

Public Comment
CPA 22-06 Calusa Creek Ranch
Text Amendment

Combined with Public
Comment for CPA 23-12, The
Ranch FLUM

From: villagebootery@comcast.net
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: JWA Ranch, Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 12:26:18 PM
Attachments: [letter2.docx](#)



Dear Commissioners of Martin County,

This letter is in response to the proposals presented to the LPA last Thursday by JWA Ranch concerning two amendments to the Rural Lifestyle Designation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Benjamin Schuemann

Benjamin T. Schuemann

Schuemann Farm

Indiantown, FL

November 13, 2023

Martin County Commissioners and the Local Planning Agency of Martin County

Dear members of the Local Planning Agency of Martin County

On Thursday, November, 16 2023 two proposed amendments will be brought forth to the agency concerning changes to the Martin County Comprehensive Growth Plan. The Calusa Creek Ranch project, which seeks to designate 3902 acres of agricultural land for Rural Lifestyle use. The applicant seeks a Future Land Use Map change *and* a Comprehensive Plan text amendment to **expand** the Rural Lifestyle designation to apply to more acreage in the County's western farmlands.

The Calusa Creek Ranch is a diverse land with lush palm trees, freshwater marshes and towering cypress domes, it was first surveyed in 1845 and is home to a variety of wildlife, including the Ocala Turkey, a breed unique to Florida. The Ocala turkey's most significant threat is human development and land conversion. According to Calusa Creek's own website, Calusa Creek has always been appreciated for its beauty, diversity and wildlife. Tribes such as the local Cherokee and Seminoles Indians favored areas near Lake Okechobee, such as Calusa Creek, because of the diverse game and readily available clean water. The ranch is also home to a herd of over 850 Brangus cattle.

The Rural Lifestyle designation approved by Commissioners Harold Jenkins, Doug Smith and Stacey Hetherington is available for any property of 1,000 or more contiguous acres adjacent to the primary or secondary Urban Services District or a freestanding USD. The Calusa Creek Ranch amendment would eliminate the requirement for property to be adjacent to a USD and would allow the Rural Lifestyle designation to be applied to property within 6,000 feet of the USD if the property is a minimum of 3,000 acres. Furthermore, The Calusa Creek Ranch proposal would change the text of the Comprehensive Plan to allow for density in excess of one unit per 20 acres, although a proposed maximum density is not specified . . . the proposal provides that maximum density will be the "density allowed in the P.U.D".

It is vital that the leadership in Martin County honor our agricultural heritage by preserving our ranch lands and natural resources. The Martin County Comprehensive

Growth Plan was created in 1982 to protect the environment and guide growth and development. By allowing the developer these major amendment changes would be unethical and go against everything the Comprehensive Growth Plan stands for! It will open wide the doors to the "Browardization" of Martin County, a fear that our good residents have fought so hard to avoid. The Rural Lifestyle Amendment was unpopular from the beginning and amending it even further, to allow urban sprawl to go unchecked, would be dishonest. The Rural Lifestyle Designation must be limited -- not expanded.

I urge the Planning Agency to strongly encourage the County Commissioners to reject these amendment proposals from JWA Ranch LLC. Thank you for your consideration.

Benjamin T. Schuemann

Clyde Dulin

From: Greg Braun <execdirector@theguardiansofmartincounty.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 11:06 PM
To: Clyde Dulin
Cc: Paul Schilling; pschilling@martin.fl.us; legal@theguardiansofmartincounty.com; powens@1000fof.org
Subject: The Ranch - CPA 22-06 and 23-12
Attachments: Guardians Position Paper on golf courses outside the USB - rev 11-14-23.pdf

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
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Greetings Clyde: The Guardians of Martin County have reviewed documents related to the request to amend the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to authorize the construction of residences, golf villas and two golf courses on lands outside the County's Urban Service Districts for a project called "The Ranch".

After several contentious public hearings, the approval of the Rural Lifestyle Zoning was conditioned upon applicants having a minimum 1,000 acres and being adjacent to an urban service district. As noted in the Staff Report, this proposed project does not meet both of these criteria.

The Guardians have recently investigated the status of golf courses in Martin County, and attached is a Position Paper that we have developed regarding golf courses that are proposed for locations outside USD boundaries. We are concerned that the proposed Ranch PUD will require public services that are most cost-effectively provided to properties that are within the USD.

We request that the County require that a permanent conservation easement (that will be held by a third-party conservation entity) or deed restrictions be imposed on all portions of the subject property that are not otherwise protected through upland and/or wetland Preserve Area Management Plans.

Please add this correspondence and the attached Position Paper as public input for the LPA mtg on November 16, at which CPA 22-06 and 23-12 will be discussed, and forward this information to members of the LPA for their consideration. Thank you.

Greg Braun
Executive Director
The Guardians of Martin County

Please use this address for all Guardians-related emails



**Executive Summary of Guardians Position on Golf Courses proposed on lands outside Martin County's Urban Services Districts
November 14, 2023**

Public and private golf courses provide open space and recreational opportunities for thousands of residents and visitors to Martin County. The approximately 30 golf courses in Martin County occupy approximately 12,000 acres and provide habitat for a variety of native flora and fauna and serve other environmental purposes (e.g., stormwater retention, groundwater recharge etc.).

Several recent requests that public water and/or sewer services be extended outside Martin County's Urban Service Districts to serve golf course projects have caused the Guardians to investigate potential ramifications of these public services extensions. Due to the increase in property values that are realized once utility services are provided, the Guardians are concerned that without more thorough protection, the properties will be more attractive for future conversion to residential or other higher-intensity uses.

Conservation

For projects that involve the extension of water and/or sewer utilities outside the USDs, the Guardians believe that permanent conservation easements or deed restrictions should be required for the portions of all new golf course projects that are not permanently protected through Preserve Area Management Plans (PAMPs). The Guardians suggest that the requirement for permanent conservation easements could be conditions associated with the County's Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval.

Water Supply

To the extent allowed by State law and/or rules of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Guardians encourage use of surface water waters from the C-44 Reservoir, the C-44 Canal, Lake Okeechobee and reclaimed water for irrigation of golf courses in preference to withdrawals from the surficial aquifer.

Water Quality

To the extent allowed by law, and to prevent further degradation of surface waters, the Guardians request that Martin County require continuous water quality monitoring as conditions of Planned Unit Development (PUD) approvals when local approvals are sought for new projects, including but not limited to golf courses, at locations where these proposed facilities will discharge into water bodies that are designated as Impaired. If monitoring reveals that discharges from the property do not meet the applicable water quality standard and/or are resulting in adverse water quality impacts in the downstream receiving water body, the property owners shall have the responsibility to retrofit their system to prevent degradation of waters of the state. Monitoring can cease or be scaled back after construction has been completed and the facility has operated for five years if no degradation is observed.



**Guardians position on Golf Courses proposed on lands outside Martin County's
Urban Services Districts
November 13, 2023**

Since its roots in Scotland in the middle ages, the sport of golf has spread widely, with golf currently being played in all states in the U.S., in most foreign countries and on all continents, including at outposts in Antarctica¹. It is physically and mentally challenging, and stimulates participants to exercise their physical and competitive skills.

With approximately 1250 golf courses², Florida has more golf courses than any other state in the country. In Florida, a favorable climate and diverse landscapes from oceanfront to the panhandle offer golfers a seeming infinite variety of courses, most of which are in close proximity to major urban centers. In Florida, Palm Beach County leads the pack, with 160 courses³.

Using U.S. Census Bureau statistics for 2022 (the most recent year available)⁴, with 29 existing golf courses in Martin County, the County has a higher ratio of golf courses to population (5,586 residents/golf course) than Palm Beach County (9,490 residents/golf course), which is likely one of the highest in the state, and possibly one of the highest in the country and the world.

Based on the popularity of golf in Martin County and its positive economic benefits and potential environmental concerns, on June 6, 2023, subject experts Dr. Bryan Unruh (University of Florida), Mike Davis (past CEO of the United States Golf Association) and Thomas Barrett (Director of Agronomy, McArthur Golf Club) made a presentation at a meeting of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners focused on Best Management Practices. (see Agenda Item DEPT-6 Agenda Item: 23-0864; and the video recording at https://martin.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=24 beginning at 2:06).

In spite of a recent increased local interest in building new golf courses in Martin County, in recent years, golf has been going through challenging times.

¹ <https://blog.thesocialgolfer.com/golfing-in-antarctica/>

² <https://tellymoregolf.com/beginners/states-with-the-most-golf-courses>

³ <https://golfweek.usatoday.com/2021/06/24/pg-a-tour-tiger-woods-jack-nicklaus-brooks-koepka-rory-mcilroy-palm-beach-county/>

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau,
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/martincountyflorida,palmbeachcountyflorida/PST045222>

Following previous increases, there was a peak of 30 million golfers in 2005⁵.

By 2011, however, the number of golfers in the U.S. had dropped to 25.7 million, a 16% decrease in participation over an eight-year span⁶. This decline in the popularity of golf continued during the last decade⁷. In the years immediately preceding the pandemic, golf in the U.S. was waning, with increasing costs for participants, reduced amounts of available time and other factors contributing to this decline⁸.

In 1000 Friends of Florida's 2021 Special Report Golf Course Redevelopment or Repurposing in Florida (J. Gloster, 2021) stated "We are entering an era where most people prefer other, less time-consuming recreation and entertainment, frequently in digital forms. Additionally, longer working hours have reduced Americans' leisure time to an average of 2.5 hours per day, not enough time for many to play "a sport that takes between 3 and ½ and five and ½ hours to play"⁹.

The COVID pandemic, on the other hand, resulted in an increased interest in golf, with many people seeking recreational opportunities that took them outdoors, in activities that were comparatively low in risk for transmission of the virus. Golf courses adopted strategies to further minimize this risk¹⁰, and golf was again on the up-swing, literally.

Golf Courses in Martin County

A recent inventory of golf courses in Martin County performed by the Guardians has revealed that there are 30 existing golf courses in the County and six that are either under construction or for which approvals are being sought (Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

These existing and proposed courses vary considerably in size, from small courses less than 100 acres (i.e., Palm Lakes, Miles Grant, Jupiter Island) to larger courses in excess of 400 acres (i.e., McArthur, Atlantic Fields/Discovery, 3-Lakes, The Ranch).

⁵ Crompton, John L. 2020. , *Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf*, PARKS & RECREATION, THE NRPA'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE (Jun. 25, 2020), <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreationmagazine/2020/july/implications-of-the-rise-and-decline-of-golf/>.

⁶ Conant, Blake Jeffrey, 2009., *Bankrupt Golf Courses: An Historical Analysis and Strategies for Repurposing*, University of Georgia, https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/conant_blake_j_201305_mla.pdf at 11.

⁷ Burke, Kathleen, 2017. *Playing Golf Has Gone the Way of the 3-Hour Martini Lunch—Trump Being the Exception*, MARKETWATCH (Mar. 29, 2017, 7:53 PM), <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/why-golf-has-gone-the-way-of-the-three-martini-lunch-2016-07-13>.

⁸ Tuttle, Brad, 2014. *Fore! No, Make that Five! 5 Reasons Golf is in a Hole*". In Money, <https://money.com/golf-dying-tiger-woods-elitist/>

⁹ Benfield, F. Kaid 2015. *Could Placemaking Become New Golf? Repurposing Obsolete Courses*, SMART CITIES DIVE (updated Mar. 16, 2015), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/could-placemaking-become_b_6873934.

¹⁰ <https://golf.com/news/golf-course-combat-coronavirus/>

These sizes are consistent with nationwide averages, which is typically approximately 170 acres, not including any surrounding residential or resort development, which often increases project size to a minimum of 300 acres ¹¹.

Nearly all golf courses in Martin County are privately owned and operated, often by homeowner's associations. Two (i.e., Sailfish Sands and Summerfield) are properties owned by Martin County. They also vary considerably in age, with several (e.g., Palm Lakes, Jupiter Island) having been constructed decades ago, and several others (e.g., McArthur West, Atlantic Fields/Discovery, 3-Lakes, The Ranch, Rolling Sands) either being under construction or for which approval for construction has been applied.

In total, these existing and proposed courses occupy approximately 12,000 acres, many of which include County-mandated upland and/or wetland preserves, which provide habitat for a variety of native flora and fauna, including some endangered or threatened species (e.g., Florida scrub-jays, gopher tortoises), store/retain stormwater, and recharge the surficial aquifer.

Environmental values are further enhanced on those courses that are certified in Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (<https://auduboninternational.org/acsp-for-golf/>), a voluntary program which accredits specific golf courses that go above and beyond minimum environmental and/or ecological requirements to meet the program's criteria. It is noted this Cooperative Sanctuary program is administered by Audubon International, which is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Two golf courses in Martin County (i.e., Loblolly Golf Club and Sailfish Point) are presently certified by Audubon International (https://directory.auduboninternational.org/directory?memberCategory=acsp&city=&state=FLORIDA&country=United%20States%20of%20America&zipcode=¤t_page=4) Two others, Harbour Ridge and The Floridian, are just across the county's boundary in St. Lucie County. Several additional golf courses certified by Audubon International are present in Palm Beach County.

Many of the existing golf courses in Martin County are either a valuable component of a residential development or have residences overlooking their fairways, tees, greens or preserves.

Golf Courses and Martin County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (Comp Plan, CGMP)

A key philosophy in Martin County's Comp Plan is the recognition that public services (e.g., potable water, sewer, emergency services etc.) can be provided most cost-effectively where population densities are the highest. By restricting development projects that need public services to areas within the primary or secondary Urban Service Districts (USDs), the County is able to provide those services at a lower cost than if the same development projects were to be serviced outside the USBs.

¹¹ Conant, Blake Jeffrey, 2009., *Bankrupt Golf Courses: An Historical Analysis and Strategies for Repurposing*, University of Georgia, https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/conant_blake_j_201305_mla.pdf at 11.

Golf courses, whether publicly-owned or privately-owned are an allowable use on lands outside the USBs (Land Development Regulations, Vol 2, Div 3, Sec 3.11). Golf courses, by their nature, require large areas of land, often provide valuable habitat for native flora and fauna, and have a high ratio of open space to impervious area.

Many golf courses in Martin County are key features of residential developments. Some of Martin County's most prestigious developments consist of residences that front golf courses, and the use of those golf courses by residents promotes physical and mental health and prevents or reduces the need for off-site impacts on roads, traffic, and other public services.

During the early years of the pandemic, several golf courses were proposed to be constructed at locations outside Martin County's USD boundaries. While, as noted above, golf courses are allowed outside the USBs, several proposed courses have requested that public water and sewer services be extended outside the USD to serve their facilities. Many golf courses have water requirements, either for irrigation and/or wastewater treatment, that exceed the limits that are allowed for facilities outside the USBs in Martin. Connecting to public water services in these situations is logical, as, in general, there is less potential for water quality related problems when compared to stand-alone water treatment systems. And furthermore, re-claimed water (i.e., water that has been treated through a public wastewater treatment system) is then available for irrigation and other non-potable purposes.

Problems arise, however, when, in spite of the best intentions, outside factors result in the failure of golf course/country club projects. Property owners who paid higher prices to live "overlooking the golf course", may, rightfully so, object to a change of land use if the golf course amid their development is proposed for a different use, particularly if that land use is of higher intensity (e.g., residential).

Golf courses are expensive to operate and maintain, and whole-course renovations, which are occasionally necessary, are exceedingly expensive. In a sign of troubling economic times, some courses have encountered financial challenges too severe to overcome, and have ceased to operate. In these cases, what happens next can vary considerably.

In February 2022, a request by Mattamy Homes to construct a 282-unit residential complex on the site of the former 45-year old defunct Sherbrooke golf course in Palm Beach County was rejected by the County's Planning, Zoning and Building Department after hundreds of residents and concerned citizens voiced opposition to the project, citing concerns about traffic, loss of open space and other quality of life impacts¹². Similar situations have likely occurred elsewhere.

¹² (Palm Beach Post, 2021) Palm Beach Post, <https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/local/lakeworth/2021/08/06/sherbrooke-residents-dont-want-new-homes-old-golf-course/5496631001/>

Statement of Problems/Opportunities

In Martin County, where residents have consistently elected county commissioners who have run on platforms of “not moving the urban services district boundary”, there are concerns that, after public water and/or wastewater services are extended to serve a new facility, there may, at some time in the future, be a request to change the land use from golf course to a higher intensity residential.

To reduce the likelihood of this eventuality, and to promote the permanent “green” connotation of golf courses, the Guardians believe that permanent conservation easements or deed restrictions should be required for the portions of all new golf course projects that are not permanently protected through Preserve Area Management Plans (PAMPs) whenever those projects are proposed to be constructed outside the County’s Urban Services Districts if the projects involve the extension of water and/or sewer utilities outside the USDs.

Water Supply

Golf Courses require substantial amounts of water for irrigation. The United States Golf Association reported that: “From 2003-2005, the average water use for golf course irrigation in the U.S. was estimated to be 2,312,701 acre-feet per year. That equates to approximately 2.08 billion gallons of water per day for golf course irrigation in the U.S.”¹³. In peninsular Florida, where most water withdrawals are from the shallow, “surficial” aquifer, water is a precious commodity. While there may be some comfort in knowing that water withdrawals for golf courses are likely less than what may have been permitted for golf courses that are constructed on previously-existing agricultural lands, groundwater withdrawals have the potential to negatively affect limited sub-surface water supplies.

In Martin County, rainfall typically results in an over-abundance of water during the rainy season (typically May-October) and the need for irrigation during the dry season (typically November-April), during times that the surficial aquifer may be in a depressed condition. The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has determined that Martin County is within a “Water Resource Caution Area”, which Rule 62-40.210(39), F.A.C., defines as: “.. a geographic area identified by a District as having existing water resource problems or an area in which water resource problems are projected to develop during the next twenty years”¹⁴.

¹³ Lyman, Gregory T., 2012. How Much Water Does Golf Use and Where Does It Come From? Presented by the U.S. Golf Association.

¹⁴ Rule 62-40.210(39), F.A.C.

In 2023, The Guardians recognize that the existing surface water management system in Martin County is highly managed. Discharges from Lake Okeechobee via the C-44 Canal to the South Fork of the St. Lucie River are managed through a complex inter-relationship between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the SFWMD. Situated on approximately 12,000 acres, the C-44 Reservoir and its associated Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), are a regional water management facility that is used primarily to accommodate water from the local basin and treat it before discharging it to the C-44¹⁵.

Fresh water from the Lake Okeechobee and C-44 watersheds have elevated levels of nutrients (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus). Use of nutrient-enhanced waters for irrigation reduces the need for fertilizers.

The Guardians encourage use of surface water waters from the C-44 Reservoir, the C-44 Canal, the Lake Okeechobee Service Area or reclaimed water for irrigation of golf courses, in preference to water withdrawals from the surficial aquifer. It is recognized that the ability to use these waters for golf course irrigation may be affected by the designation of these areas by SFWMD as a “Closed Basin”¹⁶.

Water Quality

Most golf courses require the use of chemicals (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.) to keep their facilities green and aesthetically appealing. Rain-water run-off from golf courses has the potential to carry these chemicals, and/or their break-down constituents, into surface waters, both on-site and potentially to off-site locations.

The construction and/or operation of golf courses has the potential to cause adverse water quality impacts in downstream receiving waters. As a close-to-home example, in 2018, unauthorized discharge into the South Fork of the St. Lucie River during the construction of the Grove XXIII Golf Course resulted in fines levied by the South Florida Water Management District¹⁷

In recognition of Florida’s unique geology, topography and environment, and the potential for golf courses to adversely affect water quality, the Florida Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America worked with professionals from the University of Florida and others to develop a manual on the “Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses”¹⁸. The potential for adverse downstream water quality impacts from golf courses can be lessened when/if the owner conscientiously implements these Best Management Practices (BMPs).

¹⁵ SFWMD, 2020 C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area Factsheet

¹⁶ SFWMD, Environmental Resource Permit Applicant’s Handbook and Basis of Review

¹⁷ Club and Resort Business, 2018. <https://clubandresortbusiness.com/grove-xxiii-developer-fined-polluting-st-lucie-river/>

¹⁸ Florida Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses

Adherence to golf course BMPs is currently voluntary in Florida, with the exception of those courses that discharge into waters that have been declared by the State of Florida as “Impaired”¹⁹.

