drive, LLC to request more time, the town agreed to the compliance agreement route — the same mechanism used with Mullis at the Half Moon House. Extensions beyond 30 days require a formal written commitment from the owner, signed jointly by the Building Official and Town Manager, establishing hard deadlines for every step of the repair or demolition process.

The details of 6601’s compliance agreement deadlines have not been publicly released, but the document was executed just days before the May 4 meeting at which the Commission will decide whether to put Garcia on retainer.

## The Legal Chessboard — and Why the Town Is Moving Early

The reason for hiring counsel before any appeal is filed comes down to the two very different legal pathways available to property owners under Town Code Section 150.21 — and the speed at which one of them can catch a town flat-footed.

The slower, more familiar route — Subsection (H) — allows an owner to appeal a condemnation and demolition order to the Town Commission itself, which acts as a quasi-judicial body. That process includes published notice, a public hearing, and a written decision, with circuit court review available afterward.

The faster, more dangerous route is Subsection (J): the emergency demolition appeal, which bypasses the Commission entirely and goes straight to Circuit Court as a full de novo hearing. An owner has just ten calendar days from the mailing of a demolition notice to file that circuit court appeal — and nothing in the code prevents the Building Official from proceeding with demolition while the appeal clock is running.

It was Subsection (J) that made the Colony Beach fight so bruising, and it is Subsection (J) that has Mooney moving proactively. “In an effort to avoid delay in responding to any potential challenges that may arise,” she wrote, “it is prudent to request that the Town Commission provide authorization for the Town Manager and Town Attorney to engage special counsel.”

## The Ghost of the Colony

No discussion of Longboat Key’s unsafe structure enforcement history is complete without the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort. Once a glamorous destination that hosted presidents and celebrities, the Colony closed in 2010 and spent nearly a decade rotting in plain sight at the island’s mid-Key. When the town finally moved to condemn and demolish the sprawling ghost resort under the emergency provisions of Subsection (J) in June 2018, the property owner sued. The legal battle wound through the Twelfth Judicial Circuit before a judge upheld the town’s authority to proceed — paving the way for the development now occupying that site.

Martin Garcia won that fight for Longboat Key. The town is betting he can win two more.

## Summer Recess and a Backup Plan

The May 4 agenda also includes a separate but related item: Resolution 2026-12, which would give the Town Manager and Town Attorney joint authority to initiate or defend litigation and engage specialized legal counsel during the Commission’s summer recess from June 30 through September 13, 2026 — the window when commissioners will not be holding public meetings.

The resolution requires both the Town Manager and Town Attorney to act together — neither can move unilaterally — and any actions taken must be reported to commissioners and brought back for ratification when meetings resume in September.

Given that the compliance agreement deadlines for both Gulfside Road properties will almost certainly be tested before or during that recess window, the resolution appears to have been written with exactly this stretch of beachfront in mind.

## Two Properties. One Clock. One Law Firm.

The convergence is striking. Within four days in late April, both 6541 and 6601 Gulfside Road signed compliance agreements with the Town of Longboat Key. Both are owned by par-

ties who have hired attorneys. Both carry hurricane damage that went unaddressed for well over a year. Both sit in an area of the island the town’s own coastal engineers have identified as one of the highest-erosion, most environmentally stressed stretches of shoreline on Longboat Key.

If either owner fails to meet the terms of their compliance agreement — and the June 1 hurricane-season deadline looms large for 6541 — the town could find itself simultaneously prosecuting two condemnation and demolition cases, on the same block, through the same special counsel, against two different LLC or individual property owners, in proceedings that could run concurrently through the Circuit Court.

The May 4 vote is, in that sense, less a formality than a declaration: Longboat Key is getting its legal house in order before the storm, real or legal, arrives.

The Town Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2026 at Longboat Key Town Hall. The full agenda packet, including Town Code Section 150.21, the GarciaDell engagement letter, compliance agreements, and the text of Resolution 2026-12, is available through the Town Clerk’s office.

