

CONTROL GROWTH NOW

News

Save Sarasota County

March 5, 2013

www.controlgrowthnow.org

Vol. 23, No.1

NOW MORE THAN EVER

Join Today

Basic rules to protect our environment, neighborhoods, traffic mobility and taxes are under attack.

Developers control state and local officials more than ever before.

Help us resist and overcome. Join or renew in Control Growth Now today.

Return
Card
Enclosed

Storm Clouds Loom For Growth Control

Developers gave thousands to County Commission candidates and now they are getting millions in return. Slashed impact fees, repeal of rules on urban sprawl, lifting of limits on traffic, all have happened or are on the table in the months to come.



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SEE YOU AT THE PICNIC

Saturday March 23



Please see page 8 and the flyer for details and return the enclosed card for your reservation. Free to members and guests.

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**Annual Membership Dues
Are \$20 Per Year**

***Additional Contributions
Are Very Welcome***



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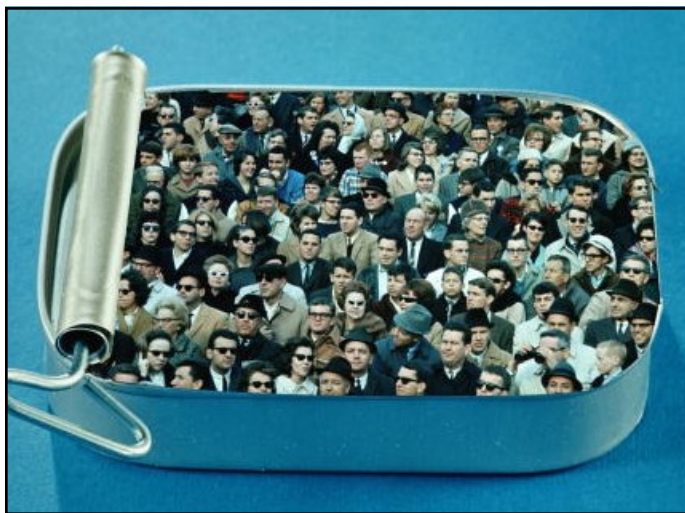
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President's Message



Sarasota County's Not a Sardine Can

Let's pack 'em in, developers say, by massive increases in allowable densities, increased building heights and repealing the limits on how much traffic they can add to overcrowded roads.

We must do that, they say, to avoid urban sprawl.

However, at the same time developers are pushing to drop the limits on urban sprawl by gutting the Sarasota 2050 Plan that limits rural developments to compact, mixed use, walkable communities that pay their own way.

They just want to be allowed to do whatever they want everywhere, at the public expense.

Even today, traffic barely inches along in many places, mile after mile. If our local politicians do as the developers want and remove limits on their intensities as well as open the rural lands to uncontrolled urban growth, imagine what driving will be like then. Not to mention the impacts on our neighborhoods, environment, water supply, schools and much more.

We need a change in direction — and politicians who care to make that change.

Sarasota County is not a sardine can. We need reasonable limits on development and we need them now.

President, **Control Growth Now**

Now More Than Ever - Continued from p. 1

In the City of Sarasota, developers seek to elect Commissioners who will quadruple density, repeal neighborhood protections, eliminate traffic limits and allow a developer to turn a public park into a shopping center.

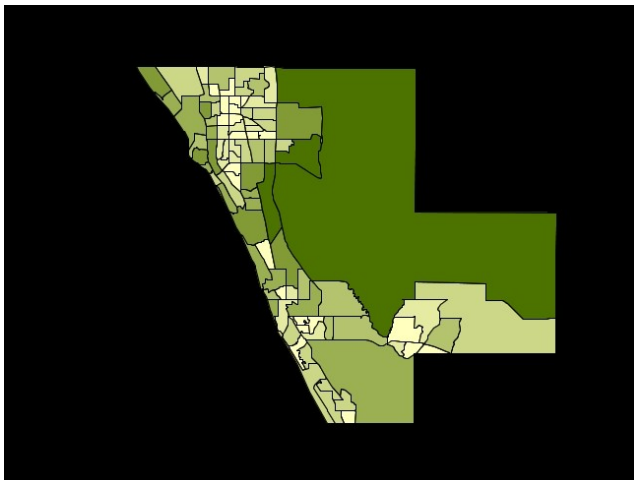
In Venice, the City Council almost made Jeff Boone, the chief attorney for local developers, the City Attorney. On Longboat Key, City leaders side with a big developer over valid concerns of residents.

About the only bright spot is North Port, where new Commissioners seem to chart a path more sensitive to citizen concerns, including resistance to overdevelopment of Warm Mineral Springs.

The heightened threat to the public interest comes from two main factors.

First, development interests used their control of the Florida Legislature to effectively repeal the Growth Management Act, leaving the regulation of development in the broad discretion of local governments.