The Guardians recognize that the State of Florida, through its rules implemented by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and/or SFWMD attempt to protect surface waters from adverse impacts. Unfortunately, several surface waters in Martin County have been designated as “Impaired”. These include the St. Lucie River and portions of the Indian River Lagoon, for which Basin Action Management Plans (BMAPs) have been developed in an attempt to address water quality deficiencies. While State efforts may be underway to revise water quality standards, the extent to which any such revisions will have a marked effect on improving water quality is unknown.

Protection of receiving waters could be further enhanced if golf course owners/designers would engineer on-site storage systems to preclude off-site discharges, ideally, or at least to exceed the levels presently required for on-site retention.

Martin County recently submitted a grant application in which they requested federal funding, which, if approved, would allow the county to significantly enhance their water quality monitoring program.

While the Guardians support the County’s request for funding for enhanced water quality monitoring, we believe that new sources of potential pollution, in this case golf courses, should be required to perform intensive water quality monitoring at their own expense rather than as financial burden to the County and its taxpayers.

Water quality monitoring by the Ft. Pierce-based Ocean Research & Conservation Organization (ORCA)²⁰ and Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI)²¹ have shown the value in conducting real-time continuous water quality monitoring. While their monitoring equipment may differ (i.e., Kilroys for ORCA and LOBOs for HBOI) the reliability of data collected by continuous recorders is exponentially more enlightening than analyses of “grab samples” that are collected and analyzed quarterly or semi-annually.

¹⁹ Chapter 62-303 F.A. C.

²⁰ Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Florida Atlantic University, Land/Ocean Biogeochemical Observatory. <http://fau.loboviz.com/>

²¹ Ocean Research & Conservation Association, Kilroy Mapping and Monitoring, <https://www.teamorca.org/monitoring-mapping/>

Because golf courses are subject to regulation by the State of Florida, and Martin County's authority to regulate these facilities may be affected by Section 403.9339 F.S., the Guardians request that the County require continuous water quality monitoring as conditions of a PUD agreement when local approvals are sought for new projects, including but not limited to golf courses, at locations where these proposed facilities will discharge into water bodies that are designated as Impaired.

Monitoring is requested not just for the sake of getting water quality data. Conditions of development approval must contain provisions that require that appropriate modifications to water management systems be designed and implemented if the monitoring reveals that discharges from the facility do not meet the applicable water quality standard and/or are having adverse water quality impacts in the downstream receiving water body.

The quality of surface waters in Martin County is directly tied to our economy, our environment, and our ability to pursue recreational activities. We cannot wait for the years/decades to tick by as Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects are designed and implemented.

The Guardians believe that Martin County has the authority and responsibility to take actions to prevent further degradation and permanently protect environmentally-valuable open spaces.

Appendix 1
Existing and Proposed Golf Courses in Martin County

Map Loc'n #	Golf Course Name	General Location	Public Private	Gross Acres (Est) ²	W/in primary or secondary USB?	Comments
1	Palm Lakes Golf Club	North River Shores: West of US-1, North of Roosevelt Bridge	Private	~ 70	Primary	W/in residential area
2	Jensen Beach Golf Club ¹	North of Jensen Bch Blvd, E of US-1	Private	~ 300	Primary	Part of PUD
3	Sailfish Sands	Stuart; SE of Witham Field	Public	~ 310	Primary	County-owned
4	Monarch Country Club ¹	Palm City; N of Monterey Rd	Private	~ 310	Primary	Part of PUD
5	Martin Downs Golf Club ¹	Palm City, NW of Monterey Rd and west of High Meadows Ave	Private	~ 300	Primary	Part of PUD
6	Hammock Creek Golf Club ¹	Palm City; East of High Meadows Ave	Private	~ 365	Primary	Part of PUD
7	Piper's Landing	Palm City, East & west of Mapp Rd south of Martin Hwy	Private	~ 135	Primary	Part of PUD
8	Willoughby ¹	Stuart; east of Willoughby Blvd	Private	~ 150	Primary	Part of PUD
9	Indian River Plantation	Hutchinson Island	Private	~ 70	Primary	Part of PUD
10	Sailfish Point	Southern tip of Hutchinson Island	Private	~ 125	Primary	Part of PUD
11	Stuart Yacht & Country Club	Port Salerno; East of Dixie Highway, north of St. Lucie Blvd	Private	~ 100	Primary	Part of PUD
12	Miles Grant	Port Salerno; East of A1A north of Cove Rd	Private	~ 65	Primary	Part of PUD
13	Mariner Sands ¹	Port Salerno; between US 1 and A1A	Private	~ 200	Primary	Part of PUD
14	Summerfield ¹	Port Salerno; West of US 1 South of Cove Rd	Private	~ 200	Primary	Part of PUD; County owned; Leased to Summerfield HOA

15	The Florida Club	Tropical Farms; between Turnpike, Kanner Hwy & Pratt-Whitney Rd	Private	~ 140	Primary	Part of PUD
16	Lost Lake ¹	Port Salerno/Hobe Sound; north of Seabranh Blvd	Private	~ 130	Primary	Part of PUD
17	Heritage Ridge ¹	Hobe Sound; Between US 1 & A1A north & south of SE Heritage Blvd	Private	~ 100	Primary	Part of PUD
18	Loblolly ¹	Hobe Sound; Between A1A & SE Gomez Ave north of Osprey St.	Private	~ 115	Primary	Part of PUD
19	McArthur (East)	Hobe Sound; W of US 1, S of Poinciana Gardens & N of The Medalist	Private	~ 400	Primary	Part of PUD
20	McArthur (West)	Hobe Sound; West of US 1, S of Poinciana Gardens & N of The Medalist	Private	~ 500	Secondary	Part of PUD
21	The Medalist	Hobe Sound; West of US 1 south of Poinciana Gardens & south of McArthur	Private	~ 290	Primary	Part of PUD
22	Jupiter Island	Jupiter Island; south of Bridge Rd	Private	~ 85	Primary	Pre-dates PUD
23	Hobe Sound Golf Club	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd, west of US 1	Private	~ 120	Primary	Part of PUD
24	Grove XXIII	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd., East of I-95	Private	~ 200	Outside	Part of PUD
25	Jupiter Hills	SE Martin County; west of US 1 north of County Line Rd	Private	~ 225	Primary	Part of PUD
26	Ranch Colony/Dye Preserve	Ranch Colony	Private	~ 150	Outside	Part of PUD
27	Jonathan's Landing – Old Trail	Ranch Colony	Private	~ 260	Outside	Part of PUD
28	South Fork High School	Tropical Farms: West of I-95 & FL Turnpike, East of Pratt-Whitney Rd.	County	< 5	Secondary	County-owned
29	The Cape Club of Palm City	Stuart West – west of Palm City	Private	~ 200	Outside	Part of PUD
30	Indianwood	Indiantown	Private	~ 135	Primary	Part of PUD

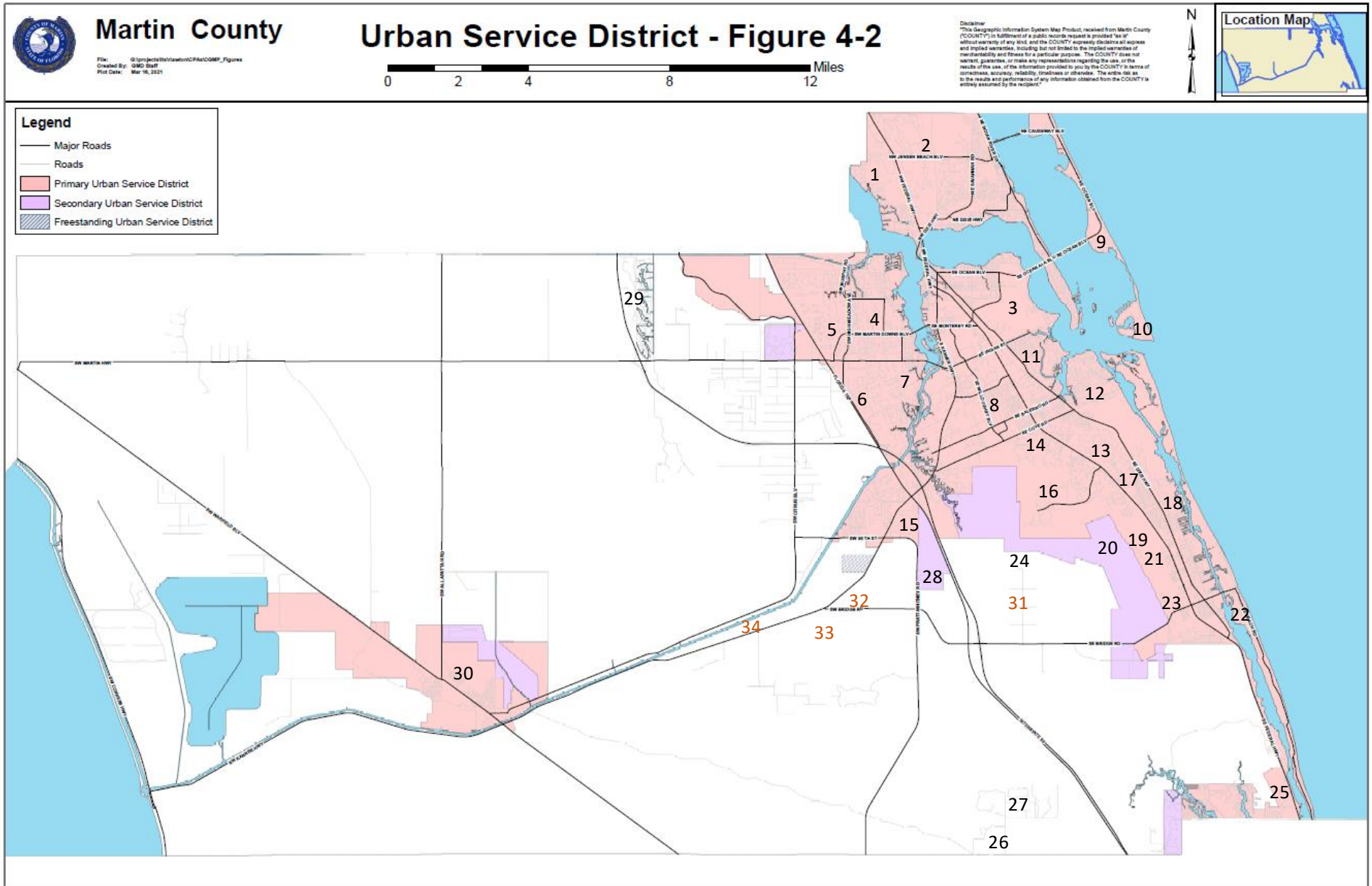
	Proposed					
31	Atlantic Fields/Discovery Land ¹	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd, east of I-95	Private	~1,000	Outside	Part of PUD
32	3-Lakes (3 courses)	Tropical Farms; North of Bridge Rd, east of intersection with Kanner Hwy	Private	~ 1,200	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD
33	The Ranch	Tropical Farms; South of Bridge Rd & Kanner Hwy south of C-44	Private	~ 3,900	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD
34	Rolling Sands	North of Kanner Hwy, west of The Ranch	Private	~ 240	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD

¹ Acreage calculation includes residences

² Includes wetlands, upland preserves, and wetland preserves

Figure 1

Location of Existing (shown in black) and Proposed (shown in brown) Golf Courses in Martin County in relation to Urban Service District boundaries
 For golf course names, see Table 1

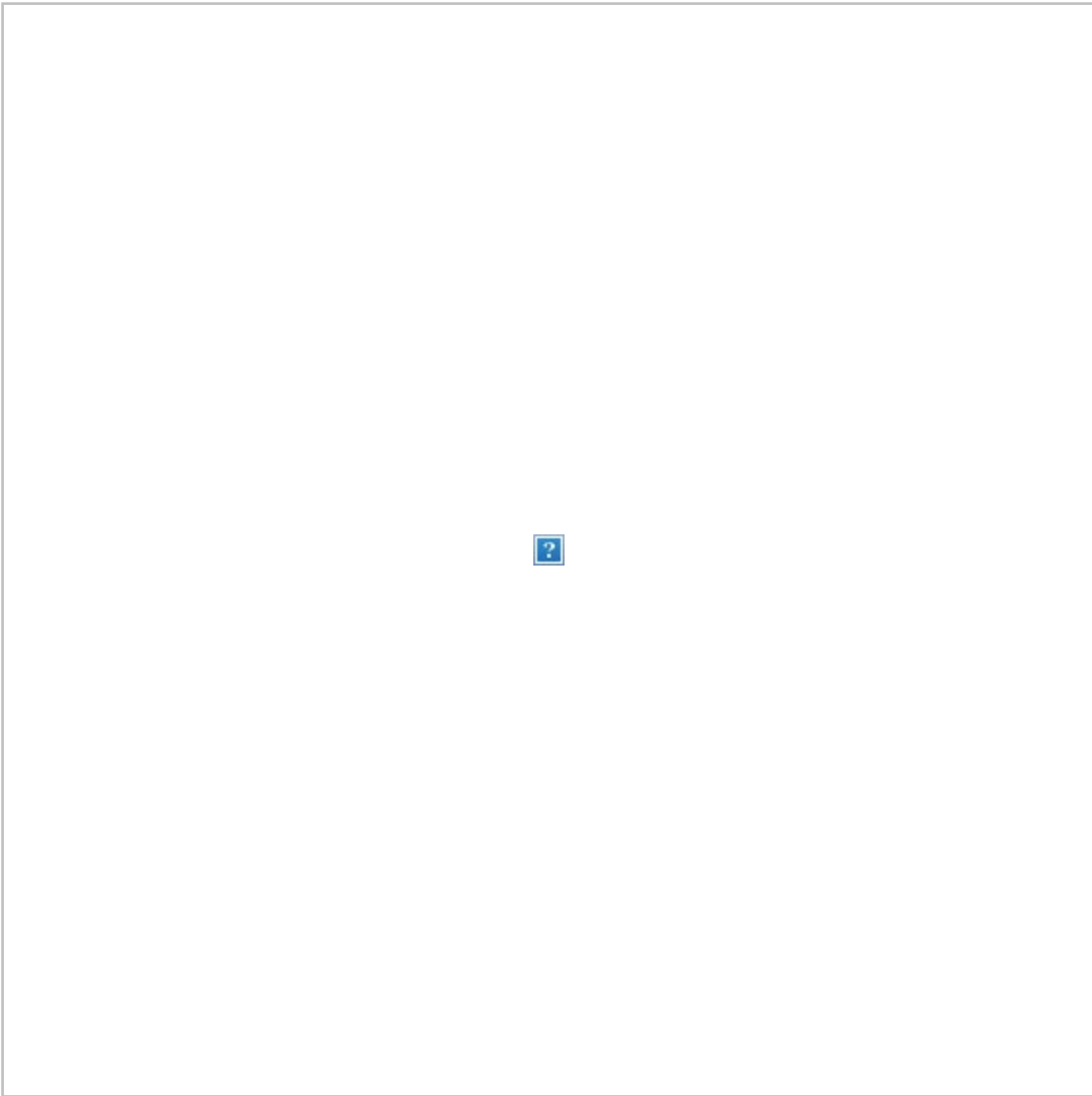


From: [The Guardians of Martin County](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Save the Date: County Commission Meeting on Tuesday, Dec., 5th – time TBD
Date: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 2:50:09 PM



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[Source: Staff Report for Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Text Amendment.](#)

6,000 foot new extension (swirled area) to the USD for contiguous development under proposed RLZ amendment, as well as the Calusa Ranch.

On Tuesday, December 5th the County Commission is scheduled to consider two new requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan for Rural Lifestyle Zoning (RLZ) land use. This change will allow development on Calusa Ranch, a 3,900+-acre tract outside the Urban Service District, located on both sides of Kanner Highway near the western terminus of Bridge Rd. Note that part of Calusa is adjacent to the St. Lucie Canal.

Presently, Calusa Ranch does not have access to municipal water or wastewater services.

The request is for;

1. 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf course cottages and dormitory housing for staff support;

2. Multi-slip docking facilities on the St. Lucie canal;
3. A general store;
4. To extend RLS Developments to 6,000 feet from the USD for parcels over 3,000 acres (Indiantown excepted).

County staff made the determination that these RLZ changes would allow Calusa revenue-generating “support establishments” (i.e. spa, racquet club, gym, event facilities, marina, etc.). The County does not consider the project to be urban sprawl and Calusa will not result in an increase of traffic on Kanner Highway! Incredulous!

To date, the Guardians’ request to require permanent conservation easements on open land that would not otherwise be protected has been ignored.

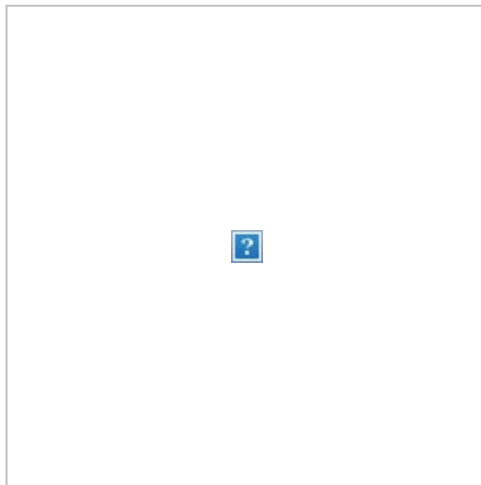
For anyone who is interested to learn more of the details of the proposed project, see the Agenda items for the Local Planning Agency for Calusa Ranch on November 14, 2023 here [Comp Plan Text Amendment](#) and [Future Land Use Map Amendment](#).

The Guardians will be sending out a detailed ‘call to action’ during the week of 11/27, but please set aside some time on December 5th, and the days leading up to it, to let the county commissioners know how you feel about these amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

There appears to be a rush to get this approved, but in recognition of this time of the year, it looks to us like a turkey!

Please share this message with your friends and neighbors!

Live Responsibly, Protect Our Future.



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From: [Ellen Dwinell](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Comp plan
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 5:40:49 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Please vote against changing the comp plan in any way. Martin County is special , because it is. Not ruined YET.

From: [SHARON](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: CPA 22-06 and changes to the Rural Lifestyle designation
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 3:50:01 PM



Commissioner Heard,

After reading the proposed text amendment to the Rural Lifestyle designation, prompted by the developer who just purchased 3000+ acres for \$50M, I am very concerned about the strength of our RL amendment to have any real impact on managing the growth and impact of large developments and what and where it can be applied. Additionally the county staff has proposed wording changes to the RL amendment not requested that weaken the RL amendment.

The changes below that are proposed by MC Staff are the most problematic and should not be allowed. You were elected to use your judgement.. You have the power to reject the staff's proposed changes.

Changing the wording from minimum to "a portion" the amount to acreage (touching an urban service boundary) required to allow the land to be classified as eligible opens the opportunity for very relaxed standard for the property to be eligible.

Changing the wording from planned unit development to "Rural Lifestyle future land use designations" as the boundary from which utilities provided by the development within the RL amendment can service/extend again allows for very relaxed standard for the boundary.

That is in addition to the fact that property within 6000 ft of our urban/freestanding service boundary to qualify. Again, we are weakening the requirements to development and eroding the strength of our regulations that have preserve our quality of life.

MC is trying to get it's citizen to eat and elephant one bite at a time. Before long our regulations will be so weak that you will not have any power to reject developers request and the growth will go unchecked and our vision for MC will change .

I expect each of you to reject this proposal and any changes to the RL Amendment. You were elected to use your judgement. Is your staff looking for a reason to reject this proposal? What is the real power of our Urban Service district? Does it not have any provisions for rejecting this request?

Regards,
Sharon McGinnis
Rocky Point

From: [Deana Peterson](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Please vote NO
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 8:27:44 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Dear County Commissioners,

It is my understanding that on December 5, 2023, you will consider two Comprehensive Plan Amendments -- a text amendment and a Future Land Use Map amendment -- to expand acreage designated for Rural Lifestyle use. The text amendment eliminates the requirement that Rural Lifestyle communities be adjacent to an Urban Services District if the property is at least 3,000 acres and is 6,000 feet (more than a mile) from an urban services boundary. The FLUM amendment is for the Calusa Creek Ranch project consisting of 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf cottages (up to 6 bedrooms each), employee dormitories, multi-family dock facility on the St. Lucie Canal, and other "amenities."