*Editor’s note: LBK News previously reported on the Half Moon House at 6541 Gulfside Road in our March 9, 2026 story “Gag Order on the Gulf.” This story incorporates new agenda material from the May 4 packet connecting that case to a second active enforcement action sixty feet away.*

## Longboat Key News Sarasota City News

PO Box 8001  
Longboat Key, FL 34228  
941-387-2200  
www.lbknews.com

Steve Reid, Editor & Publisher  
sreid@lbknews.com

Associate Publisher  
Melissa Reid

Sales  
Lillian Sands  
Steve Reid  
ads@lbknews.com

Graphic Production  
Dottie Rutledge

Letters to the Editor  
letters@lbknews.com



## D R I F T K I T C H E N & B A R

## Top-Ranked for a Reason

Perched on the eighth floor of Lido Beach Resort, Drift ranks #1 among 900 Sarasota restaurants on TripAdvisor for its unrivaled views and unforgettable flavors.

opalcollection.com/lido-beach

941.388.2161



# Business Directory



**MESA**  
PRIMARY & WELLNESS CLINIC

**Dr. Nathalia Mesa, MD**  
Board-Certified Family Medicine Physician  
*Your health, held with care*

**NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS!**  
SAME-DAY APPOINTMENTS  
**941-251-0600**

Primary Care • Wellness • Medicare Accepted  
Medical Weight Management  
Hydrafacial • Botox • Skin Care

Email: Hello@MesaPrimaryWellness.com  
3645 Cortez Rd., W I Ste. 110, Bradenton, FL 34210  
**MesaPrimaryWellness.com**

**Loved again**  
Boutique  
**UPSCALE WOMEN'S CONSIGNMENT STORE**



HIGH END CLOTHING, SHOES, AND ACCESSORIES

- JOHNNY WAS
- CHANEL
- HERMES
- JIMMY CHOO

4141 S. Tamiami Trail #8 • Sarasota  
BESIDE TRADER JOE'S  
**941.702.8159**



**GREENWICH INTERIORS, LLC**

*Creating beautiful, functional residential and commercial spaces.*

- New construction
- Remodeling
- Project management

*We bring your vision to life.*

**NANCY O'ROURKE, Principal**  
(941) 279-7500  
nancy@greenwichinteriors.com  
Greenwichinteriors.com

**YOU MAY BE MISSING MEDICARE BENEFITS**

- ★ • Turning 65 Soon?
- Save on Doctor Visits
- Get Grocery Benefits

**CALL NOW**  
**941-225-8411**

**KENNETH ZUMBA**  
Licensed Medicare Specialist

**FREE MEDICARE PLAN REVIEWS**  
Serving Sarasota and the Islands

**Cortez Bait & Seafood**

*Fresher than Fresh!*  
**Local Florida Seafood**  
Oysters • Shrimp • Clams  
Fish Spread • Smoked Mullet

MON - SAT: 10 AM TO 6:30PM | SUN: 10AM TO 5PM  
**941.794.1547** 12110 Cortez Road West  
www.cortezbaitandseafood.com Cortez, FL  
SEE US ON FACEBOOK



**Call for a FREE Evaluation!**

**SERVICES**

- Personal Care
- Respite Care
- Alzheimer's Care
- Light Cleaning
- Med Administration
- Meal Preparation
- Errands & More

**ROSA TORRES, OWNER**  
941-536-6372  
epichomecareprovider@gmail.com

ads@Lbknews.com  
941.387.2200

**KAREN & ANGELO POMPETTI**  
**Two Generations of Master Barbers**

Traditional & Cutting Edge Barbering  
38 Years in Business



200 CENTRAL AVE. SUITE 11  
ACROSS FROM WHOLE FOODS  
484-889-8991 • menshaircutsarasota.com

**Steff's Stuff**  
**ANTIQUES AND TREASURES**  
ESTATES & CONSIGNMENTS ARRIVING DAILY

5380 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE  
IN THE CENTRE SHOPS • 941.383.1901  
**SteffsStuffLBK.com**