Second, those same interests have ramped up their attempts to determine who serves as our County and City Commissioners, and get favors owed in return, by recruiting and bankrolling candidates of their choice.



For example, last year the developers picked lawyer Charles Hines of Venice, a former partner of Jeff Boone, to succeed Jon Thaxton as County Commissioner and then managed and heavily funded his campaign. To get around the \$200 limit on campaign contributions, for example, Benderson Development gave Hines 50 \$200 checks under various names. Developer Pat Neal and others used the same scheme.



Skirting the rules became so pervasive it even crossed the line into a felony arrest. Bob Waechter, the leader of the cabal of developers in local elections, faces trial in August for stealing the identity of Lourdes Ramirez, the president of the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations, to make donations to Democrats in her name in an attempt to discredit her in the 2014 Republican Primary for County Commission.

In the City of Sarasota, developer Jesse Biter has raised thousands of dollars to elect Richard Dorfman to the City Commission in pursuit of his goal to quadruple densities from 50 to 200 units per acre, almost as much as in downtown Los Angeles.

Also on the agenda in the City of Sarasota is the repeal - which Dorfman has endorsed - of limits on the amount of traffic a developer

may add to the roads and the requirement that developers pay their share of road improvements, known as concurrency. Due largely to opposition by Control Growth Now, the scheme, called the "Mobility Plan", has been moved to further consideration by the City Commission in April or May, after the elections.

In Sarasota County, the County Commission in January extended their cut of impact fees by 2/3 for another two years, saving developers like Benderson and Neal millions of dollars.

The County Commission also had staff meet privately with developers to make a list of changes they want to the Sarasota 2050 Plan that controls urban sprawl east of I-75 and in south County. Predictably, the developers seek to gut the Plan in order to remove policies for "fiscal neutrality" (that make growth pay its own way) and for compact, mixed-use, walkable communities that better protect the environment and other public interests.



Traffic limits on developers will also be on the chopping block for the County Commission, after they gauge the extent of opposition that occurs in the City of Sarasota to the plans to allow gridlock there.

In total, this campaign by development interests to choose and control our local politicians means that we face an evisceration of reasonable controls on development east

and west, north and south, in areas both urban and rural, to the ultimate detriment of our quality of life.

Once traffic becomes intolerable, taxes skyrocket to pay for the facilities developers are not made to pay for, the environment is degraded and neighborhoods suffer incompatibilities, the damage will be done.

The beautiful quality of life that drew us to Sarasota County would be lost forever.

That is why it is so important that we join together in Control Growth Now and other community organizations that share our goals, to strive together for a better future.

If we show up in numbers at a public meeting, or work together to support candidates of good will, we can and will have an impact.

And elections are what it is all about. Money does not always win. In Manatee County a few years ago, developer Stan Stephens was trounced in his re-election bid for County Commission despite outspending his opponent 6 to 1. In 2012 here in Sarasota County, incumbent County Commissioner Christine Robinson won the general election by what the Sarasota Herald Tribune called "a surprisingly small number of votes" (20,259 out of 188,243 cast) despite outspending her opponent \$100,000 to \$15,000.

In 2014, voters will have a chance to take back the County Commission from undue developer influence. We have high hopes that Lourdes Ramirez will run for the seat being vacated by Nora Patterson and that another good candidate (perhaps Jon Thaxton) will seek the seat being vacated by Joe Barbetta. If that does not cause Carolyn Mason to join them then the shift can be completed in 2016.

Ultimately the public will prevail. It's up to us to hasten that day. We need to try. Now more than ever.

Bits and Pieces

And My Modesty Is a Strong Point Too

When current Sarasota City Commission candidate Richard Dorfman first ran in 2011, he was on a panel at the Tiger Bay Club. The candidates were asked, "What should be done to improve the City's image?" Dorfman responded (and we are not making this up), "The best thing that can be done to improve the City's image is to elect me as Commissioner, because frankly I'm a very attractive man."



Just When You Thought It Was Safe ...

When Sarasota County Administrator resigned in disgrace in the midst of a purchasing scandal, it was reported that he was retiring to Kentucky. Now, however, the *Sarasota Phoenix* reports that Ley has accepted a six-figure job with one of the area's major political operatives, Gary Kompothecras, of "1-800-Ask-Gary" fame. Gary K (as he is known to those who find pronouncing his last name difficult) has raised millions for favored politicians and is allied with the developers who work to control local government with their campaign contributions, including Carlos Beruff, Pat Neal, Henry Rodriguez, Rex Jensen and Randy Benderson.