We must stop overdevelopment of farmland and rural conservation land.

We need rural lands and space for migratory birds, endangered panthers, and so many more animals that depend on this rural land. Golf courses and pickle ball courts are not green spaces

We were sold a bill of goods by commissioners delaying the vote on the initial changes to the comp plan to then change their vote after the election. We were also told it would be limited. Not many acres qualified. Seems we were lied to. Please please please stop this rampant overwhelming development. Please protect green space for future generations.

Thank you!
Deana

Deana Peterson
RE/MAX of Stuart
(772) 631-0643

From: [April watson](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural lifestyle
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 8:20:15 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Good evening,

I'm hoping you take the time to read the emails that I'm praying your constituents are sending regarding the heavy development of our county. I understand we have a comp plan and I'm pretty certain we have surpassed it!

If anyone is arguing the affordable housing prices that is a joke! What do you consider affordable? If they are arguing the fact there is no houses available that is a joke! There are over 800 available on realtor.com!

The county put in the urban services to help protect our agriculture community which is slowly diminishing before our eyes.

Our roads can not support the growth that has surpassed the 2% that has been the habitual responsible amount.

Our taxes have done nothing but increase since this commission has taken office! I have heard campaign slogans that have been broken time and time again once that commissioner has gotten in to office.

I'm praying enough is enough and we stop the over growth of our community and over taxation of our citizens. Let's take a stand against the developers and stop allowing them free access to any and all of our land!

Let's try to save what little agriculture we have left and make Martin County great once again. The place your citizens are proud to be a member of and willing to stand up for what is just.

~April
Martin County Resident

From: [Krysten Brown](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Reject the Calusa Creek Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:41:00 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

To whom it is concerned,

As a Martin county resident who raises outside of city limits in “rural” Martin County I am asking you to reject the Calusa Creek Comprehensive Plan amendment that would allow for a large influx of homes and yet another golf course. We live in rural communities because we seek and prefer the small town feel and do not welcome this kind of change. Please serve us your current constituents by not allow for this imposition.

Kind Regards,
Krysten Brown

From: [Judy Holden](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: comprehensive plan ammendments
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:03:10 PM



Do not vote for the two comprehensive plan amendments. We must stop overdevelopment of farmland and rural conservation land.

--

*Judy Holden
102 Black Bear Trail
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
C: 203.912.3142*

From: [sarah heard](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Fwd: BOCC may expand Rural Lifestyle
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 7:35:05 AM



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>
Date: Mon, Nov 27, 2023 at 6:33 PM
Subject: BOCC may expand Rural Lifestyle
To: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>
CC: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>

On December 5, 2023, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners will consider two Comprehensive Plan Amendments -- a text amendment and a Future Land Use Map amendment -- to expand acreage designated for Rural Lifestyle use. The text amendment eliminates the requirement that Rural Lifestyle communities be adjacent to an Urban Services District if the property is at least 3,000 acres and is 6,000 feet (more than a mile) from an urban services boundary. The FLUM amendment is for the Calusa Creek Ranch project consisting of 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf cottages (up to 6 bedrooms each), employee dormitories, multi-family dock facility on the St. Lucie Canal, and other "amenities."

Please let Commissioners know that enough is enough! We must stop overdevelopment of farmland and rural conservation land.

Please attend the meeting at 9:00 a.m. on December 5 at the County Administration Center or send an e-mail to commissioners at comish@martin.fl.us.

Ginny Sherlock

LITTMAN, SHERLOCK & HEIMS, P.A.

P.O. Box 1197

Stuart, FL 34995

Telephone: (772) 287-0200

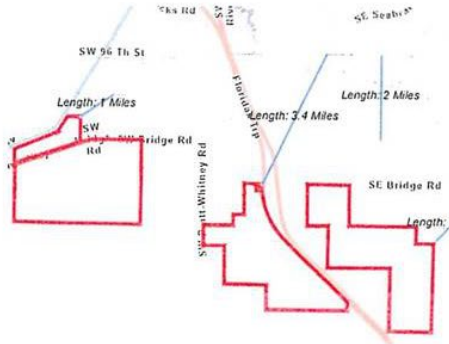
Facsimile: (772) 872-5152

www.lshlaw.net

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Enough Traffic - Enough Golf Courses - Enough Pollution - Enough Taxes

Tell Martin County Commissioners to reject the Calusa Creek Ranch amendments to our Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. On December 5, 2023, Commissioners will vote on proposed Amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12 which would revise the Rural Lifestyle land use designation to expand development and suburbanize more agricultural land in western Martin County. Attend the meeting at the Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida, at 9:00 a.m. to speak out for the Martin County Difference.



Commissioners are being asked to eliminate the requirement that land designated for Rural Lifestyle use be adjacent to an Urban Services District, allowing parcels of at least 3,000 acres to be designated for Rural Lifestyle use if an urban services boundary is within 6,000 feet. Calusa Creek Ranch wants to build 175 homes, 24 golf cottages, employee dormitories, two golf courses, a multi-slip boat docking facility, and other amenities on 3,902 acres off SW Bridge Road and SW Kanner Highway bordering the St. Lucie Canal.

The Calusa Creek Ranch amendments take Rural Lifestyle more than a mile outside the Urban Services District into farmlands, wetlands, marshes and cattle grazing land in western Martin County and will change our Comp Plan and development patterns forever. **The project is not allowed under current rules. Calusa Creek Ranch wants Commissioners to change the rules for this development and others that follow.**

The cost to Martin County residents is enormous.

Ask anyone who tells you that growth pays for itself to explain why our taxes are increasing year after year as development booms.

Ask anyone who loves Martin County to explain how important it is to preserve water quality, wildlife habitat, native vegetation, free-flowing roadways, our urban boundaries and community character that make Martin County different from counties to our north and south.

Tell Commissioners that Enough is Enough! Reject the Calusa Creek Ranch Comp Plan Amendments.

Say "NO" to expanding Rural Lifestyle. Say "YES" to the Martin County Difference.

From: [Janet Jorden](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural Lifestyle?
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 4:49:37 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I have just learned that next Tuesday, December 5th, there will be two new requests to further amend the Martin County Comprehensive Plan so a new development can be included in the Rural Lifestyle Zoning. Really, do we actually need more golf courses? Urban sprawl? Further pollution to our waterways from fertilizers and herbicides?

I am adamantly opposed to these further changes, and will certainly do my best to see that any commissioner who votes in favor of this is not re-elected when their term is up. We, the voters of Martin County, have found it difficult in the past to rid ourselves of commissioners whose sole purpose appears to be destruction of Martin County. Perhaps this blatant attempt to change the entire character of our county will be the wake up call many need to finally open their eyes to the impending destruction leading to a new era of Martin County for the rich and famous only.

Thank you all for your service, and I remain hopeful that this ridiculous development, Calusa Ranch, will never see the light of day!

Very truly yours,

Janet Jorden
5299 SE Horseshoe Point Rd
Stuart, FL 34997

From: [Thomas Campenni](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Fwd: The Ranch - CPA 22-06 and 23-12
Date: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 8:39:19 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Guardians Position Paper on golf courses outside the USB - rev 11-14-23.pdf](#)



Dear Commissioner:

I received this after our conversation.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Chelsea Love <clove@martin.fl.us>
Date: Wed, Nov 15, 2023 at 8:33 AM
Subject: The Ranch - CPA 22-06 and 23-12
To: amiz1122@gmail.com <amiz1122@gmail.com>, Bob Thornton <Robertjthornton@hotmail.com>, Clyde Dulin <cdulin@martin.fl.us>, Elizabeth Nagal <enagal@martin.fl.us>, Elysse Elder <eelder@martin.fl.us>, James Moir <benchcat@aol.com>, Joan Seaman <jseaman@martin.fl.us>, Maria Harrison <mharriso@martin.fl.us>, Mark Sechrist <sechrim@martinschools.org>, Niki Norton <niki@n2archdesign.com>, Paul Schilling <pschilli@martin.fl.us>, Peter Walden <pwalden@martin.fl.us>, Reed Hartman <ransomreed@hotmail.com>, Thomas Campenni <thomasfcampenni@gmail.com>

Good Moring,

Please see attached public comment received from Greg Braun, The Guardians of Martin County.

From: Greg Braun <execdirector@theguardiansofmartincounty.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 11:06 PM
To: Clyde Dulin <cdulin@martin.fl.us>
Cc: Paul Schilling <pschilli@martin.fl.us>; pschilling@martin.fl.us; legal@theguardiansofmartincounty.com; powens@1000fof.org <powens@1000fof.org>
Subject: The Ranch - CPA 22-06 and 23-12



Greetings Clyde: The Guardians of Martin County have reviewed documents related to the request to amend the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to authorize the construction of residences, golf villas and two golf courses on lands outside the County's Urban Service Districts for a project called "The Ranch".

After several contentious public hearings, the approval of the Rural Lifestyle Zoning was conditioned upon applicants having a minimum 1,000 acres and being adjacent to an urban service district. As noted in the Staff Report, this proposed project does not meet both of the these criteria.

The Guardians have recently investigated the status of golf courses in Martin County, and attached is a Position Paper that we have developed regarding golf courses that are proposed for locations outside USD boundaries. We are concerned that the proposed Ranch PUD will require public

services that are most cost-effectively provided to properties that are within the USD.

We request that the County require that a permanent conservation easement (that will be held by a third-party conservation entity) or deed restrictions be imposed on all portions of the subject property that are not otherwise protected through upland and/or wetland Preserve Area Management Plans.

Please add this correspondence and the attached Position Paper as public input for the LPA mtg on November 16, at which CPA 22-06 and 23-12 will be discussed, and forward this information to members of the LPA for their consideration. Thank you.

Greg Braun

Executive Director

The Guardians of Martin County

Please use this address for all Guardians-related emails

Thanks,



Chelsea Love

Administrative Assistant

Growth Management Department

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

772-288-5935

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Tom Campenni

www.friendsandneighborsofmartincounty.com



**Executive Summary of Guardians Position on Golf Courses proposed on lands outside Martin County's Urban Services Districts
November 14, 2023**

Public and private golf courses provide open space and recreational opportunities for thousands of residents and visitors to Martin County. The approximately 30 golf courses in Martin County occupy approximately 12,000 acres and provide habitat for a variety of native flora and fauna and serve other environmental purposes (e.g., stormwater retention, groundwater recharge etc.).

Several recent requests that public water and/or sewer services be extended outside Martin County's Urban Service Districts to serve golf course projects have caused the Guardians to investigate potential ramifications of these public services extensions. Due to the increase in property values that are realized once utility services are provided, the Guardians are concerned that without more thorough protection, the properties will be more attractive for future conversion to residential or other higher-intensity uses.

Conservation

For projects that involve the extension of water and/or sewer utilities outside the USDs, the Guardians believe that permanent conservation easements or deed restrictions should be required for the portions of all new golf course projects that are not permanently protected through Preserve Area Management Plans (PAMPs). The Guardians suggest that the requirement for permanent conservation easements could be conditions associated with the County's Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval.

Water Supply

To the extent allowed by State law and/or rules of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Guardians encourage use of surface water waters from the C-44 Reservoir, the C-44 Canal, Lake Okeechobee and reclaimed water for irrigation of golf courses in preference to withdrawals from the surficial aquifer.

Water Quality

To the extent allowed by law, and to prevent further degradation of surface waters, the Guardians request that Martin County require continuous water quality monitoring as conditions of Planned Unit Development (PUD) approvals when local approvals are sought for new projects, including but not limited to golf courses, at locations where these proposed facilities will discharge into water bodies that are designated as Impaired. If monitoring reveals that discharges from the property do not meet the applicable water quality standard and/or are resulting in adverse water quality impacts in the downstream receiving water body, the property owners shall have the responsibility to retrofit their system to prevent degradation of waters of the state. Monitoring can cease or be scaled back after construction has been completed and the facility has operated for five years if no degradation is observed.



**Guardians position on Golf Courses proposed on lands outside Martin County's
Urban Services Districts
November 13, 2023**

Since its roots in Scotland in the middle ages, the sport of golf has spread widely, with golf currently being played in all states in the U.S., in most foreign countries and on all continents, including at outposts in Antarctica¹. It is physically and mentally challenging, and stimulates participants to exercise their physical and competitive skills.

With approximately 1250 golf courses², Florida has more golf courses than any other state in the country. In Florida, a favorable climate and diverse landscapes from oceanfront to the panhandle offer golfers a seeming infinite variety of courses, most of which are in close proximity to major urban centers. In Florida, Palm Beach County leads the pack, with 160 courses³.

Using U.S. Census Bureau statistics for 2022 (the most recent year available)⁴, with 29 existing golf courses in Martin County, the County has a higher ratio of golf courses to population (5,586 residents/golf course) than Palm Beach County (9,490 residents/golf course), which is likely one of the highest in the state, and possibly one of the highest in the country and the world.

Based on the popularity of golf in Martin County and its positive economic benefits and potential environmental concerns, on June 6, 2023, subject experts Dr. Bryan Unruh (University of Florida), Mike Davis (past CEO of the United States Golf Association) and Thomas Barrett (Director of Agronomy, McArthur Golf Club) made a presentation at a meeting of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners focused on Best Management Practices. (see Agenda Item DEPT-6 Agenda Item: 23-0864; and the video recording at https://martin.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=24 beginning at 2:06).

In spite of a recent increased local interest in building new golf courses in Martin County, in recent years, golf has been going through challenging times.

¹ <https://blog.thesocialgolfer.com/golfing-in-antarctica/>

² <https://tellymoregolf.com/beginners/states-with-the-most-golf-courses>

³ <https://golfweek.usatoday.com/2021/06/24/pgs-tour-tiger-woods-jack-nicklaus-brooks-koepka-rory-mcilroy-palm-beach-county/>

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/martincountyflorida,palmbeachcountyflorida/PST045222>

Following previous increases, there was a peak of 30 million golfers in 2005⁵.

By 2011, however, the number of golfers in the U.S. had dropped to 25.7 million, a 16% decrease in participation over an eight-year span⁶. This decline in the popularity of golf continued during the last decade⁷. In the years immediately preceding the pandemic, golf in the U.S. was waning, with increasing costs for participants, reduced amounts of available time and other factors contributing to this decline⁸.

In 1000 Friends of Florida's 2021 Special Report Golf Course Redevelopment or Repurposing in Florida (J. Gloster, 2021) stated "We are entering an era where most people prefer other, less time-consuming recreation and entertainment, frequently in digital forms. Additionally, longer working hours have reduced Americans' leisure time to an average of 2.5 hours per day, not enough time for many to play "a sport that takes between 3 and ½ and five and ½ hours to play"⁹.

The COVID pandemic, on the other hand, resulted in an increased interest in golf, with many people seeking recreational opportunities that took them outdoors, in activities that were comparatively low in risk for transmission of the virus. Golf courses adopted strategies to further minimize this risk¹⁰, and golf was again on the up-swing, literally.

Golf Courses in Martin County

A recent inventory of golf courses in Martin County performed by the Guardians has revealed that there are 30 existing golf courses in the County and six that are either under construction or for which approvals are being sought (Appendix 1 and Figure 1).

These existing and proposed courses vary considerably in size, from small courses less than 100 acres (i.e., Palm Lakes, Miles Grant, Jupiter Island) to larger courses in excess of 400 acres (i.e., McArthur, Atlantic Fields/Discovery, 3-Lakes, The Ranch).

⁵ Crompton, John L. 2020. , *Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf*, PARKS & RECREATION, THE NRPA'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE (Jun. 25, 2020), <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreationmagazine/2020/july/implications-of-the-rise-and-decline-of-golf/>.

⁶ Conant, Blake Jeffrey, 2009., *Bankrupt Golf Courses: An Historical Analysis and Strategies for Repurposing*, University of Georgia, https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/conant_blake_j_201305_mla.pdf at 11.

⁷ Burke, Kathleen, 2017. *Playing Golf Has Gone the Way of the 3-Hour Martini Lunch—Trump Being the Exception*, MARKETWATCH (Mar. 29, 2017, 7:53 PM), <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/why-golf-has-gone-the-way-of-the-three-martini-lunch-2016-07-13>.

⁸ Tuttle, Brad, 2014. *Fore! No, Make that Five! 5 Reasons Golf is in a Hole*". In Money, <https://money.com/golf-dying-tiger-woods-elitist/>

⁹ Benfield, F. Kaid 2015. *Could Placemaking Become New Golf? Repurposing Obsolete Courses*, SMART CITIES DIVE (updated Mar. 16, 2015), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/could-placemaking-become_b_6873934.

¹⁰ <https://golf.com/news/golf-course-combat-coronavirus/>

These sizes are consistent with nationwide averages, which is typically approximately 170 acres, not including any surrounding residential or resort development, which often increases project size to a minimum of 300 acres ¹¹.

Nearly all golf courses in Martin County are privately owned and operated, often by homeowner's associations. Two (i.e., Sailfish Sands and Summerfield) are properties owned by Martin County. They also vary considerably in age, with several (e.g., Palm Lakes, Jupiter Island) having been constructed decades ago, and several others (e.g., McArthur West, Atlantic Fields/Discovery, 3-Lakes, The Ranch, Rolling Sands) either being under construction or for which approval for construction has been applied.

In total, these existing and proposed courses occupy approximately 12,000 acres, many of which include County-mandated upland and/or wetland preserves, which provide habitat for a variety of native flora and fauna, including some endangered or threatened species (e.g., Florida scrub-jays, gopher tortoises), store/retain stormwater, and recharge the surficial aquifer.

Environmental values are further enhanced on those courses that are certified in Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (<https://auduboninternational.org/acsp-for-golf/>), a voluntary program which accredits specific golf courses that go above and beyond minimum environmental and/or ecological requirements to meet the program's criteria. It is noted this Cooperative Sanctuary program is administered by Audubon International, which is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Two golf courses in Martin County (i.e., Loblolly Golf Club and Sailfish Point) are presently certified by Audubon International (https://directory.auduboninternational.org/directory?memberCategory=acsp&city=&state=FLORIDA&country=United%20States%20of%20America&zipcode=¤t_page=4) Two others, Harbour Ridge and The Floridian, are just across the county's boundary in St. Lucie County. Several additional golf courses certified by Audubon International are present in Palm Beach County.

Many of the existing golf courses in Martin County are either a valuable component of a residential development or have residences overlooking their fairways, tees, greens or preserves.

Golf Courses and Martin County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (Comp Plan, CGMP)

A key philosophy in Martin County's Comp Plan is the recognition that public services (e.g., potable water, sewer, emergency services etc.) can be provided most cost-effectively where population densities are the highest. By restricting development projects that need public services to areas within the primary or secondary Urban Service Districts (USDs), the County is able to provide those services at a lower cost than if the same development projects were to be serviced outside the USBs.

¹¹ Conant, Blake Jeffrey, 2009., *Bankrupt Golf Courses: An Historical Analysis and Strategies for Repurposing*, University of Georgia, https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/conant_blake_j_201305_mla.pdf at 11.

Golf courses, whether publicly-owned or privately-owned are an allowable use on lands outside the USBs (Land Development Regulations, Vol 2, Div 3, Sec 3.11). Golf courses, by their nature, require large areas of land, often provide valuable habitat for native flora and fauna, and have a high ratio of open space to impervious area.

Many golf courses in Martin County are key features of residential developments. Some of Martin County's most prestigious developments consist of residences that front golf courses, and the use of those golf courses by residents promotes physical and mental health and prevents or reduces the need for off-site impacts on roads, traffic, and other public services.

During the early years of the pandemic, several golf courses were proposed to be constructed at locations outside Martin County's USD boundaries. While, as noted above, golf courses are allowed outside the USBs, several proposed courses have requested that public water and sewer services be extended outside the USD to serve their facilities. Many golf courses have water requirements, either for irrigation and/or wastewater treatment, that exceed the limits that are allowed for facilities outside the USBs in Martin. Connecting to public water services in these situations is logical, as, in general, there is less potential for water quality related problems when compared to stand-alone water treatment systems. And furthermore, re-claimed water (i.e., water that has been treated through a public wastewater treatment system) is then available for irrigation and other non-potable purposes.