PD by CSTF



SCAN HERE TO SUBMIT A TIP OR DOWNLOAD OUR FREE MOBILE APP



**CRIME STOPPERS**  
of Sarasota County

**REWARDS UP TO \$5000**  
FOR ANONYMOUS TIPS THAT LEAD TO AN ARREST

**941-366-TIPS**  
SarasotaCrimeStoppers.com

**DESIGN 2000**

*Celebrating 27 years on the island!*

EXCELLENCE AND EXPERIENCE IN HAIR AND NAIL DESIGN

941-387-9807

**Welcoming the clients and stylists after the closing of David Gregory Salon!**

6840 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE AT WHITNEY BEACH PLAZA  
www.design2000longboatkeyfl.com

**THE FISH HOLE**  
**ADVENTURE GOLF**

18 HOLES  
OPEN 9am-9pm  
7 days a week  
COME PLAY A ROUND!

115 BRIDGE STREET  
BRADENTON BEACH, FL 34217  
PHONE: (941) 778-3388 www.THEFISHHOLE.com

**ANTIQUORIENTALRUGS.COM**

FOR OVER 40 YEARS...  
ALL HAND CHOSEN  
ALL ONE-OF-A-KIND  
BOUGHT • SOLD • APPRAISED



Visit our Sarasota Gallery  
**Call Robert Mosby**  
941.925.1025  
By appointment only

**Ads that work...**  
ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

**Mira Mar, from page 1**

**The Permit that Changes Everything**

In early April 2026, the City of Sarasota issued the construction permit for the twin 18-story towers that form the financial engine of the Mira Mar Residences project, developed by Sarasota-based Seaward Development. All former commercial tenants have vacated the more than 100-year-old structure. Work has begun.

“This is an incredibly important milestone that has been years in the making,” said Patrick DiPinto, owner of Seaward Development. “It officially kicks off the rehabilitation portion of the project and to be stewards of the history and legacy at this site is an incredibly humbling position that we take very seriously.”

DiPinto and his team are deeply local. “Our team members have lived in Sarasota for 30 to 40 years. We are deeply rooted in this community. Rather than trying to be the biggest, our goal is to be the best.” Full project completion is targeted for the end of 2028. The permanent sales gallery is open at 1258 North Palm Avenue.

**Born In 1922: The Building That Launched a City**

In 1922, Chicago developer Andrew McAnsh arrived in Sarasota and moved quickly. The Mira Mar Apartments rose along Palm Avenue as the largest building project in the city’s history at that time — erected on a literal foundation of beach sand in a round-the-clock construction effort that became part of local lore. By January 1924, the Hotel and Auditorium had opened. Marketed as “The Aristocrat of Beauty,” the hotel drew clientele arriving by rail from Chicago and New York. The auditorium became Sarasota’s first significant civic cultural venue, hosting Metropolitan Opera performances in 1926. The original campus included a casino, a cigar factory, and the city’s earliest retail and fine dining establishments along nearly 400 feet of South Palm Avenue frontage.

“Mira Mar was Sarasota’s first hotel, home to its earliest retail and fine dining, and one of the city’s first true luxury compounds,” DiPinto said. “There were so many amazing aspects of the building. We learned quickly that we were onto something truly special.”

**Decades of Decline and a Near-Miss With a Wrecking Ball**

The trajectory from opening-night prominence was not smooth. The hotel closed in 1957 as travelers shifted to newer motor lodges along U.S. 41. The auditorium was demolished in 1955. The hotel structure itself came down in 1982, leaving only the original apartment building standing. That survivor cycled through uses and ownerships for decades, most recently serving as commercial space for roughly 48 tenants before Mira Mar Acquisition Company, LLC purchased it in 2023 for \$17.5 million. By then, structural assessments had raised serious concerns — foundational stabilization work was needed before anything else could proceed.