Hold The Maio

In 2000, Control Growth Now called for the resignation of Alan Maio from the Sarasota County Planning Commission "due to his repeated conflicts of interest as a planning consultant for local developers" that caused him repeatedly to have to abstain and leave the room and for his consistent bias towards development interests. Now, the

developer cabal led by felony arrestee Bob Waechter has anointed Maio as its candidate for Nora Patterson's County Commission seat when she leaves due to term limits in 2014, in the Republican primary against public interest advocate Lourdes Ramirez. Maio is now a principal with the Kimley-Horn engineering firm, known recently for his wildly expensive proposal as a County consultant for the redesign of Siesta Beach facilities, including 13 trash cans at a cost of \$3,500 each. While we repeat our slogan in



2000 to "Hold The Maio", we are reluctant to overly criticize him at this point for concern that the developers will recruit a stronger candidate.

Going Dry?

Last fall when County Commissioners expressed what was reported as "skepticism" over a plan to clean up Dona Bay, it came out that due to projected increases in demand, the County will need a new source of water supply in the next 10 to 15 years, but there are no current plans to provide it. Meanwhile developer Pat Neal predicts an imminent "boom" in development and, with other developers, seeks a repeal of controls on growth. Is there something wrong with this picture?





Marianne Reilly To Be Honored at Picnic

Control Growth Now is very pleased to honor Marianne Reilly as its Citizen of the Year for 2013.

She will be recognized at our March 23

annual meeting and will share remarks with us at that time.

Marianne Reilly served eight full years on the Sarasota County Planning Commission. She was first appointed by the County Commission in 2005 and reappointed in 2009 to another four year term. She served with intelligence and dedication, for the public interest.

Although we did not agree with all her votes, notably to lift limits on building heights in commercial sector plans, in almost every instance Reilly sought to properly protect neighborhoods, the environment and the taxpayers from the adverse impacts of uncontrolled development. As just one example, she helped to persuade the Planning Commission to vote against two huge developments under the Sarasota 2050 Plan because they violated that Plan in important regards (even though the projects were later approved anyway in divided votes of the County Commission). She also sought to point out that we should learn from the lesson of the housing bust by not approving so much development that it far exceeds demand.

Then, in January, 2013, the County Commission, fresh off election victories by the big developers, broke longstanding precedent by not again reappointing Reilly. Instead, they filled her position, and another than had expired, with people who work in the development industry. This, together with other recent appointments, has created a Planning Commission with a majority in the devel-

opment industry and others who are developer allies. Only two of the Planning Commissioners remain independent advocates of the public interest.

Important voices and votes for independent review have been lost, and the Planning Commission -- just like the County Commission -- is now in the solid grip of development interests.

However, we are pleased that Marianne Reilly's voice has not been silenced and that she will remain active in the community and will share her views with us at our annual meeting on March 23.

Marianne Reilly's life has been a history of involvement and success. At the age of 18, she became the youngest person ever to be named to the Board of Directors of a Federal Credit Union for International Paper Company headquartered in New York. Reilly studied Finance and Credit Union Management and was hired in 1974 as Comptroller for Universal Graphics in New Jersey. She studied Special Police Operations at Morris County College and served as a Special Police Officer in Vernon, N.J. Reilly studied Real Estate Sales and Marketing while raising her four children and eventually became manager of the New Homes Division for Century 21 in Vernon, N.J. She was named Sussex County Realtor of the Year and named to the Who's Who of Woman Executives in 1989-1990.

Reilly's political career began in 1984 where she chaired the local Environmental Commission in New Jersey. In 1985, she was appointed to a Blue Ribbon Panel, which she chaired, studying the effects of microwave towers in residential areas. In 1986, she was appointed by Gov. Kean to serve on the

Radium/Radon Advisory Panel. During this time she also chaired a second Blue Ribbon Panel studying radium contaminated soil disposal. That same year she testified before Congress on hazardous waste siting.

Reilly served in many campaigns including, local, county, State House, State Senate, Congressional and Gubernatorial. Over an eleven year span she also served on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Board of Health, Recreation Commission and Senior Citizen Advisory Board. Reilly also served three years as Police Commissioner and received a coveted memoriam award from the Vernon Township

Police Department.

In 1993, after her own successful campaign, she became the first woman in 202 years to serve as Mayor in Vernon, N.J. Reilly moved to Florida in 1998 and is now President of the Venice Area Democratic Club, and President of the DLDC (Democratic Leadership Development Council).

For the last seven years, Marianne Reilly has been volunteering with the Red Cross. She has traveled coast to coast covering fires, hurricanes, tornados and floods working in Disaster Management. "This is," she says, "the most fulfilling work I have ever done."