Problems arise, however, when, in spite of the best intentions, outside factors result in the failure of golf course/country club projects. Property owners who paid higher prices to live "overlooking the golf course", may, rightfully so, object to a change of land use if the golf course amid their development is proposed for a different use, particularly if that land use is of higher intensity (e.g., residential).

Golf courses are expensive to operate and maintain, and whole-course renovations, which are occasionally necessary, are exceedingly expensive. In a sign of troubling economic times, some courses have encountered financial challenges too severe to overcome, and have ceased to operate. In these cases, what happens next can vary considerably.

In February 2022, a request by Mattamy Homes to construct a 282-unit residential complex on the site of the former 45-year old defunct Sherbrooke golf course in Palm Beach County was rejected by the County's Planning, Zoning and Building Department after hundreds of residents and concerned citizens voiced opposition to the project, citing concerns about traffic, loss of open space and other quality of life impacts¹². Similar situations have likely occurred elsewhere.

¹² (Palm Beach Post, 2021) Palm Beach Post, <https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/local/lakeworth/2021/08/06/sherbrooke-residents-dont-want-new-homes-old-golf-course/5496631001/>

Statement of Problems/Opportunities

In Martin County, where residents have consistently elected county commissioners who have run on platforms of “not moving the urban services district boundary”, there are concerns that, after public water and/or wastewater services are extended to serve a new facility, there may, at some time in the future, be a request to change the land use from golf course to a higher intensity residential.

To reduce the likelihood of this eventuality, and to promote the permanent “green” connotation of golf courses, the Guardians believe that permanent conservation easements or deed restrictions should be required for the portions of all new golf course projects that are not permanently protected through Preserve Area Management Plans (PAMPs) whenever those projects are proposed to be constructed outside the County’s Urban Services Districts if the projects involve the extension of water and/or sewer utilities outside the USDs.

Water Supply

Golf Courses require substantial amounts of water for irrigation. The United States Golf Association reported that: “From 2003-2005, the average water use for golf course irrigation in the U.S. was estimated to be 2,312,701 acre-feet per year. That equates to approximately 2.08 billion gallons of water per day for golf course irrigation in the U.S.”¹³. In peninsular Florida, where most water withdrawals are from the shallow, “surficial” aquifer, water is a precious commodity. While there may be some comfort in knowing that water withdrawals for golf courses are likely less than what may have been permitted for golf courses that are constructed on previously-existing agricultural lands, groundwater withdrawals have the potential to negatively affect limited sub-surface water supplies.

In Martin County, rainfall typically results in an over-abundance of water during the rainy season (typically May-October) and the need for irrigation during the dry season (typically November-April), during times that the surficial aquifer may be in a depressed condition. The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has determined that Martin County is within a “Water Resource Caution Area”, which Rule 62-40.210(39), F.A.C., defines as: “.. a geographic area identified by a District as having existing water resource problems or an area in which water resource problems are projected to develop during the next twenty years”¹⁴.

¹³ Lyman, Gregory T., 2012. How Much Water Does Golf Use and Where Does It Come From? Presented by the U.S. Golf Association.

¹⁴ Rule 62-40.210(39), F.A.C.

In 2023, The Guardians recognize that the existing surface water management system in Martin County is highly managed. Discharges from Lake Okeechobee via the C-44 Canal to the South Fork of the St. Lucie River are managed through a complex inter-relationship between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the SFWMD. Situated on approximately 12,000 acres, the C-44 Reservoir and its associated Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), are a regional water management facility that is used primarily to accommodate water from the local basin and treat it before discharging it to the C-44¹⁵.

Fresh water from the Lake Okeechobee and C-44 watersheds have elevated levels of nutrients (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus). Use of nutrient-enhanced waters for irrigation reduces the need for fertilizers.

The Guardians encourage use of surface water waters from the C-44 Reservoir, the C-44 Canal, the Lake Okeechobee Service Area or reclaimed water for irrigation of golf courses, in preference to water withdrawals from the surficial aquifer. It is recognized that the ability to use these waters for golf course irrigation may be affected by the designation of these areas by SFWMD as a “Closed Basin”¹⁶.

Water Quality

Most golf courses require the use of chemicals (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.) to keep their facilities green and aesthetically appealing. Rain-water run-off from golf courses has the potential to carry these chemicals, and/or their break-down constituents, into surface waters, both on-site and potentially to off-site locations.

The construction and/or operation of golf courses has the potential to cause adverse water quality impacts in downstream receiving waters. As a close-to-home example, in 2018, unauthorized discharge into the South Fork of the St. Lucie River during the construction of the Grove XXIII Golf Course resulted in fines levied by the South Florida Water Management District¹⁷

In recognition of Florida’s unique geology, topography and environment, and the potential for golf courses to adversely affect water quality, the Florida Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America worked with professionals from the University of Florida and others to develop a manual on the “Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses”¹⁸. The potential for adverse downstream water quality impacts from golf courses can be lessened when/if the owner conscientiously implements these Best Management Practices (BMPs).

¹⁵ SFWMD, 2020 C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area Factsheet

¹⁶ SFWMD, Environmental Resource Permit Applicant’s Handbook and Basis of Review

¹⁷ Club and Resort Business, 2018. <https://clubandresortbusiness.com/grove-xxiii-developer-fined-polluting-st-lucie-river/>

¹⁸ Florida Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses

Adherence to golf course BMPs is currently voluntary in Florida, with the exception of those courses that discharge into waters that have been declared by the State of Florida as “Impaired”¹⁹.

The Guardians recognize that the State of Florida, through its rules implemented by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and/or SFWMD attempt to protect surface waters from adverse impacts. Unfortunately, several surface waters in Martin County have been designated as “Impaired”. These include the St. Lucie River and portions of the Indian River Lagoon, for which Basin Action Management Plans (BMAPs) have been developed in an attempt to address water quality deficiencies. While State efforts may be underway to revise water quality standards, the extent to which any such revisions will have a marked effect on improving water quality is unknown.

Protection of receiving waters could be further enhanced if golf course owners/designers would engineer on-site storage systems to preclude off-site discharges, ideally, or at least to exceed the levels presently required for on-site retention.

Martin County recently submitted a grant application in which they requested federal funding, which, if approved, would allow the county to significantly enhance their water quality monitoring program.

While the Guardians support the County’s request for funding for enhanced water quality monitoring, we believe that new sources of potential pollution, in this case golf courses, should be required to perform intensive water quality monitoring at their own expense rather than as financial burden to the County and its taxpayers.

Water quality monitoring by the Ft. Pierce-based Ocean Research & Conservation Organization (ORCA)²⁰ and Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI)²¹ have shown the value in conducting real-time continuous water quality monitoring. While their monitoring equipment may differ (i.e., Kilroys for ORCA and LOBOs for HBOI) the reliability of data collected by continuous recorders is exponentially more enlightening than analyses of “grab samples” that are collected and analyzed quarterly or semi-annually.

¹⁹ Chapter 62-303 F.A. C.

²⁰ Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Florida Atlantic University, Land/Ocean Biogeochemical Observatory. <http://fau.loboviz.com/>

²¹ Ocean Research & Conservation Association, Kilroy Mapping and Monitoring, <https://www.teamorca.org/monitoring-mapping/>

Because golf courses are subject to regulation by the State of Florida, and Martin County's authority to regulate these facilities may be affected by Section 403.9339 F.S., the Guardians request that the County require continuous water quality monitoring as conditions of a PUD agreement when local approvals are sought for new projects, including but not limited to golf courses, at locations where these proposed facilities will discharge into water bodies that are designated as Impaired.

Monitoring is requested not just for the sake of getting water quality data. Conditions of development approval must contain provisions that require that appropriate modifications to water management systems be designed and implemented if the monitoring reveals that discharges from the facility do not meet the applicable water quality standard and/or are having adverse water quality impacts in the downstream receiving water body.

The quality of surface waters in Martin County is directly tied to our economy, our environment, and our ability to pursue recreational activities. We cannot wait for the years/decades to tick by as Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects are designed and implemented.

The Guardians believe that Martin County has the authority and responsibility to take actions to prevent further degradation and permanently protect environmentally-valuable open spaces.

Appendix 1
Existing and Proposed Golf Courses in Martin County

Map Loc'n #	Golf Course Name	General Location	Public Private	Gross Acres (Est) ²	W/in primary or secondary USB?	Comments
1	Palm Lakes Golf Club	North River Shores: West of US-1, North of Roosevelt Bridge	Private	~ 70	Primary	W/in residential area
2	Jensen Beach Golf Club ¹	North of Jensen Bch Blvd, E of US-1	Private	~ 300	Primary	Part of PUD
3	Sailfish Sands	Stuart; SE of Witham Field	Public	~ 310	Primary	County-owned
4	Monarch Country Club ¹	Palm City; N of Monterey Rd	Private	~ 310	Primary	Part of PUD
5	Martin Downs Golf Club ¹	Palm City, NW of Monterey Rd and west of High Meadows Ave	Private	~ 300	Primary	Part of PUD
6	Hammock Creek Golf Club ¹	Palm City; East of High Meadows Ave	Private	~ 365	Primary	Part of PUD
7	Piper's Landing	Palm City, East & west of Mapp Rd south of Martin Hwy	Private	~ 135	Primary	Part of PUD
8	Willoughby ¹	Stuart; east of Willoughby Blvd	Private	~ 150	Primary	Part of PUD
9	Indian River Plantation	Hutchinson Island	Private	~ 70	Primary	Part of PUD
10	Sailfish Point	Southern tip of Hutchinson Island	Private	~ 125	Primary	Part of PUD
11	Stuart Yacht & Country Club	Port Salerno; East of Dixie Highway, north of St. Lucie Blvd	Private	~ 100	Primary	Part of PUD
12	Miles Grant	Port Salerno; East of A1A north of Cove Rd	Private	~ 65	Primary	Part of PUD
13	Mariner Sands ¹	Port Salerno; between US 1 and A1A	Private	~ 200	Primary	Part of PUD
14	Summerfield ¹	Port Salerno; West of US 1 South of Cove Rd	Private	~ 200	Primary	Part of PUD; County owned; Leased to Summerfield HOA

15	The Florida Club	Tropical Farms; between Turnpike, Kanner Hwy & Pratt-Whitney Rd	Private	~ 140	Primary	Part of PUD
16	Lost Lake ¹	Port Salerno/Hobe Sound; north of Seabranh Blvd	Private	~ 130	Primary	Part of PUD
17	Heritage Ridge ¹	Hobe Sound; Between US 1 & A1A north & south of SE Heritage Blvd	Private	~ 100	Primary	Part of PUD
18	Loblolly ¹	Hobe Sound; Between A1A & SE Gomez Ave north of Osprey St.	Private	~ 115	Primary	Part of PUD
19	McArthur (East)	Hobe Sound; W of US 1, S of Poinciana Gardens & N of The Medalist	Private	~ 400	Primary	Part of PUD
20	McArthur (West)	Hobe Sound; West of US 1, S of Poinciana Gardens & N of The Medalist	Private	~ 500	Secondary	Part of PUD
21	The Medalist	Hobe Sound; West of US 1 south of Poinciana Gardens & south of McArthur	Private	~ 290	Primary	Part of PUD
22	Jupiter Island	Jupiter Island; south of Bridge Rd	Private	~ 85	Primary	Pre-dates PUD
23	Hobe Sound Golf Club	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd, west of US 1	Private	~ 120	Primary	Part of PUD
24	Grove XXIII	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd., East of I-95	Private	~ 200	Outside	Part of PUD
25	Jupiter Hills	SE Martin County; west of US 1 north of County Line Rd	Private	~ 225	Primary	Part of PUD
26	Ranch Colony/Dye Preserve	Ranch Colony	Private	~ 150	Outside	Part of PUD
27	Jonathan's Landing – Old Trail	Ranch Colony	Private	~ 260	Outside	Part of PUD
28	South Fork High School	Tropical Farms: West of I-95 & FL Turnpike, East of Pratt-Whitney Rd.	County	< 5	Secondary	County-owned
29	The Cape Club of Palm City	Stuart West – west of Palm City	Private	~ 200	Outside	Part of PUD
30	Indianwood	Indiantown	Private	~ 135	Primary	Part of PUD

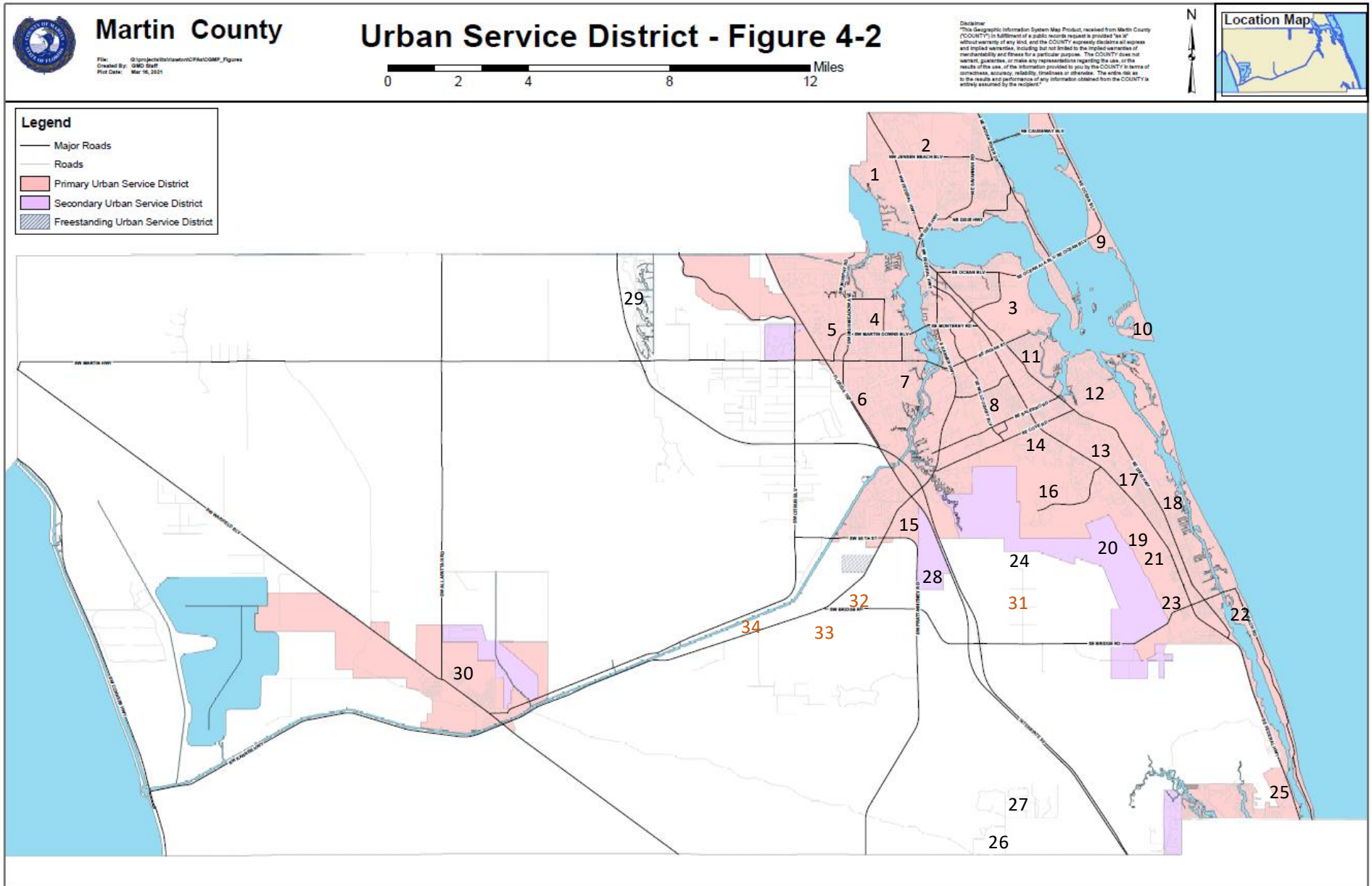
	Proposed					
31	Atlantic Fields/Discovery Land ¹	Hobe Sound; North of Bridge Rd, east of I-95	Private	~1,000	Outside	Part of PUD
32	3-Lakes (3 courses)	Tropical Farms; North of Bridge Rd, east of intersection with Kanner Hwy	Private	~ 1,200	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD
33	The Ranch	Tropical Farms; South of Bridge Rd & Kanner Hwy south of C-44	Private	~ 3,900	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD
34	Rolling Sands	North of Kanner Hwy, west of The Ranch	Private	~ 240	Outside	Proposed; Part of PUD

¹ Acreage calculation includes residences

² Includes wetlands, upland preserves, and wetland preserves

Figure 1

Location of Existing (shown in black) and Proposed (shown in brown) Golf Courses in Martin County in relation to Urban Service District boundaries
 For golf course names, see Table 1



From: [Krysten Brown](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Reject the Calusa Creek Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:41:00 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

To whom it is concerned,

As a Martin county resident who raises outside of city limits in “rural” Martin County I am asking you to reject the Calusa Creek Comprehensive Plan amendment that would allow for a large influx of homes and yet another golf course. We live in rural communities because we seek and prefer the small town feel and do not welcome this kind of change. Please serve us your current constituents by not allow for this imposition.

Kind Regards,
Krysten Brown

Patricia Higginbotham

From: Barbara Clowdus <barbara@hscurrents.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 10:37 AM
To: Susan Kores
Cc: George Stokus; Don Donaldson; Edward Ciampi; Harold Jenkins; Doug Smith; Stacey Hetherington
Subject: The Nov. 27 CRA agenda

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information**

Susan,

Just a week or so ago, I complimented you (and copied my email to George Stokus) for standing up for the Port Salerno NAC. Then after returning late last night from my Thanksgiving travels, I was disappointed all over again.

I watched the video of Monday's CRA meeting and was appalled that you said the BusinessFlare presentation was not on the agenda, telling Salerno NAC member Ellen Asselin quite emphatically after she asked why it was canceled that it had NEVER been on the agenda.

I'm telling you just as emphatically, the BusinessFlare presentation WAS most certainly on the agenda, which I opened online from my phone in Massachusetts on Nov. 21. (I believe it was around 5 p.m. or so.) I took notes, which I still have, that say: BusinessFlare, LLC Presentation -- three Port Salerno projects: SE Railway Ave. Extension, Creekside Linear Park and On-Street Parking. I copied this directly from the agenda.

I also notified others that the BusinessFlare presentation, which likely would be identical to the one given to the Salerno NAC, would be on the Nov. 27 CRA meeting agenda. Ellen was NOT confused about the CRA agenda that showed BusinessFlare giving its presentation on Port Salerno projects to the CRA.

If that agenda was posted prior to receiving final approval, or posted accidentally, I cannot say, but I can tell you it was, indeed, posted (at least on Nov. 21).

And you could have/should have shown Ellen some respect simply by being kinder without being condescending, even if you believe that agenda had never been posted. It hurts no one to be kind.

Barbara

--

Barbara Clowdus <barbara@martincountycurrents.com>

From: [Carole Hunter](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#)
Subject: December 5 vote
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 8:31:27 AM



Dear Commissioners, I write as a longtime voter/resident of Martin County and a member of the Jupiter Island Garden Club, a member club of the Garden Club of America. I feel that the rural lifestyle plans proposed will be degrading to Martin County. Please do not make any more disastrous changes to the Martin County Comprehensive Plan. Those changes will be costly in many ways, both financially and environmentally. Please do not give in to the pressure you are getting and do the right thing for the citizens and wildlife of Martin County. Thank you, Carole Hunter, 7960 SE Dock St., Hobe Sound, FL 33455

From: villagebootery@comcast.net
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: RE: JWA Ranch, Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:44:27 PM



Thank you for voting against the Rural Lifestyle Amendment! The people who live in the western communities want to remain rural. We need more commissioners like you who realize that. My fear with this upcoming vote is that the commissioners already passed an unpopular amendment (Rural Lifestyle) and amending it even further would cause distrust in our county leadership. Thanks again and have a nice day

Ben Schuemann

From: Sarah Heard <sheard@martin.fl.us>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 2:07 PM
To: villagebootery@comcast.net
Subject: RE: JWA Ranch, Calusa Creek Ranch

Thank you for taking the time to write so thoughtfully to us with your concerns about the rapid urbanization of western Martin County. I agree with you.