**When Sarasota Said No — And Something Different Emerged**

When Seaward Development sought permission to demolish the building in 2022, the City of Sarasota’s Historic Preservation Board said no. Rather than appeal, DiPinto and his team spent nearly two years developing an alternative: preserve and fully restore the historic structure while constructing two residential towers on the rear of the 1.2-acre site, using condominium revenues to fund the \$29 million rehabilitation.

The plan required rezoning the property from Downtown Core to Downtown Bayfront. That process was contentious. Residents of the adjacent Mark condominiums objected. City planning staff recommended against approval. After two public hearings, the Sarasota City Commission voted unanimously — five to zero — on both the comprehensive plan amendment in May 2025 and the rezoning in July 2025.

Mayor Liz Alpert noted that under existing zoning, the site could have accommodated a monolithic structure built lot-line to lot-line with far greater neighborhood impact. “We have to remember that not all development is evil,” she said, “and all of these things help move our city forward.” Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch was equally direct: “A lot of parts of our community came together to make something happen. I very much hope this project does come together as it has been promised.”

The extended regulatory process, for all its friction, produced a project with a substantially different relationship to the street than a by-right development would have delivered — one that will shape the west end of Palm Avenue for a generation. DiPinto called the commission’s support humbling. “Our entire team is passionate about making this not only a legacy project for Sarasota, but a case study for other municipalities around the country.”

**The Numbers, The Team, And The Legal Structure**

The \$29 million historic rehabilitation is funded through revenues from 70 luxury condominium sales. Rick Gonzalez of REG Architects leads the preservation work. Igor Reyes of Nichols Architects — whose firm restored the St. Moritz Hotel in Miami Beach and converted the Seville Hotel into the EDITION Miami Beach — serves as project architect. General contractor Suffolk Construction, whose recent work includes the billion-dollar restoration of the Waldorf Astoria in New York City, is the builder of record.

The rezoning came with binding conditions: tower coverage above the podium is capped at 60 percent; second-story commercial space must rent at 50 percent or below market rate for

a full decade; and no certificate of occupancy may be issued for either tower until the historic restoration is complete. The towers cannot be occupied until the old building is saved — a legal mechanism tying the project’s financial model directly to its preservation obligations.

**The Market Position: Scarcity as a Strategy**

DiPinto is direct about how Mira Mar is positioned. “My partner Michael and I spent years assembling 1.5 acres with nearly 400 feet of frontage on South Palm Avenue — an offering that simply cannot be replicated. Calling Mira Mar a trophy asset is an understatement.”

Early buyers, he says, understand the distinction clearly. “Experienced buyers are choosing Mira Mar because they truly understand real estate. They recognize Mira Mar as the last great address on Palm Avenue. Our buyers are deeply drawn to the century-old legacy of the property. That level of scarcity and authenticity positions the property for exceptional long-term value.” The 70 residences are offered in three- and four-bedroom configurations across two 18-story towers, priced from the high \$3 millions. Upper-floor units deliver unobstructed bay views.

**The Street Level: Where the Community Impact is Most Direct**

For residents who will never own a unit in either tower, the more immediate question is what the restored Mira Mar delivers at street level. The historic building’s 400-foot frontage will become retail, restaurant, and office space framed by wide sidewalks, generous setbacks, and outdoor dining areas. The street level will also allow for a level to overlook the courtyard and outside dining as well.

Seaward is in discussions with dining and retail operators described as first-to-market for Sarasota. Second-story tenants receive rents discounted 50 percent below market for a decade — designed to attract operators who might not otherwise afford a Palm Avenue address.

“This project is like nothing else being built in Sarasota,” DiPinto said, “with its extensive setbacks that will allow for an open-air lobby, outdoor dining for lunch and dinner, shopping at street level, and wide sidewalks, offering connection and activation in this exclusive downtown location.” Pedestrian passageways between the towers will move light and bay breezes through the block — public access through what is currently a largely impermeable stretch of downtown.