Visit Our Updated Website Today



***Renew Your Membership or Join Online
and Register For the Picnic***

www.controlgrowthnow.org

***Growth In CGN Membership and Participation
Is a Good Kind of Growth***



Saturday **March 23** 11:30-1:30

Join Us for Our

**CONTROL
GROWTH
NOW**

Picnic



Again at the
beautiful
**Colonial Oaks
Park**

5300 Colonial
Oaks Blvd.,
Sarasota

See map and
directions on
next page



Free To
Control Growth Now
Members And All Of
Our Welcome Guests

We Provide The
Burgers, Hot
Dogs, Veggie
Burgers and
Drinks.



Bring a Side
Dish or Dessert
to Share, If You
Can

Reservations Required — Please See Last Page

**We Look Forward To Seeing You At
Our Annual Meeting and Potluck**



Picnic

**Saturday, March 23
11:30 to 1:30
Colonial Oaks Park
Sarasota**

**Free to
Members and
Our Welcome
Guests!**

**Please see the next page to make your
reservation for the picnic.**

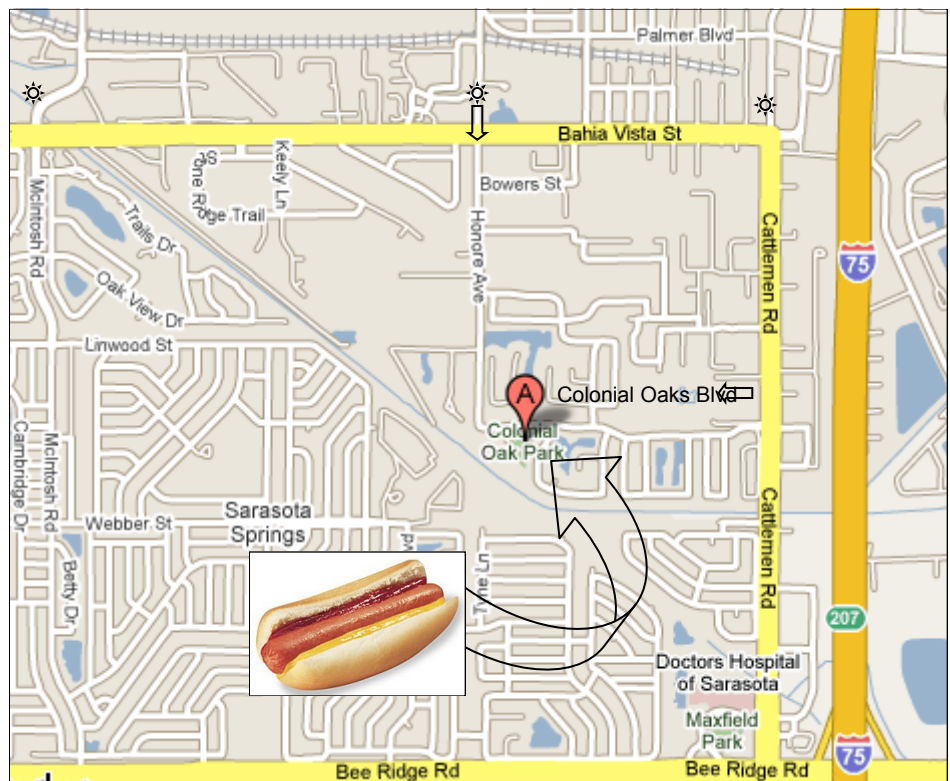
Directions to Colonial Oaks Park:

Go east on Bahia Vista St. (which is between Fruitville and Bee Ridge), past the light at McIntosh Rd., take a right at the light at Honore Ave. and follow Honore to its end.

OR - Take I-75 north to the Bee Ridge Road exit, go west (left) on Bee Ridge, turn right (north) on Cattlemen Rd. Cut through Colonial Oaks left on Colonial Oaks Blvd. to the park OR continue on Cattlemen to Bahia Vista St., turn left onto Bahia Vista to the light at Honore Ave., turn left onto Honore Ave. to the end.

Colonial Oaks Park is on the left off Honore Ave. right near its end. Park and walk past the buildings to the picnic structures next to the open lawn area.

See you there! (Bring a side dish or dessert to share, if you like).



Three Ways To Sign Up For The March 23 Picnic

(And To Join CGN If You Like)



Option One: Sign Up Online at www.controlgrowthnow.org

Option Two: Print, Complete and Mail This Form

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Please fill out this form and mail it, with
your \$20 check to CGN if you are joining,
to:

Control Growth Now
PO Box 277
Osprey, FL 34229-0277

Please check as many as apply:

☐ I'll see you at the picnic on March 23. With our guests, we'll need _____ hamburgers, _____ hot
dogs and/or _____ veggie burgers

☐ Please sign me up as a CGN member. My \$20 check to CGN is enclosed.

☐ I'm not joining CGN at present but would like to attend the picnic as a guest

Option Three: To just attend the picnic, email your name and food order to maralph@comcast.net; dlobeck@lobeckhanson.com