Sarah Heard

From: villagebootery@comcast.net <villagebootery@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 12:24 PM
To: Comish <Comish@martin.fl.us>
Subject: JWA Ranch, Calusa Creek Ranch



Dear Commissioners of Martin County,

This letter is in response to the proposals presented to the LPA last Thursday by JWA Ranch concerning two amendments to the Rural Lifestyle Designation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Benjamin Schuemann

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From: [Betspo](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Resident support for the Ranch
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:58:35 PM



[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#) Dear Martin County Board of County Commissioners, I have lived in Hobe Sound Golf Club off Bridge Road ([7713 SE Manhasset Place](#)) for more than 20 years and believe adding this well-planned, high-end golf community west of us will elevate both Martin County's status and property values.

The Ranch seems to be designed in a way to protect open land on the property and minimize impacts to nearby neighbors like me. Plus, the types of luxury homes in the neighborhood are likely to be someone's second or maybe even third home. This means they'll only be here a portion of the year and won't be a heavy strain on our roads, stores or schools.

Martin County will get a lot of benefits such as tax revenues and land preservation, without some of the usual issues tied to new development. I hope you choose to approve The Ranch project that can help Martin County continue to move ahead in a measured fashion.

Thank you,

Bette Sposa

From: [Betspo](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Resident support for the Ranch
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:58:35 PM



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Martin County will get a lot of benefits such as tax revenues and land preservation, without some of the usual issues tied to new development. I hope you choose to approve The Ranch project that can help Martin County continue to move ahead in a measured fashion.

Thank you,

Bette Sposa

From: [Austin Tracy](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: RE: Support for The Ranch
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 7:50:52 PM



I am a new homeowner in Stuart. One of the reasons that I decided to settle down in Martin County is because of how the area balances development and nature. I love looking out my backyard and seeing a preserve. Along those lines, I recently became aware of The Ranch golf course community being proposed in the county. This seems like it will be a wonderful addition for our community since it is being designed to make the most of nature on the site, while adding two golf courses and a practice facility that are going to be some of the best in the country. Plus, I was surprised how few houses there will be on a property that size. I have no doubt The Ranch will continue to increase Martin County's appeal with a first-rate development and meaningfully demonstrate its commitment to environmental preservation. A project like this reinforces why I and many others are glad to call this area home.

Austin Tracy
4592 SE Murray Cove Cir.

From: [Sam Hay](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Please oppose amendments to Comp Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:26:40 PM



Dear Commissioner Heard:

I am confident that you will oppose amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12, These amendments would open the floodgates to further urban sprawl and environmental degradation and would render the Comp Plan essentially dead.

Thank you for consistently defending our quality of life against your fellow commissioners who seem not to value what remains of the Martin County difference.

Respectfully,
Sam Hay, Port Salerno



Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: [Kara Justi](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: The Ranch
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 1:37:46 PM



Nov. 30, 2023

To Martin County Board of County Commissioners,

As a parent and resident of Palm City, I recognize the importance of increasing funding for educational programs in our community.

New tax revenues from development are a helpful way to bolster our education funds, especially when they come from projects that do not strain existing resources. Based on my understanding of The Ranch, our schools would benefit from over \$1 million in funding from the project.

The added bonus is that the property owner does not anticipate adding many additional students to the public school system, given the relatively low number of homes and projected demographics. If this large plot of land were to be developed with hundreds more houses, as was considered in the past, there undoubtedly could be challenges for our school system.

Given these factors, I ask you to favorably consider The Ranch project so our schools and students can benefit from the positive economic impact.

Thank you,

Kara Justi

Sent from my iPhone

From: [SHARON](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: CPA 22-06
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 1:01:57 PM



Commissioner Heard,

Do you plan to approve the staff recommendations to the Rural Lifestyle designation?

The changes below that are proposed by MC Staff are the most problematic and should not be allowed. You were elected to use your judgement.. You have the power to reject the staff's proposed changes.

1.The extension of utility services from or through the Primary Urban Service District, the Secondary Urban Service District or Freestanding Urban Service District to a specific parcel with a Rural Lifestyle future land use designation and a Planned Unit Development zoning classification shall not serve any other property outside the ~~Planned Unit Development agreement~~ Rural Lifestyle future land use designation.

Changing the wording from **planned unit development to "Rural Lifestyle future land use designations"** as the boundary from which utilities provided by the development within the RL amendment can service/extend again allows for very relaxed standard for the boundary.

2.be comprised of a minimum of 1,000 contiguous acres and a ~~portion~~ of the minimum 1,000 contiguous acres must be adjacent to the Primary Urban Service District, the Secondary Urban Service District or a Freestanding Urban Service District.; or

Changing the wording from **minimum to "a portion"** the amount to acreage (touching an urban service boundary) required to allow the land to be classified as eligible opens the opportunity for very relaxed standard for the property to be eligible.

Regards,
Sharon McGinnis
817-602-0150

From: [Deana Peterson](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Re: Please vote NO
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 3:17:12 PM



They may be allowed but extending the rural lifestyle areas will only further development. If they can do it as it is currently zoned and within the current comp plan then so be it. But if changes have to be made then please vote no.

Deana Peterson
RE/MAX of Stuart
(772) 631-0643

On Nov 29, 2023, at 3:15 PM, Stacey Hetherington <shetherington@martin.fl.us> wrote:

Thank you for taking time to be engaged and send your thoughts. I am thoroughly reviewing the amendment and will certainly consider your thoughts. Happy to discuss your thoughts anytime, and while I may not like the fact, but golf courses and cottages are permitted in agricultural zoned land.

Stacey Hetherington

From: [Deana Peterson](#)

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 8:27 PM

To: [Comish](#)

Subject: Please vote NO

This Email Sent From External Sender

Dear County Commissioners,

It is my understanding that on December 5, 2023, you will consider two Comprehensive Plan Amendments -- a text amendment and a Future Land Use Map amendment -- to expand acreage designated for Rural Lifestyle use. The text amendment eliminates the requirement that Rural Lifestyle communities be adjacent to an Urban Services District if the property is at least 3,000 acres and is 6,000 feet (more than a mile) from an urban services boundary. The FLUM amendment is for the Calusa Creek Ranch project consisting of 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf cottages (up to 6 bedrooms each), employee dormitories, multi-family dock facility on the St. Lucie Canal, and other "amenities."

We must stop overdevelopment of farmland and rural conservation land.

We need rural lands and space for migratory birds, endangered panthers, and so many more animals that depend on this rural land. Golf courses and pickle ball courts are not green spaces

We were sold a bill of goods by commissioners delaying the vote on the initial changes to the comp plan to then change their vote after the election. We were also told it would be limited. Not many acres qualified. Seems we were lied to. Please please

please stop this rampant overwhelming development. Please protect green space for future generations.

Thank you!

Deana

Deana Peterson

RE/MAX of Stuart

(772) 631-0643

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From: [Anthony Mastroianni](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Paul Schilling](#); [cdublin@martin.fl.us](#); [shaykyla@yahoo.com](#); [trailsidehoa@yahoo.com](#)
Subject: Proposed "Storie" Development and Calusa Creek Golf Community
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 2:23:18 PM



Good afternoon,

My name is Anthony Mastroianni. I live in Trailside with my wife and two young children; a quaint, quiet, beautiful, old Florida agricultural community. We have cattle, horses and are surrounded by sugar cane, a flower farming operation, South Florida Water Management owned property, County owned property and sizeable cattle operations exist on these aforementioned parcels. We absolutely love the beauty of western Martin County, the sunsets, the nature, wildlife and all that comes with living in a rural/agricultural setting. Myself and my fellow neighbors did not spend hundreds of thousands and or millions of dollars to be surrounded by large Planned Unit Developments, similar to an Abacoa or Alton or even a Jupiter Farms type setting. No, we chose the vast openness of our community, more importantly the vast openness of western Martin County.

Florida is ranked number 12 in the US for cattle production, as you all may be aware; Florida was the first state to have the cow and the first state to have the horse. This is our heritage; it is part of what makes our part of the county/state so beautiful and desirable. I own and operate a large cattle ranch, along with other farming operations in St. Lucie County and not a day, week or month goes by that I see more Ranches or Agricultural lands being bought and developed on and it truly is a shame. My point on St. Lucie is, within a 10-mile radius of my ranch there are roughly 80,000 homes in various stages of development. We DO NOT NEED to add to this pipeline and allow another large-scale housing development to be developed in our area, Newfield will provide a good amount of inventory to our local market. Indiantown needs to grow and develop into a great little village for the more affordable homes needed in the local market. We do not need more golf courses on Bridge Road, Pratt Whitney or Kanner Highway. Discovery is not sold out and have not filled their member base, Apogee the same. Both of these locations will provide plenty of opportunity for golfers amazing courses, homes and alternatively plenty of jobs for our residents. In turn a great stimulation to our local economy.

We do not need to be a St. Lucie County or a Palm Beach County, we do not need to flood the market with homes and golf course communities. What has been approved are appreciable additions to our community, tastefully done, they have provided great conservation opportunities, they value our local and state history and preserved both in many ways. The impacts that Storie and Calusa Creek will have on us rural residents are in no way needed and or wanted by the tax payers and shareholders of western Martin County and the Agricultural community. Pratt Whitney and Bridge Roads are already congested with traffic and at times unsafe driving conditions. Not to mention the unsafe and vexatious conditions coming from Pal-Mar directly to our south, gun shots all hours of the day and night, mud trucks and ATV's crossing Pratt Whitney, music, lights and loud motors all hours of the night...

I value property rights and am not one to stand in the way of a property owners' ability to do as they please with what they own. I am also in the real estate development industry and have vast knowledge in this field. The Harmony ranch approval is more fitting for this area of the county and you should not deviate from what has already been approved. I urge you all to stand strong and uphold the values and traditions that makes Martin County what it is. Do not allow this leap frog development to continue.

Thank you for your time,

Anthony Mastroianni

President

Allied Capital & Development of South Florida

M-Ranch Properties

(c) 561-379-6923

(o) 561-799-0050

Anthony@acdsfl.com

From: [1000 Friends of Florida](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: ACTION NEEDED: Urge Commissioners Not to Sprawl in Western Martin County
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:09:50 AM



Dear SARAH,

On **Tuesday, December 5**, Martin County commissioners will consider two amendments to the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan that would **increase the threat of sprawl consuming natural and agricultural lands in the western portion of the county**. We're calling on our friends who treasure the county's environment and quality of life, and want to preserve it for future generations, to **urge commissioners to reject the Calusa Creek Ranch comp plan amendments**.

For those who are available to attend to deliver this important message in person, Tuesday's meeting begins at 9 a.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Martin County Administration Building at 2401 SE Monterey Road in Stuart.

Those who cannot attend can contact the commissioners via telephone or email:

District 1 Commissioner Doug Smith 772-221-2359 dsmith@martin.fl.us

District 2 Commissioner Stacey Hetherington 772-288-5421

shetherington@martin.fl.us

District 3 Commissioner Harold Jenkins 772-221-2357 hjenkins@martin.fl.us

District 4 Commissioner Sarah Heard 772-221-2358 sheard@martin.fl.us

District 5 Commissioner Ed Ciampi 772-221-1357 eciampi@martin.fl.us

The comp plan amendments at issue would authorize construction of 175 residences, two golf courses, golf course cottages, and other structures on lands 6,000 feet beyond an urban service district for the Calusa Creek Ranch project as a development under the rural lifestyles land-use category. When commissioners narrowly approved creation of that category in October 2022 after months of debate and controversy, they limited eligible developments to land abutting an urban service district. Extending the limit more than a mile would vastly increase the area in the county vulnerable to negative environmental and community impacts from development, including water pollution, congested roads and higher taxes to stretch public services.

If commissioners are willing to overlook these impacts to accommodate this project by enlarging the area open to development so soon after limiting it, what will dissuade them from further expanding the footprint for future proposals? Please join us in urging them to defeat these amendments.

Sincerely,

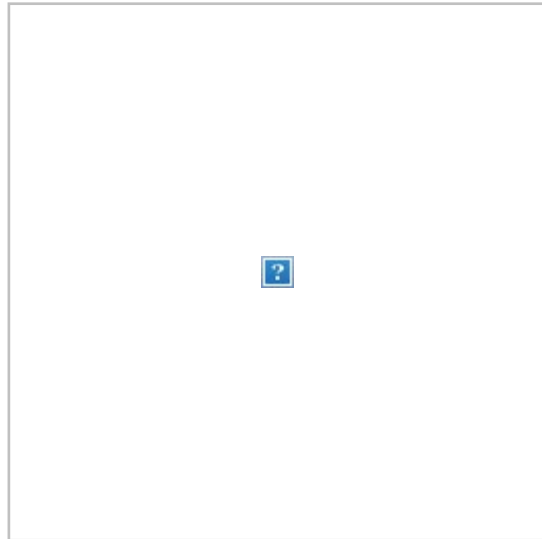
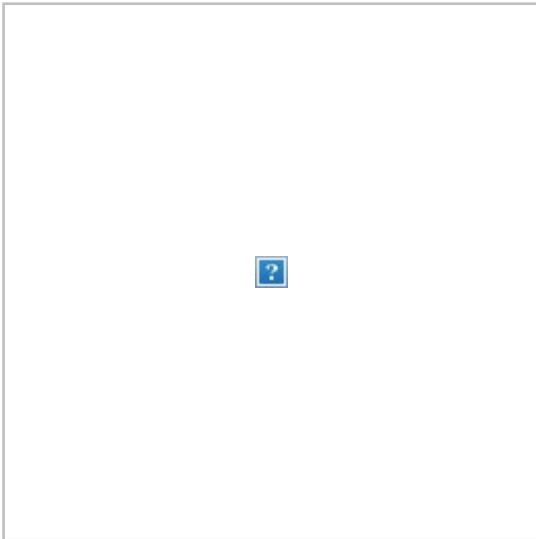
Paul Owens
President

Background

For decades, Martin County's comp plan has been its constitution for responsible, compatible growth — the foundation for what's known as "the Martin County difference." 1000 Friends of Florida is proud to have worked with local leaders to develop and maintain this award-winning plan.

With Martin County under increasing development pressure, it's more important than ever to defend its comp plan from changes that would undermine its protections, and send it down the path of overdevelopment seen in neighboring counties.

The comp plan amendments that would clear the way for the Calusa Creek Ranch golf community would open the door to more developments in rural areas that would increase nutrient pollution in surrounding waterways, threaten the viability of agriculture in the county, raise the cost of acquiring land for conservation, add to traffic on already congested roads and stretch public services, making them more expensive for taxpayers. Plans for the Calusa Creek development would undermine the intent of legislation enacted earlier this year at the direction of Gov. DeSantis to eliminate septic tanks in basins connected to the Indian River Lagoon.



From: [Jocelyn Boyce](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:35:51 PM



Dear Commissioners,

The comp plan amendments that would clear the way for the Calusa Creek Ranch golf community would open the door to more developments in rural areas that would increase nutrient pollution in surrounding waterways, threaten the viability of agriculture in the county, raise the cost of acquiring land for conservation, add to traffic on already congested roads and stretch public services, making them more expensive for taxpayers. Plans for the Calusa Creek development would undermine the intent of legislation enacted earlier this year at the direction of Gov. DeSantis to eliminate septic tanks in basins connected to the Indian River Lagoon.

Please do not subject all living things in Martin County to this additional onslaught of pollution, traffic and loss of habitat! Just because you can, does not mean that you should! Think about it...

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Boyce

Former County Planner



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FOUNDER

BERNHARD M. AUER

December 1, 2023

Martin County Commissioners
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, Florida 34996

via email

Re: CPA 22-06 and 23-12

Dear Martin County Commissioners:

The Guardians of Martin County have several questions and concerns regarding the Comp Plan amendments that are being considered for the Calusa Ranch project. While we appreciate that the project proposes to allocate 70% of the 3,900+ acre property as open space, we are concerned that the perceived rush to get the project approved is not providing adequate opportunity for interested parties, including the Guardians, to fully understand the project and its potential impacts. This is particularly notable in that documents associated with the proposal were not available to the public until just before the meeting of the Local Planning Agency on November 16, 2023.

Similar to the concerns we voiced during the consideration of the Rural Lifestyle Zoning proposal, we have concerns regarding the impacts of the Calusa Ranch project on: 1) Water and the Environment; 2) Infrastructure and Public Services; 3) the Community, and; 4) Conservation and Open Space, each of which are identified and described hereafter.

1) Water and Environmental Impact:

a) Without a requirement for water quality monitoring, how can the public be assured that converting low-impact cattle rangeland to a development with homes, golf courses, golf course cottages, worker dormitories and support facilities will not further degrade the quality of our surface waters?

b) How will the enhanced nutrient-reducing septic systems be implemented, and what guarantees are there for monitoring their effectiveness?

c) What measures are in place to mitigate potential environmental consequences of the development, especially given the lack of municipal water and wastewater services?

d) Regardless of how stormwater and leachate from on-site water treatment systems are managed, we are concerned about the likelihood that pharmaceuticals, forever chemicals (PFAS and PFOS), and chemicals related to the application of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers will make their way off-site and/or the surficial aquifer.

2) Infrastructure and Public Services:

a) We are concerned that, without having details for the multi-slip docking facility, it is impossible to determine the extent to which the project is consistent (or not) with the County's Manatee Protection Plan, and its associated Boat Facility Siting Plan, and how that element of the project aligns with other environmental conservation efforts.

b) Will the County be providing potable water and/or wastewater services to the project?

3) Community Impact:

a) It is unclear to us how the County could make the determination that conversion of rangeland to the golf course project and its associated residences, cottages, worker dormitories and commercial uses will not result in an increase in traffic on Kanner Highway and other public services (e.g., emergency response) considering the extension of development beyond the Urban Service District. What assessments have been made regarding the potential increase in traffic on Kanner Highway and its impact on the community?

b) We understand from Staff Reports that the County has made the determination that the project does not contribute to the proliferation of urban sprawl. We hold that if the conversion of low-intensity ranch land to the proposed uses does not constitute urban sprawl, then the criteria need to be amended to be realistic.

c) Are there plans to address the potential strain on local resources and services due to the introduction of new residential and commercial elements outside the Urban Service District?

4) Conservation and Open Lands:

a) We believe that the requirement for a conservation easement or agricultural easement (with a third party easement holder) was a valuable addition to the Rural Lifestyle Regulations. As described in the Guardians Position Paper on Golf Courses proposed outside the Urban Service Districts (which was transmitted as an attachment to our comments for the LPA meeting at which the Calusa Ranch project was considered), we urge the County to require a conservation easement or agricultural easement that will apply to the undeveloped portions of the Calusa Ranch property that will not be protected by a PAMP.

b) We are interested in understanding how the proposed development aligns with other components of the existing Rural Lifestyle Regulations and the character of the surrounding area, particularly when it abuts Pal-Mar's "Chimney" to the west.

c) We understand that wetlands and a portion of native upland habitat will be protected pursuant to a Preserve Area Management Plan, but we would like to understand how the development potentially effects open-space lands that would otherwise not be protected, and what efforts are being made to ensure conservation.

d) The Guardians supported the proposal to allocate a percentage of new tax revenues that will be generated by Rural Lifestyle projects for the purposes of acquiring environmentally sensitive or strategically valuable properties. Please consider adding that provision to the Calusa Ranch project as a means of mitigating the conversion of rangelands to housing, golf courses and other lands uses of comparably lower-value open space.

Lastly, while we did not support the creation of the Rural Lifestyle Zoning category, the Commission majority's vote in favor of it in October 2022 was somewhat mitigated by the provision that a study be conducted to evaluate the impact on western lands and the requirement that to be eligible for approval under the new category, any new developments would have to abut one of the county's urban service districts. Doing so constrained the spread of development and limited the scope and potential impact of this land-use change on the county's environment and public services. Amending the Comp Plan now to allow a Rural Lifestyle development more than a mile outside a USD would unfortunately validate the warnings of opponents that previous limitations would not hold, and further erode the public's waning confidence in the transparency and actions of our elected officials.