**Construction Timeline and What Comes Next**

Initial work centers on structural stabilization and historic rehabilitation — the most technically demanding phase of the project. Tower construction follows once that work is sufficiently advanced. Suffolk project executive Brian Stathers has said the team will use digital modeling and real-time project controls to manage the complexity of simultaneous historic and new construction on the same site. Full completion is targeted for the end of 2028.

**What the Project Means for Sarasota**

The branded towers rising elsewhere in downtown reflect genuine demand and will deliver quality product. They will also, in most cases, produce buildings that could be built in any number of coastal markets where the same brands operate. Mira Mar’s identity is specific to this block, this city, and this history in a way that cannot be replicated elsewhere or at a later date.

DiPinto frames it plainly: “We believe preserving the century-old tradition of the Mira Mar adds incredible long-term value to the community, and ultimately, our owners are the beneficiaries of this vision.”

What is clear is that Sarasota — its residents, its preservationists, its elected officials, and ultimately its developers — chose the harder and better path here. They chose to rescue a building that carried the city’s earliest identity rather than erase it. They chose a streetscape with soul over a footprint of maximum density. And when the restored Mira Mar facade opens along South Palm Avenue, with its outdoor cafes and first-to-market retailers and bay breezes moving through pedestrian passageways that did not exist before, it will stand as evidence that a city’s history and its future do not have to be in competition with each other.

For Sarasota, that is no small thing. For Palm Avenue, it may be everything.

**LONGBOAT KEY TENNIS CENTER**  
*Join the fun!*

10 OPEN COURTS | TOURNAMENT PLAY | LESSONS  
 FULL SERVICE TENNIS PRO SHOP  
 ROUND ROBIN LEAGUE  
 CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS AND CLINICS

OPEN MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM  
 SAT-SUN 7:30 AM - 1200 PM

SEASONAL AND ANNUAL PASSES ENJOY  
 UNLIMITED FREE PLAY!

590 BAY ISLES ROAD | LONGBOAT KEY, FL  
 941.316.8367

*Place Your Bets!*  
**ONE EYED JACKS POKER ROOM**

**70 TVS - SIMULCASTING**  
 Watch and wager on thoroughbred & greyhound tracks from across the country

**DAILY & MONTHLY TOURNAMENTS**  
 HIGH HAND PAYOUT SPECIALS

**Poker**  
 LIVE ACTION CASH GAMES  
 TEXAS HOLD 'EM  
 7 CARD STUD • OMAHA  
 VEGAS STYLE GAMES  
 ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD 'EM  
 WILD STUD 3-CARD  
 FACE UP PAI-GOW