We ask that the Commission please either deny the requested amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, or continue the transmittal hearing to a later date to give the applicant and the community the opportunity to discuss refinements that would address concerns about water quality, economic issues, wildlife corridors and land conservation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter H. Conze, Jr.
President



D. Greg Braun, Executive
Executive Director

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REGISTRATION# CH30115

The Review Process

1. Why is there a perceived rush to get the project approved, and what considerations have been made regarding the timing in relation to public awareness and engagement?
2. Can the Commissioners elaborate on the decision-making process and criteria used to determine that the project does not constitute urban sprawl?

Water and Environmental Impact:

3. Without requiring water quality monitoring, how can the public be assured that converting low-impact cattle rangeland to a development with homes, golf courses, cottages, and support facilities will not further degrade the quality of our surface waters?
4. How will the enhanced nutrient-reducing septic systems be implemented, and what guarantees are there for their effectiveness?
5. What measures are in place to mitigate potential environmental consequences of the development, especially given the lack of municipal water and wastewater services?
6. Regardless of how storm water and leachate from on-site water treatment systems are managed, isn't it likely that pharmaceuticals, forever chemicals (PFAS and PFOS), and chemicals related to the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers will make their way off-site and/or into our surficial aquifer?

Infrastructure and Services:

7. Without having details for the multi-slip docking facility, it is impossible to determine the extent to which the project is consistent (or not) with the County's Manatee Protection Plan, and its associated Boat Facility Siting Plan, and how that element of the project aligns with other environmental conservation efforts.
8. What considerations have been made for traffic management and public services (e.g., emergency response), considering the extension of development beyond the Urban Service District?

Community Impact:

9. What assessments have been made regarding the potential increase in traffic on Kanner Highway and its impact on the community?
10. Are there plans to address the potential strain on local resources and services due to the introduction of new residential and commercial elements outside the Urban Service District?

Conservation and Open Lands:

11. We believe that the requirement for a conservation easement or agricultural easement

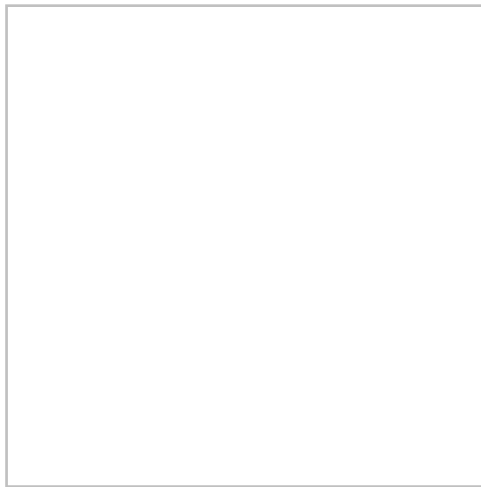
(with a third party easement holder) was a valuable addition to the off-site component of Rural Lifestyle projects that exceed a density of 1 unit/20 acres. As described in the Guardians Position Paper on Golf Courses proposed outside the Urban Service Districts (which was transmitted as an attachment to our comments for the LPA mtg. at which the Calusa Ranch project was considered), we urge the County to require a conservation easement or agricultural easement that will apply to the undeveloped portions of the Calusa Ranch property that will not be protected by a PAMP. Additionally, we are interested in understanding how the proposed development aligns with other components of the existing Rural Lifestyle Regulations and the character of the surrounding area, particularly when it abuts Pal-Mar's "Chimney" to the west.

12. How will the development impact open lands that would otherwise not be protected, and what efforts are being made to ensure conservation?

13. We supported the proposal to allocate a percentage of new tax revenues that will be generated by Rural Lifestyle projects for the purposes of acquiring environmentally sensitive or strategically valuable properties. Please consider adding that provision to the Calusa Ranch project as a means of mitigating the conversion of rangelands to housing, golf courses and other lands uses of comparably lower-value open space.

Please join the Guardians, 1,000 Friends of Florida, and others in urging county commissioners to either deny the requested amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, or continue the transmittal hearing to a later date to give the applicant and the community the opportunity to discuss refinements that would address concerns about water quality, economic issues, wildlife corridors and land conservation.

Please attend the County Commission meeting on Dec 5th at 2401 SE Monterey Rd – rally beginning at 8:15, public comment soon after the meeting starts at 9 AM. If you can't attend in person, you can email all the commissioners at: comish@martin.fl.us



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From: [P. Hopkins](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: land use amendments
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:43:55 PM



Commissioner Heard,

I would like to express my deep disapproval of anymore amendments to the Comp Plan or Urban District Boundary. Land bought as agricultural/pastoral/rural /conservation should not be permitted to be developed for 'other' uses however lucrative it may be for the developer.

At a time when agricultural land world-wide is being lost through development, degradation, soil loss, rising sea levels, lack of irrigation water, wouldn't it wise to husband the land we have. To ensure that there are options for farming with new and improved techniques in the future and that, in the present, there is land that can absorb the rain to replenish the aquifers, that can support plants that capture carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, de-toxify the soil and air, please keep Martin County residents' option open. We do not know what the future holds but money isn't everything. Everyone wants to live in Martin County for reason so please protect the Golden Goose. Do the right thing – not for you or few friends but for all the present and future residents of Martin County.

If you have read up to this point, I am very grateful for your attention.

Thank you,
Martin County resident
Pam Hopkins

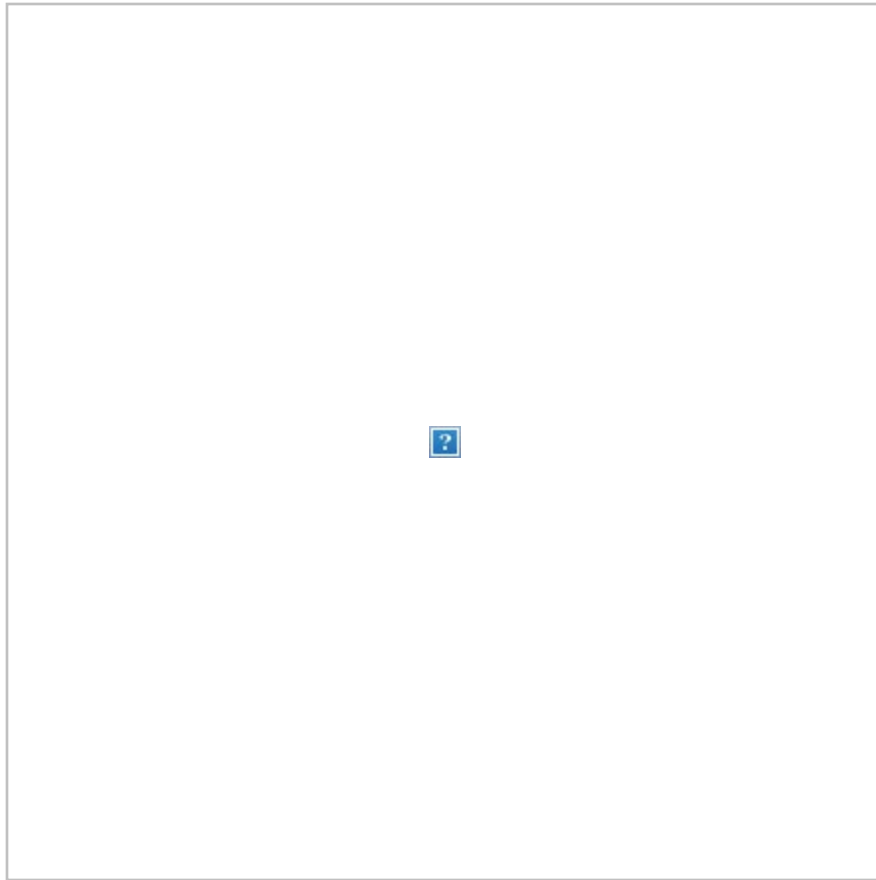
From: [sarah heard](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Fwd: BOCC 12/5: Rural Land Development Amendments
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:45:00 PM



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Walter** <lwvmc@seashelldigital.com>
Date: Fri, Dec 1, 2023 at 1:51 PM
Subject: BOCC 12/5: Rural Land Development Amendments
To: <pockethouse54@gmail.com>





The BOCC is considering two amendments at their December 5th meeting at 9:00am which, if passed, would significantly continue the acceleration of development in western Martin County. We can't stop all development, but we can – and should -- use our voices (and votes) to slow things down. If you can, please arrive for the pre-meeting rally between 8:00-8:15am and stay for the BOCC meeting at 9:00am.

If you are willing to speak before the commission at the BOCC meeting, please do so. You get up to 3 minutes. Practice at home to be sure that what you want to say is within the 3-minute period. They will cut you off if you go over.

If you can't attend the meeting, please write to the commissioners. Go here to view commissioners and their email addresses: <https://www.martin.fl.us/Commissioners>. You can also send one

email that goes to all commissioners by using this email address:

comish@martin.fl.us

Walter Deemer

LWVMC Environmental Issues Chair

P.S.

All Commission meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Martin County Administration Building at [2401 SE Monterey Road](#) in Stuart, unless otherwise noted.

Commission meetings are televised on Comcast Channel 20, U-verse Channel 99, [MCTV online](#) and [YouTube](#).



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From: [r.stephens Mahoney](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Comp Plan Amendment
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 1:30:22 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I am concerned that the comp plan amendments at issue would authorize construction of 175 residences, two golf courses, golf course cottages, and other structures on lands 6,000 feet beyond an urban service district for the Calusa Creek Ranch project as a development under the rural lifestyles land-use category. When commissioners narrowly approved creation of that category in October 2022 after months of debate and controversy, they limited eligible developments to land abutting an urban service district. Extending the limit more than a mile would vastly increase the area in the county vulnerable to negative environmental and community impacts from development, including water pollution, congested roads and higher taxes to stretch public services.

Please vote against the amendment.

Sincerely,

Prof R. Stephen Mahoney

Stuart, FL

From: [Donna Clasen](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Sarah Heard](#); sheatherington@martin.fl.us
Cc: tcnletters@tcpalm.com
Subject: Rural Lifestyle comp plan amendment
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 11:35:25 AM



Commissioners:

Have we lost our collective minds, Commissioners??? This amendment to me seems akin to URBAN SPRAWL by any other name! Since adopting our original Comp Plan in the early 1980's we have always pointed to other counties saying we did not want to become carbon copies of those counties to our south which have continually been expanding westward into agricultural land and the Everglades.

I strongly feel that should this land use change be adopted, ***the next pillar of our Comp Plan to fall will be the four story height limitation.***

IT'S TIME TO PUT ON OUR BIG GIRLS' AND BOYS' HATS AND JUST SAY A RESOUNDING NO! to this amendment.

Sincerely,

Donna J Clasen
Palm City
772-341-0669

cc: TCNLetters

D.

From: [Robert Ernst](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Cc: [bbruner](#); [eclarke](#); [ccollins](#); tmcdonald@ci.stuart.fl.us; [crich](#)
Subject: "Rural lifestyle" land-use rules already targeted for expansion, which isn't a good sign
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 8:39:01 AM



'Rural lifestyle' land-use rules already targeted for expansion, which isn't a good sign

Greetings Martin County Commissioners
Greetings Commissioners Ciampi, Heard, Hetherington, Jenkins and Smith,

Blake is correct, (see below) your votes are destroying the SACRED Martin County,
We Are Different USB, Urban Service Boundary.

This attack on the USB began when you voted to approve Becker and Kiplinger which
should never have been approved!

Now your votes have opened the floodgates.

The Sacred USB must be saved, on December 5th you must vote to deny any further
destruction of the USB, the USB must be SAVED, so called Rural Lifestyle must be
rescinded.

Martin County, WE ARE DIFFERENT must be upheld, defended and respected.

I will be present to watch your vote, I expect you all to vote to SAVE the USB.

Thanks,

Bob and Margot Ernst

Opinion

'Rural lifestyle' land-use rules already targeted for expansion, which isn't a good sign

By *Blake Fontenay*

Treasure Coast Newspapers

November 30, 2023

Among his many talents as an author, George Orwell was great at coming up with ironic euphemisms that, in the dystopian worlds in which his stories were set, meant pretty much the exact opposite of what you would expect. In his classic novel, "1984," for example, writings and photographs are fed into "the memory hole" — a large incinerator — so they'll be forgotten rather than remembered. The book's "Ministry of Truth" is actually dedicated to the spreading of untruths. And so on and so on.

I bring this up because the phrase "rural lifestyle" is starting to take on an Orwellian meaning in Martin County. And if the current trajectory doesn't change soon, I fear something similar could happen in the other counties along the Treasure Coast.

Redefining the meaning of 'rural'

On Dec. 5, the Martin County Commission is scheduled to consider granting preliminary approval to an amendment to its "rural lifestyle" land-use category. It's been only a little more than a year since the commission adopted the original version, despite significant public opposition and a legal challenge

ultimately resolved in the county's favor by the state's Administration Commission.

The rural lifestyle land-use designation allows more intense development outside of the county's designated urban services areas, provided certain criteria are met. As originally adopted, the land-use designation could only be applied to tracts 1,000 acres or larger, adjacent to an urban services boundary. That seemed like a way to limit the number of opportunities developers would have to build housing subdivisions in what have historically been agricultural areas in the western part of the county.

Well, the amendment commissioners are scheduled to consider at their next meeting would loosen those restrictions: If a parcel is at least 3,000 acres, then it could be up to 6,000 feet from an urban services boundary. For perspective, there are 5,280 feet in a mile. So this amendment would significantly extend the boundaries where development would potentially be allowed under the rural lifestyle rules.

Critics' fears are coming true

Here's a shocker: On the same agenda, there's a request from a developer to build a golf course community near where Kanner Highway and Bridge Road intersect. This project would cover 3,902 acres. And yes, it happens to be within 6,000 feet of the urban services boundary.

All the people who argued the initial land-use change was going to set a precedent that would lead to more and more incursions into Martin County's agricultural lands must feel like Nostradamus now.

It's not surprising developers avoided trying to get property rezoned for rural lifestyle while the lawsuit challenging the commission's initial decision was pending. But this is at least the second rural lifestyle project proposed since the lawsuit was resolved. And, less than 15 months after the regulations were adopted, there's already this movement to make them less restrictive so more farmland will be "in play" for real estate speculators.

It's probably not a great object lesson for St. Lucie County, where officials are considering changes to the "towns, villages and countryside" element of their comprehensive plan, which could lead to less-restrictive zoning in western agricultural areas. Nor for Indian River County, where a series of meetings are underway to help determine the future of growth and development there.

The goalposts keep moving

Sticking with my Orwell analogies, it's a bit like how in "Animal Farm," the pigs kept changing the rules about how the farm was run until their hold on power was firmly secured.

Oh, but don't those rural landowners have property rights? Of course they do. They have rights to build whatever was allowed by the zoning on their property at the time they purchased it. They don't have the unfettered right — or at least they shouldn't — to build whatever type of development suits their interests at the moment, without regard to what constitutes good public policy.

On that score, the staff's report on the development project up for consideration Dec. 5 seems pretty clear: "Changing the land use to Rural Lifestyle does not appear to fulfill a public service need," it says on Page 8.

Ken Bakst, the property owner, said the project will add money to the tax base, preserve open space and even provide treatment for some of the dirty water flowing through the C-44 Canal. All that may be true, but the amendment will still open the proverbial barn door for future developments that may not be as beneficial.

Bakst said he hopes to build 175 homes (not the 195 called for in the plans sent to commissioners), which is actually less than the current agricultural zoning would allow. However, the rural lifestyle designation allows the houses to be clustered much closer together than the agricultural zoning would. By clustering them together, that leaves more room for golf courses, as well as guest houses, so-called "golf cottages" and course employee dormitories.

One of the selling points of rural lifestyle was supposed to be a provision that

requires a significant portion of the property to be designated as "open space." But this definition of open space allows golf courses, polo grounds or other recreational facilities to be built there. Not facilities that are necessarily open to the public, just the people who live there.

Is it really correct to say developers are "sacrificing" land for open space if what they're really doing is using it for amenities that will drive up profits on the land where they do build? I would say no.

Rules preserving agricultural land slipping away

Commissioners are likely to mention that whatever action they take on Dec. 5 won't be final, which is true. If they grant preliminary approval to the amendment, it will have to be forwarded to various state and local government agencies for review because it's a comprehensive plan change. Theoretically, commissioners could vote the change down after the other agencies have completed their review processes, but we all know that's not likely to happen.

After that amendment is ratified, it will just be a matter of time before another amendment is proposed, seeking to further weaken the rules in order to cater to some developers' specific wishes. And so on and so on, until the pigs are running the farm.

This column reflects the opinion of Blake Fontenay. Contact him via email at blake.fontenay@tcpalm.com or at 772-232-5424.

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/opinion/columnists/blake-fontenay/2023/11/30/developers-are-already-asking-to-expand-a-controversial-land-use-rule/71722001007/>

From: [sarah heard](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Fwd: Martin BOCC to consider Rural Lifestyle expansion on Tuesday
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 10:42:04 AM



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>
Date: Sat, Dec 2, 2023 at 10:31 AM
Subject: Martin BOCC to consider Rural Lifestyle expansion on Tuesday
To: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>
CC: Virginia Sherlock <vsherlock@lshlaw.net>

At their penultimate meeting of the year, Martin County Commissioners will elect a new chair on Tuesday and make committee assignments and approve the 2024 meeting and holiday schedule before considering expanding suburban development into rural farmlands and increasing impact fees for new construction.

At the outset of the meeting, Commissioners will approve the schedule and holidays for 2024 and vote for a new Board Chair to replace Commissioner Ed Ciampi. Committee assignments will be made for each of the Commissioners for the coming year.

Following the reorganization session, Commissioners will consider two proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to allow the Rural Lifestyle land use designation to be assigned to property more than a mile outside an existing Urban Services Boundary. Agenda Items PH-2 and PH-3 seek changes to the Comp Plan for the Calusa Creek Ranch project to allow construction of 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf cottages (up to six bedrooms each), employee dormitories, general store, multi-slip dock facility and other amenities on 3,902 acres of farmland, marshes and wetlands off SW Bridge Road and SW Kanner Highway.

CPA 22-06 is a text amendment that would change the current requirement that property must be adjacent to an Urban Services District to qualify for the Rural Lifestyle designation, expanding the land use to properties of at least 3,000 acres within 6,000 feet of a USD (including a free-standing USD like the USD the Calusa Creek Ranch amendment relies upon).

CPA 23-12 is a Future Land Use Amendment that would change the Agricultural land use designation to Rural Lifestyle for the Calusa Creek Ranch property.

NOTE: A rally has been scheduled beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the Administration Center at 2401 SE Monterey Road by residents who object to increasing density and intensity of use of western agricultural and conservation lands.

The Calusa Creek Ranch amendments are just two of six proposed Comp Plan amendments on Tuesday's agenda.

- CPA 23-14 would change the future land use designation from Industrial to Agricultural on a 32.26-acre parcel west of SW Kanner Highway near SW 96th Street in the Gateway Planned Unit Development (Agenda Item PH-4);
- CPA 23-13 is a site-specific text amendment to Chapter 4 of the Comp Plan for the Gateway PUD project (Agenda Item PH-5);
- CPA 22-12 would change the future land use designation for another 32.26-acre parcel within the Gateway PUD from Agricultural to Industrial (Agenda Item PH-6); and
- CA 23-01 is another site-specific text amendment similar to CPA 23-13 as part of the “swap” of land use designations on two parcels associated with the Gateway PUD (Agenda Item PH-7).

A presentation will be made by staff at 1:30 p.m. on an impact fee study which concluded that the County’s impact fees are too high in some cases and too low in other cases to serve the stated purpose of making development contribute to the cost of impacts of a project to County services. Impact fees for single-family homes of 800 square feet or less were found to be too high, for instance, with a 10 percent decrease recommended. However, fees for single-family homes of 2,301 square feet or more were found to be too low. In the special set Agenda Item DEPT-4, staff recommends that the Commission order amendments to be drafted to the Land Development Regulations to increase impact fees by a maximum of 50 percent where appropriate.

In addition to the good news that only one more BOCC meeting will be conducted before the end of the year (the last meeting of 2023 will be conducted on December 12), there are no major spending items on Tuesday’s agenda – except, of course, for the usual Clerk’s Warrant (Item CNST-2) which will be approved on the Consent Agenda without public discussion or explanation, confirming that \$16,687,514.82 in taxpayer funds were spent between November 7 and November 19, 2023, without identifying the payees or the purpose of the payments.

A request by staff for further direction on requests for proposals for a Brightline rail station in Martin County (Agenda Item DEPT-3) is being postponed until the December 12 meeting.

In other items on Tuesday’s agenda:

- A proclamation will be approved in Consent Agenda Item CNST-3 commending Mia Stahl upon her achievement of the rank of Eagle Scout;
- Commissioners will appoint Hobe Sound and Port Salerno representatives to the Community Redevelopment Agency and will designate a chair and vice chair for the CRA in Agenda Item B&C-1; and
- A resolution declaring the County’s intent to use the uniform method of collecting proposed non-ad valorem tax assessments for municipal service benefits for road paving, drainage, dredging, stormwater management and water and wastewater services will be adopted in Consent Agenda Item PH-1.

The meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday in Commission Chambers at the Martin County Administration Center. Attend in person, watch on MCTV or livestream the meeting from the

County website at http://martin.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=24.

Agenda items may be viewed and downloaded at:

<https://martin.legistar.com/DepartmentDetail.aspx?ID=35023&GUID=98D7CC54-EF7D-4C4C-8084-1AF34C623D6E>

E-mail commissioners about matters that interest you at sheard@martin.fl.us, eciampi@martin.fl.us, dsmith@martin.fl.us, hjenkins@martin.fl.us, shetherington@martin.fl.us with copies to the County Administrator and County Attorney at ddonalds@martin.fl.us and swoods@martin.fl.us.

Ginny Sherlock

LITTMAN, SHERLOCK & HEIMS, P.A.

P.O. Box 1197

Stuart, FL 34995

Phone: (772) 287-0200

Fax: (772) 872-5152

www.LSHLaw.net

From: [Larry Mueller](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Cc: [Jeanette Mueller](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 10:18:50 PM



Martin County Board of County Commissioners

As past Leadership Martin County Alumni President, {2006-2007} and past Chairman of the Martin County Arts Council, I have committed myself to being a 35 year lifelong advocate for our community. It is critical that we recognize opportunities for our community to advance and be engaged.

Often times, we see developers come into Martin County without understanding our close knit community or trying to build upon what we have worked so hard to establish and preserve. Today, I am writing to express my support for the Calusa Creek project because to my understanding, this will be unlike others both in design and public benefits.

After doing my research, it is clear that the applicant has put forth efforts to become a part of our community through memberships to local chambers of commerce, contributions to our local nonprofit agencies, and taking part in conversations to create unique partnerships as part of their plans.

Before we see this as just “another development project”, I urge you to consider the potential public benefit this project could have for Martin County both with its emphasis on Natural Conservation and our community.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Mueller jnettemue@comcast.net

From: [Larry Mueller](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 9:50:36 PM



Martin County Board of County Commissioners

As a longtime 35 year resident of Martin County, my wife and I appreciate the quality of life that we have in what I'd like to believe ranks 1 out of 67 for counties in the state of Florida.

I encourage you to support the Calusa Creek project because it appears that it will maintain the rural character of the land. I would much rather see a project like this one that incorporates and emphasizes the wildlife corridor and leaves 91% open space .

Development has always been a point of much debate around here. However through the years, it's been shown that it can be done successfully when well-planned and the surroundings are taken into account up front. This project does just that. Maintaining the quality lifestyle for my 3 children and grandchildren who also live and enjoy Martin County is very important to me and my wife. I believe this project meets the standards that Martin County has always looked for when considering permitting new projects.

Thank you all for your consideration.

Larry Mueller

From: [Art Ondich](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); shethertington@martin.fl.us; [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: Comp Plan Changes
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 8:11:48 PM



County Commissioners:

Before the ink is even dry on the controversial, and pretty unpopular decision among county residents, of your creation of a new zoning category referred to as Rural Lifestyle, you are being presented further amendments to it under a request by the developers of the Calusa Creek Ranch project. Doesn't it make sense to see if the present Rural Lifestyle zoning category in it's present form turns out to be acceptable in it's results, before considering any further changes to our County's Comp Plan? There should be no hurry for you to rush into further possible troubled waters. If this new idea is a good one, then it will still be a good one in the future after the present Rural Lifestyles category has a chance to prove a good or bad idea for Martin County.

Arthur W. Ondich
12383 SE Plandome Dr.
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
772-546-6293

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Brian Schwan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek, The Ranch
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 10:13:58 PM



Dear commissioners and county administrator,

As a lifelong Martin County resident and a fisherman, sportsman and boat captain there's no place I'd rather call home than right here in Martin County. This is where I was raised and went to high school. I've lived here for most of my 40-years and I am raising my three children here.

The Calusa Creek Ranch proposal is a project that not only makes sense, it should be the model for rural planning and conservation. As an avid golfer, it's certainly attractive to be adding 36 holes of top-tier golf here, the fact that the site will be almost entirely open space and hardly noticed by those driving by should not be taken lightly. The consideration taken for conserving natural green space is in line with what I find makes Martin County attractive.

Martin County should continue to develop in a practical way. It will just make this an even better place for us all to live and enjoy the area. There's no place I'd rather live than in Martin County and Calusa Creek, The Ranch will continue our legacy of slow growth, yet highly valuable growth.

Thank you,

Brian Schwan/Palm City

From: [Roy Speiser](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Cc: [Sarah Phillion](#)
Subject: Ammendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12- From Tres Belle BOD
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 4:07:00 PM



Board of Directors
459 SE Tres Belle Circle, Stuart, FL 34997
bod@tresbellehoa.com
772-320-9617

From: Tres Belle Board of Directors
Re: Amendments to Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Dear Commissioner Heard,

The Tres Belle Board of Directors is strongly opposed to revising the Rural Lifestyle Land use designation that will expand residential development into agricultural land outside the Urban Services District.

In the past 4-5 years there has been a rapid increase in approval of high-density residential developments on Cove Road and surrounding areas in Martin County. This has resulted in a significant increase in traffic congestion along Cove Road to the point where it is almost impossible and dangerous to exit our community to turn left towards Kanner Highway during peak hours.

Our residents are deeply concerned that unrestricted growth of high density residential and commercial developments will further increase traffic congestion, air pollution, and have long term negative health impacts. These developments have clear cut most of the trees, displacing wildlife and causing the loss of their natural habitats. It has ruined the beauty of our bucolic environment that will never be restored.

Opening thousands of agricultural acres to residential and commercial development will require new roads, generate tons of sewerage and consume millions of gallons of water. Also, covering the ground with homes and roads reduces the recharge

of our aquifers that will inevitably deplete them causing substantial water shortages.

Therefore, the Tres Belle Board of Directors on behalf of our community urge all the Martin County commissions to vote No to amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12.

Respectfully,

Dr. Roy M. Speiser

PRESIDENT, TRES BELLE BOD

From: [Bonnie White](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 5:04:13 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Please do not change or amend the Martin County Comprehensive Plan. Sincerely, Bonnie R. White, 128 South Beach Rd. HOBE SOUND, member of the Jupiter Island Garden Club

From: [Bonnie White](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#)
Cc: [Sarah Woods](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 5:19:44 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Please do not change or amend the Martin County Comprehensive Plan. Sincerely, Bonnie R. White, 128 South Beach Rd. HOBE SOUND, , member of the Jupiter Island Garden Club.

From: [Julie Starke](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: The Garcia Companies Letter
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:44:49 AM
Attachments: [The Ranch Letter.pdf](#)



Please see the attached letter from Josh Kellam, President of The Garcia Companies.

Let me know if you need anything further.

Julie

| Julie Starke | for The Garcia Companies
| Corporate Creative Partner and Communications Specialist
| juliestarke.com | 757.646.2001 | @juliestarke



4822 NORTHLAKE BLVD SUITE A • PALM BEACH GARDENS, FL 33418
561.899.5100 • JKELLAM@GROWGARCIA.COM • GROWGARCIA.COM

November 29, 2023

Dear Martin County Board of County Commissioners:

The Garcia Companies is focused on diverse development and land management, including projects in western Martin County. We believe The Ranch project aligns well with our vision of preserving the past, enriching the present, and envisioning the future. As such, we believe that it could be a good addition to and for the area.

With agricultural preservation spanning more than 1,200 acres and wetland protection for more than 660 acres, The Ranch enhances the legacy Calusa Creek site to establish a world-class private community that will emphasize both conservation and public benefit.

It is clear that The Ranch has been carefully planned to maximize the natural elements of the location when it comes to the animals, vegetation, open space, homes and amenities. This will be a win for Martin County when it comes to preservation as well as the increased tax base for the area.

Private, visionary projects like The Ranch should be welcomed by the commission and given the go ahead to help move the county forward in a responsible manner.

Respectfully,



Josh Kellam
President
The Garcia Companies



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Private, visionary projects like The Ranch should be welcomed by the commission and given the go ahead to help move the county forward in a responsible manner.

Respectfully,



Josh Kellam
President
The Garcia Companies

From: [Terry Gibson](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:43:45 AM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

Those of you who know me understand that I've spent my career working to protect fish, wildlife, and the habitats they depend on. I work almost exclusively for top-shelf conservation groups, unless I'm working as a professional hunter or writing for outdoor enthusiast publications. I've often half-joked that I'm going to run someday for Martin County Commission on the campaign promise of building a wall – with wildlife tunnels of course – around our beautiful county. The last thing I want to see or want my seven-year-old son to experience, is the sprawl that ruined western Palm Beach County and so many other rural areas around the state. Though I am concerned about abuses of the rural lifestyle designation, I don't think that a rigid interpretation and enforcement of our celebrated comp plan is always the best way to conserve open spaces and limit growth.

Having spent many happy days afield on Martin County ranches, I was particularly nervous about the Calusa Creek Ranch project and wondered if the project is as advertised. So, I read the Environmental Assessment and the exchanges with county staff, then met with the folks behind the project.

I probed them with questions, searched them for lies and half-truths. By the time we were done, I realized that these folks are land stewards, not rapacious developers. You all know what's in the design, and I won't waste your time rehashing all the effort they put into protecting wetlands, uplands, and the ranch's agricultural tradition. But the design is impressive. It reminds me of many lodges and private preserves where I've hunted and fished throughout the west, where several kinds of outdoor recreation are offered on properties that are managed attentively, for the benefit the ecosystems that support the operation.

I support the Calusa Creek Ranch project as designed and hope you will approve it. Moreover, I hope that you will hold up this project as an example when other, perhaps less well-intended projects are presented.

Sincerely,

Terry Gibson
Jensen Beach

From: [Glenn Halstead](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Rural Lifestyle Amendment
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:39:35 PM



Dear Commissioner Heard,

Please vote NO on the Rural Lifestyle Amendment on Dec. 5.

Thank you

Glenn and Beverly Halstead

From: [Brian Schwan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Re: Calusa Creek, The Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:12:21 AM
Attachments: [Letter of support.docx](#)



Dear commissioners and county administrator,

As a lifelong Martin County resident and a fisherman, sportsman and boat captain there's no place I'd rather call home than right here in Martin County. This is where I was raised and went to high school. I've lived here for most of my 40-years and I am raising my three children here.

The Calusa Creek Ranch proposal is a project that not only makes sense, it should be the model for rural planning and conservation. As an avid golfer, it's certainly attractive to be adding 36 holes of top-tier golf here, the fact that the site will be almost entirely open space and hardly noticed by those driving by should not be taken lightly. The consideration taken for conserving natural green space is in line with what I find makes Martin County attractive.

Martin County should continue to develop in a practical way. It will just make this an even better place for us all to live and enjoy the area. There's no place I'd rather live than in Martin County and Calusa Creek, The Ranch will continue our legacy of slow growth, yet highly valuable growth.

Thank you,

Brian Schwan/Palm City

From: Brian Schwan <BSchwan@commercialrealestatellc.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 10:13 PM
To: dsmith@martin.fl.us <dsmith@martin.fl.us>; shetherington@martin.fl.us <shetherington@martin.fl.us>; hjenkins@martin.fl.us <hjenkins@martin.fl.us>; sheard@martin.fl.us <sheard@martin.fl.us>; eciampi@martin.fl.us <eciampi@martin.fl.us>; ddonaldson@martin.fl.us <ddonaldson@martin.fl.us>
Subject: Calusa Creek, The Ranch

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Thank you,

Brian Schwan/Palm City

From: [Marty S](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek The Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:54:55 PM



Dear County Leaders,

My name is Marty Stern and I am a proud Martin County resident. I'm a long-time youth baseball coach in Martin County, and my son was fortunate to represent Martin County in the Little League World Series in Pennsylvania in 2021. I got to know the people from Calusa Creek because they were one of the first families to step up and sponsor local families who couldn't afford to attend the World Series and see our kids play.

Our family loves Martin County, we cherish this community... and that's why we fully support the private preservation plan known as The Ranch. This project is just what our community needs.... it emphasizes open space, agricultural preservation and creates a significant tax base, \$25 million a year for our community.

Please support and approve this The Ranch and Calusa Creek.

Marty Stern/Palm City

From: [captjimsullivan](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:37:36 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I have been in landscaping and landscape design literally since I was a teenager right here in Martin County. Our company manages golf courses and neighborhoods throughout the region. I am also a licensed charter captain, avid hunter, and a father of a young child. I hope that my family will continue to thrive here in Martin County for generations to come.

Martin County is now in a place in time where we must decide to grow wisely, with a premium placed on preserving open spaces, wildlife habitats, and projects that include water conservation and water quality improvements. I worry about more high-density development that's a drain on everyone including the county's finances. On the other hand, we should be open to projects that entail sound infrastructure planning, and land conservation.

The Calusa Creek Ranch Project, which you will vote on tomorrow, seems like the type of project that checks those boxes. I'm hearing people say that golf courses pollute. As someone who has managed them, I assure you that today's fertilization and irrigation techniques conserve water and keep nutrients on site. They will protect and restore the wetlands, preserve much of the piney flatwoods, and create great lakes for wildlife and fishing. This project seems like the kind of place that would also create good jobs for people serious about proudly maintaining a property the right way. Please remain open to such projects.

Sincerely,

Capt. Jimmy Sullivan
Jensen Beach

From: [Ellen Dwinell](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Comp plan
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 5:40:49 PM

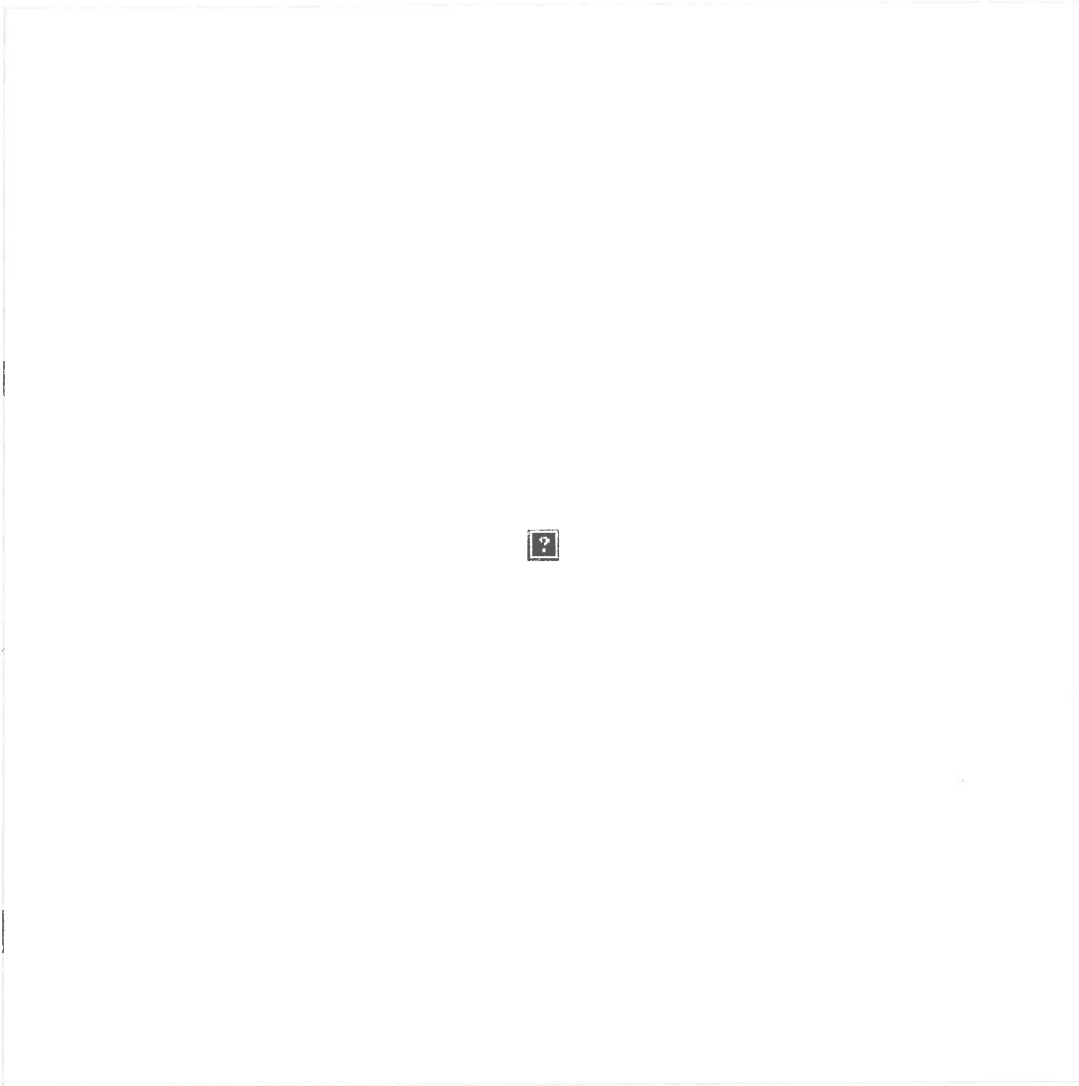
This Email Sent From External Sender

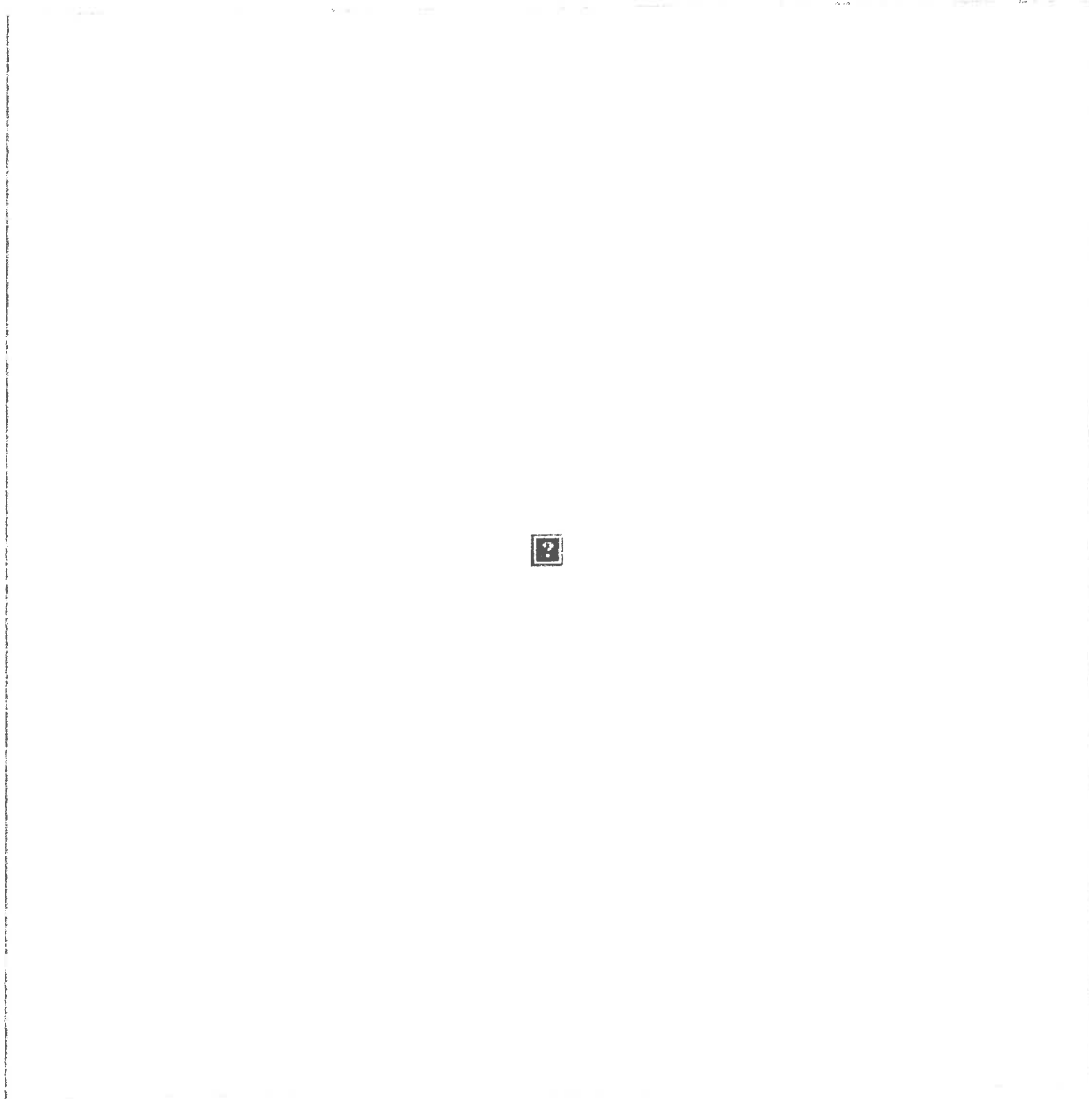
Please vote against changing the comp plan in any way. Martin County is special , because it is. Not ruined YET.