DINING AVAILABLE - ENTREES, HANDHELDS, PIZZAS, SALADS

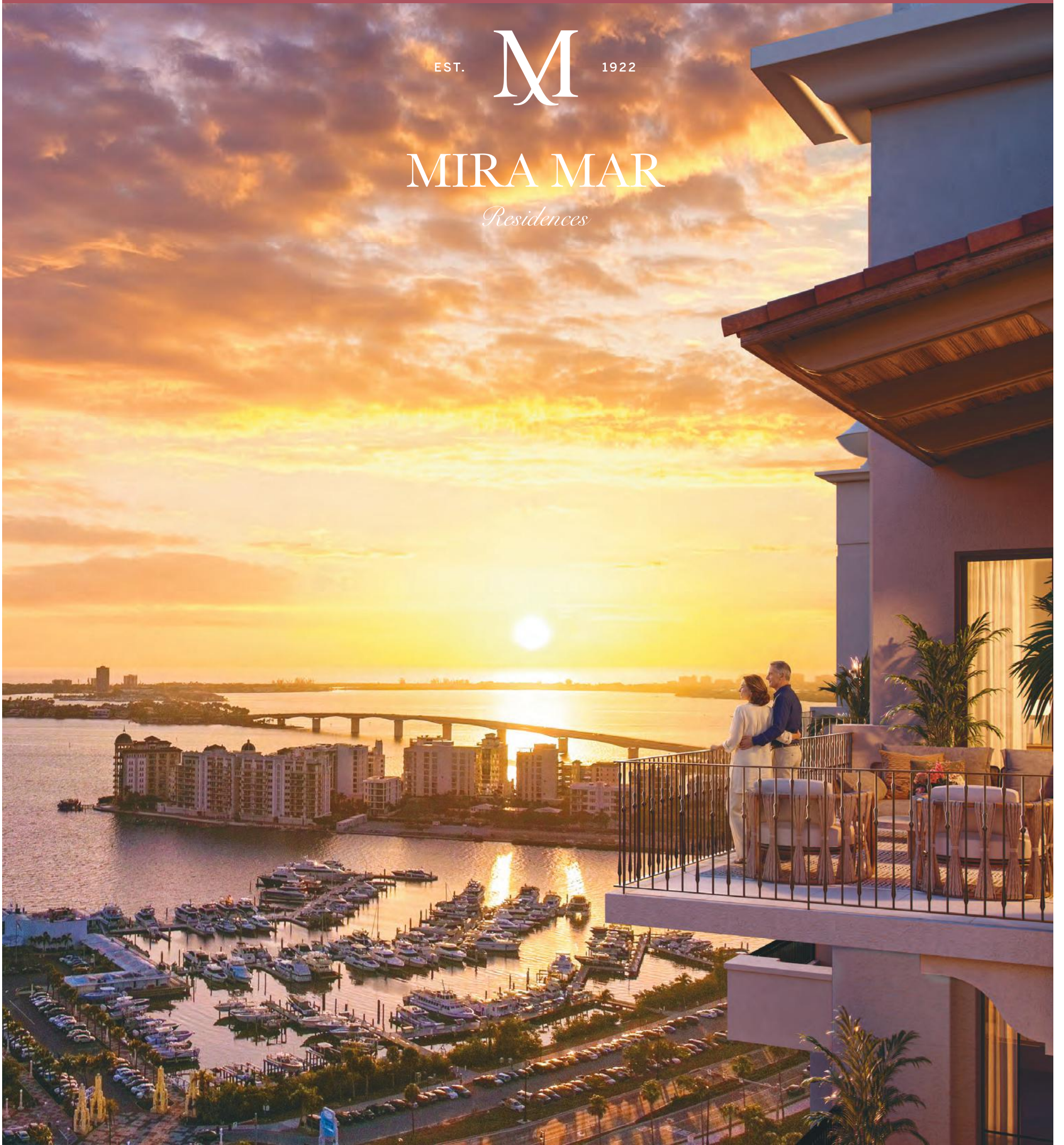
4404 BEE RIDGE RD SARASOTA, FL 34233  
 SUNDAY: NOON - MIDNIGHT  
 MON-SAT: 10:00AM - 2:00AM  
 WWW.SKPOKER.COM  
 941-355-7744 EXT 1001

STUNNING VIEWS | A STORIED HISTORY | PREMIER LOCATION | SUPERIOR QUALITY | A LOCAL TEAM | OUTSTANDING SERVICES & AMENITIES

EST. **M** 1922

# MIRA MAR

*Residences*



## THE LAST GREAT ADDRESS ON PALM AVENUE

PRICED FROM THE HIGH \$3 MILLIONS

*Discover Luxury Living in The Heart of Downtown Sarasota*

MIRAMARSARASOTA.COM | (941) 390 2955 | 1258 NORTH PALM AVENUE, SARASOTA, FL 34236



COLDWELL BANKER  
REALTY



ORAL REPRESENTATIONS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AS CORRECTLY STATING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPER. FOR CORRECT REPRESENTATIONS MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS BROCHURE AND TO THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 718.503, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO BE FURNISHED BY A SELLER TO A BUYER OR LESSEE. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FILED IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND NO OTHER STATE. THIS IS NOT AN OFFER TO SELL OR SOLICITATION OF OFFERS TO BUY THE CONDOMINIUM UNITS IN STATES WHERE SUCH OFFER OR SOLICITATION CANNOT BE MADE. PRICES AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE ANYTIME WITHOUT NOTICE.