From: [The Guardians of Martin County](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Save the Date: County Commission Meeting on Tuesday, Dec., 5th – time TBD
Date: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 2:50:09 PM



[View this email in your browser](#)





Source: Staff Report for Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Text Amendment.

6,000 foot new extension (swirled area) to the USD for contiguous development under proposed RLZ amendment, as well as the Calusa Ranch.

On Tuesday, December 5th the County Commission is scheduled to consider two new requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan for Rural Lifestyle Zoning (RLZ) land use. This change will allow development on Calusa Ranch, a 3,900+-acre tract outside the Urban Service District, located on both sides of Kanner Highway near the western terminus of Bridge Rd. Note that part of Calusa is adjacent to the St. Lucie Canal.

Presently, Calusa Ranch does not have access to municipal water or wastewater services.

The request is for;

1. 175 homes, two golf courses, 24 golf course cottages and dormitory housing for staff support;

2. Multi-slip docking facilities on the St. Lucie canal;
3. A general store;
4. To extend RLS Developments to 6,000 feet from the USD for parcels over 3,000 acres (Indiantown excepted).

County staff made the determination that these RLZ changes would allow Calusa revenue-generating “support establishments” (i.e. spa, racquet club, gym, event facilities, marina, etc.). The County does not consider the project to be urban sprawl and Calusa will not result in an increase of traffic on Kanner Highway! Incredulous!

To date, the Guardians’ request to require permanent conservation easements on open land that would not otherwise be protected has been ignored.

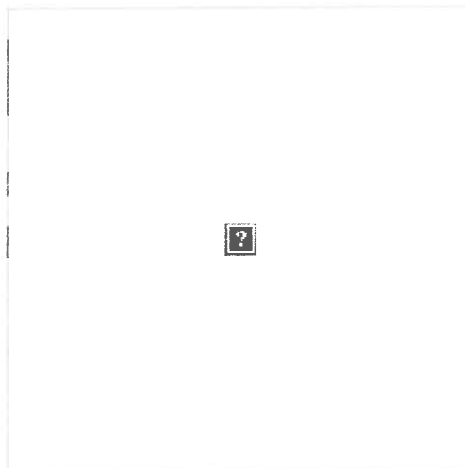
For anyone who is interested to learn more of the details of the proposed project, see the Agenda items for the Local Planning Agency for Calusa Ranch on November 14, 2023 here [Comp Plan Text Amendment](#) and [Future Land Use Map Amendment](#).

The Guardians will be sending out a detailed ‘call to action’ during the week of 11/27, but please set aside some time on December 5th, and the days leading up to it, to let the county commissioners know how you feel about these amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

There appears to be a rush to get this approved, but in recognition of this time of the year, it looks to us like a turkey!

Please share this message with your friends and neighbors!

Live Responsibly, Protect Our Future.



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The Guardians of Martin County
P.O. BOX 1489
Hobe Sound, FL 33475

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From: [Carol Ann](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: comments for the Nov. 7 BOCC meeting
Date: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:18:56 PM
Attachments: [Comments for BOCC Nov. 7, "23 meeting.docx](#)



Commissioner Hetherington,
I'm sending my comments to you via an attachment as there are many.
Thank you for taking the time to read them.

PH-1, Agenda Item 24-0213. Three Rivers Golf Course-We don't need this to be passed.

The Three Lakes Golf Course hearing may be presented as a necessary response to FL state Legislative preemption forcing water and sewer to this recreational facility, but it is described on the Agenda for Nov. 7 to change the land use from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle. It is more suburban sprawl. It is undoubtedly a preamble to getting "the Ranch" to be adjacent to available water and sewer. It has become a way to demolish the Urban Service Boundary.

We don't need more golf courses with the runoff from fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. We don't need more trees that trap carbon cut down. We don't need more development encroaching on our open and agricultural lands. We don't need more development including Golf Cottages with supposedly temporary stays, and employee housing. Homes will no doubt be asked for next.

DPQJ-1 Agenda Item 24-0201. The Christ Fellowship Church for Highpointe proposal was approved by the Commission despite massive opposition from hundreds of residents, including many from the nearby Foxwood community.

Listen to the people.

Agenda Item PH-2 Agenda Item, 24-0240 which is a proposed Future Land Use Map amendment to change the land use designation from General Commercial to Commercial Office/Residential, and Some General Commercial and Office/Commercial may be OK. I don't know the scope of the project. However, it appears to be across Kanner Hwy. from the complex with the big truck/auto gas station where Dairy Queen used to be. How many such developments do we need? I say less.

Agenda Item PHQJ-1 Agenda Item 0241-, a concurrent amendment to the Ninety-Five Riverside PUD Zoning Agreement to allow construction of 98 townhomes on 12.4 acres near the Lost River Road/I-95 Interchange for the Riverside PUD/Pulte I-95 project. **We don't need 98 townhomes here.**

For both Agenda Items:

Lost River Rd at the I-95 Interchange is a hugely trafficked area along Kanner Hwy (Hwy 76). People are trying to get onto I-95, there are businesses all along the area there and more back off the north side of Kanner at that intersection. There was a kayaking/canoe rental place on the river, south of Kanner on Lost River Rd.

There is too much congestion for the area even if the development is northwest of I-95. People have to go through that intersection of Lost River, Kanner Hwy next to the I-95 interchange. More green space will be gone. An even bigger concern is hazardous runoff from developments so close to the river.

DEPT-4 Agenda Item 24-0281 to approve \$125,000.00 to prepare and submit a proposal for a Brightline train station in Martin County.

I'm in favor of a Brightline station in Stuart but the money to prepare a proposal seems high. The City of Stuart Commissioners and Mayor want a station. Seems to me both the city and county could join forces and spend less money.

I believe that having the Brightline station in Stuart would serve both Jupiter and St Lucie residents, businesses as well. It could bring more tourism to Martin County. If fares become more reasonable people may be able to commute to jobs that we don't have in Stuart or MC. Riding the train to and from work would reduce the vehicles on I-95, the Turnpike and maybe US 1. This would reduce the carbon monoxide and pollution that contribute to Climate Change at least by some amount. You say the county cares about sea level rise. If you do, then consider all the contributors to it.

A leading contender for a Brightline station location in Martin County is the Martin County Fair Grounds.

I heard there is to be a Convention Center by the Fairgrounds and maybe some other things. **It's obviously turning into a larger development than just the Fairgrounds.** More agricultural and open land to be developed using sewer and water outside the USBs.

Stop the overdevelopment and sprawl. Stop trying to go outside the USBs. Stop trying to expand the Rural Lifestyle area. Stop trying to change the Comp Plan all the time.

Carol Ann Leonard
Stuart

Benjamin T. Schuemann
Schuemann Farm
Indiantown, FL

November 15, 2023

Re: Rural Lifestyle Designation

Martin County Commissioners

Dear Members of the Martin County Commission,

Since last year, when the Rural Lifestyle Amendment was passed by three County Commissioners, I have noticed the dreaded "Proposed Development" signs appearing throughout our western rural lands. Three Lakes, Discovery, The Ranch PUD, Newfield Farms, Highpoint and Divosta's heavily advertised new city, Storie; all urban sprawl spreading like cancer into our western communities one development at a time.

The Comprehensive Growth Management Plan was created in 1982 to protect the environment and guide growth and development within Martin County. Prior zoning laws allowed agricultural land in the county to have no more than one home per 20 acres. Last Thursday, JWA Ranch, Calusa Creek Ranch, brought two proposed amendments to the LPA:

- Eliminate the requirement for property to be adjacent to an Urban Service District and would allow the Rural Lifestyle designation to be applied to property within 6,000 feet (more than a mile) of the USD if the property is a minimum of 3,000 acres
- Change the text of the Comprehensive Growth Plan to allow for density in excess of one unit per 20 acres (a proposed maximum density was not specified . . . the proposal provides that maximum density will be the "density allowed in the P.U.D.").

A vote to approve these proposals will change the face of our rural lands forever. By allowing the developer these major amendment changes would be unethical and go against everything the Comprehensive Growth Plan stands for! It will open wide the doors to the "Browardization" of Martin County, a fear that our good residents have fought so hard to avoid.

Growth is inevitable; however, it is vital that our western communities remain rural and low density! I urge the Martin County Commissioners to LIMIT-- not expand -- acreage that may be converted from agricultural to residential and recreational use and proceed cautiously with changes to the Comprehensive Plan that threaten rural lands. Agriculture is a major contributor in Martin County, farming and ranching are the bedrock on which the county was built. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, Martin County has 592 farms over 153,732 acres and a market value of products sold at \$112,566,000. A little over 11% of jobs in Martin County are farm related.

The county must hire a consultant to prepare a western lands study to determine the best way to develop agricultural lands and get some professional guidance and factual information before moving forward with additional Rural Lifestyle approvals and expansion. Furthermore, the county staff should perform a survey to determine exactly how many acres will be affected under the Rural Lifestyle Designation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Benjamin T. Schuemann
Schuemann Farm, Indiantown

From: smcginn1=sbcglobal.net@martin.fl.us on behalf of [Martin County Florida](#)
To: [Daphne Schaub](#)
Subject: Webform submission from: Daphne Schaub
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:00:42 PM

The following information was submitted via Martin County's BOCC website's "Contact Us" staff directory.

Details of the request are as follows:

Email Address

smcginn1@sbcglobal.net

Phone Number

8176020150

Subject

CP22-06

Message

Ms. Schaub,

I need to understand how the proposed changes are a benefit to the Land Development Regulations. Will these changes weaken the commissioners power to reject applications that are not in the counties best interest I believe these changes will make even more property eligible for Rural Lifestyle designation. Convince me this not the case.

Bellow are the comments I sent to all the commissioners and are also the changes I disagree with.

The changes below that are proposed by MC Staff are the most problematic and should not be allowed. You were elected to use your judgement.. You have the power to reject the staff's proposed changes. the opportunity for very relaxed standard for the property to be eligible.

Changing the wording from planned unit development to "Rural Lifestyle future land use designations" as the boundary from which utilities provided by the development within the RL amendment can service/extend again allows for very relaxed standard for the boundary.

Changing the wording from minimum to "a portion" the amount to acreage (touching an urban service boundary) required to allow the land to be classified as eligible opens the opportunity for very relaxed standard for the property to be eligible.

Regards,
Sharon McGinnis
Rocky Point

Employee Email Address

dschaub@martin.fl.us

The comments and opinions expressed herein are those of the author of this message and may not reflect the policies of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners. Under Florida Law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

From: [Sam Hay](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Please oppose amendments to Comp Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:14:23 PM



Dear Commissioner Hetherington:

I urge you to oppose amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12, These amendments would open the floodgates to further urban sprawl and environmental degradation and would render the Comp Plan essentially dead. Please do your duty to preserve Martin County for future generations.

Respectfully,
Sam Hay, Port Salerno



Virus-free www.avg.com

From: [Sam Hay](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Subject: Please oppose amendments to Comp Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:22:10 PM



Dear Commissioner Jenkins:

I urge you to oppose amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12, These amendments would open the floodgates to further urban sprawl and environmental degradation and would render the Comp Plan essentially dead. Please do your duty to preserve Martin County for future generations.

Respectfully,
Sam Hay, Port Salerno



Virus-free www.avg.com

From: [SHARON](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Subject: CPA 22-06
Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 1:00:09 PM



Commissioner Jenkins,

Do you plan to approve the staff recommendations to the Rural Lifestyle designation?

The changes below that are proposed by MC Staff are the most problematic and should not be allowed. You were elected to use your judgement.. You have the power to reject the staff's proposed changes.

1.The extension of utility services from or through the Primary Urban Service District, the Secondary Urban Service District or Freestanding Urban Service District to a specific parcel with a Rural Lifestyle future land use designation and a Planned Unit Development zoning classification shall not serve any other property outside the ~~Planned Unit Development agreement~~ Rural Lifestyle future land use designation.

Changing the wording from **planned unit development to "Rural Lifestyle future land use designations"** as the boundary from which utilities provided by the development within the RL amendment can service/extend again allows for very relaxed standard for the boundary.

2.be comprised of a minimum of 1,000 contiguous acres and a ~~portion~~ of the minimum 1,000 contiguous acres must be adjacent to the Primary Urban Service District, the Secondary Urban Service District or a Freestanding Urban Service District.; or

Changing the wording from **minimum to "a portion"** the amount to acreage (touching an urban service boundary) required to allow the land to be classified as eligible opens the opportunity for very relaxed standard for the property to be eligible.

Regards,
Sharon McGinnis
817-602-0150

From: [Joe Flanagan](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Cc: [Colleen Pachowicz](#)
Subject: Support of 24-0192
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 5:01:36 AM
Attachments: [Supporting 24-0192.PDF](#)



Commissioner Jenkins,

Please find attached my support of The Ranch as it comes before the Commission.

Contact me if you have any questions or want further discussion.

Joe Flanagan



November 30, 2023

To Martin County Board of County Commissioners:

For 73 years, the Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce has been committed to helping our business community thrive and supporting key projects that can deliver widespread benefits across Martin County which includes direct benefits to our small business community.

After reviewing information about **The Ranch**, which is currently under consideration (File #24-0192), we feel that this premium golf course development would be an awesome addition to our area that will provide meaningful economic benefits.

These world-class golf facilities will attract visitors and successful individuals to our area who will patronize local businesses across Martin County, including Jensen Beach. With the focus on open space at **The Ranch**, we are optimistic this rural gem will translate into its members having an appreciation for nature and an eagerness to explore all that our cherished quality of life has to offer.

We ask you to approve **The Ranch**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Rose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ronald E. Rose
President CEO
Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce

CC: Don Donaldson

Clyde Dulin

From: Paul Schilling
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 2:49 PM
To: Clyde Dulin; Elysse Elder
Subject: FW: Proposed "Storie" Development and Calusa Creek Golf Community

Paul Schilling
Director
Growth Management Department
Martin County Board of County Commissioners
772-288-5473

From: Anthony Mastroianni <anthony@acdsfl.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 2:23 PM
To: Sarah Heard <sheard@martin.fl.us>; Doug Smith <dsmith@martin.fl.us>; Harold Jenkins <hjenkins@martin.fl.us>; Edward Ciampi <eciampi@martin.fl.us>; Stacey Hetherington <shetherington@martin.fl.us>; Paul Schilling <pschilli@martin.fl.us>; cdublin@martin.fl.us; shaykyla@yahoo.com; trailsidehoa@yahoo.com
Subject: Proposed "Storie" Development and Calusa Creek Golf Community

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information**

Good afternoon,

My name is Anthony Mastroianni. I live in Trailside with my wife and two young children; a quaint, quiet, beautiful, old Florida agricultural community. We have cattle, horses and are surrounded by sugar cane, a flower farming operation, South Florida Water Management owned property, County owned property and sizeable cattle operations exist on these aforementioned parcels. We absolutely love the beauty of western Martin County, the sunsets, the nature, wildlife and all that comes with living in a rural/agricultural setting. Myself and my fellow neighbors did not spend hundreds of thousands and or millions of dollars to be surrounded by large Planned Unit Developments, similar to an Abacoa or Alton or even a Jupiter Farms type setting. No, we chose the vast openness of our community, more importantly the vast openness of western Martin County.

Florida is ranked number 12 in the US for cattle production, as you all may be aware; Florida was the first state to have the cow and the first state to have the horse. This is our heritage; it is part of what makes our part of the county/state so beautiful and desirable. I own and operate a large cattle ranch, along with other farming operations in St. Lucie County and not a day, week or month goes by that I see more Ranches or Agricultural lands being bought and developed on and it truly is a shame. My point on St. Lucie is, within a 10-mile radius of my ranch there are roughly 80,000 homes in various stages of development. We DO NOT NEED to add to this pipeline and allow another large-scale housing development to be developed in our area, Newfield will provide a good amount of inventory to our local market. Indiantown needs to grow and develop into a great little village for the more affordable homes needed in the local market. We do not need more golf courses on Bridge Road, Pratt Whitney or Kanner Highway. Discovery is not sold out and have not filled their member base, Apogee the same. Both of these locations will provide plenty of opportunity for golfers amazing courses, homes and alternatively plenty of jobs for our residents. In turn a great stimulation to our local economy.

We do not need to be a St. Lucie County or a Palm Beach County, we do not need to flood the market with homes and golf course communities. What has been approved are appreciable additions to our community, tastefully done, they have provided great conservation opportunities, they value our local and state history and preserved both in many ways. The impacts that Storie and Calusa Creek will have on us rural residents are in no way needed and or wanted by the tax payers and shareholders of western Martin County and the Agricultural community. Pratt Whitney and Bridge Roads are already congested with traffic and at times unsafe driving conditions. Not to mention the unsafe and vexatious conditions coming from Pal-Mar directly to our south, gun shots all hours of the day and night, mud trucks and ATV's crossing Pratt Whitney, music, lights and loud motors all hours of the night...

I value property rights and am not one to stand in the way of a property owners' ability to do as they please with what they own. I am also in the real estate development industry and have vast knowledge in this field. The Harmony ranch approval is more fitting for this area of the county and you should not deviate from what has already been approved. I urge you all to stand strong and uphold the values and traditions that makes Martin County what it is. Do not allow this leap frog development to continue.

Thank you for your time,

Anthony Mastroianni
President
Allied Capital & Development of South Florida
M-Ranch Properties
(c) 561-379-6923
(o) 561-799-0050
Anthony@acdsfl.com

From: [Diane Evans Meier](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 3:28:01 PM
Attachments: www.martin.fl.us.icq
www.martin.fl.us.icq



Dear Commissioner Heard and Commissioner Jenkins and fellow commissioners Ciampi; Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Hetherington

COMPLAINT RE: SS RANCH LLC (Rolling Golf Course):

The SS Ranch LLC *(Rolling Sands Golf Course) project B076-004 hired a person to violate our area's critical pump station that serv... sensitive lands of Western Martin County. Their permit should be rescinded because of fraudulently presenting two sets of plans; one to FPL and one to M.C. Commissioners. Giving an excuse that the title search did not show the easements is bogus since the plans to FPL did show the easements. Below are some of the properties that would Be affected including KAI KAI

[Sunlight Ranch of Martin County - LandWatch](#)

Sunlight Ranch of Martin County The sprawling 780-acre Sunlight Ranch in Martin County, Florida, lies between two equestrian developments. The

Ranch includes

36 platted, 20-acre lots with access to the property through a gated, private drive.

<https://www.martin.fl.us/project/culpepper-ranch-project>

[Culpepper Ranch Project | Martin County Florida](#)

Culpepper Ranch is a 1,294-acre property part of a 20,000 plus acre network of conservation lands known as Hungryland/Pal Mar. Together these properties form the headwaters of Cypress Creek, which is one of the most important tributaries to the Wild and Scenic Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

<https://www.martin.fl.us/Preserves>

[Conservation Lands & Preserves | Martin County Florida](#)

Martin County manages approximately 35,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands. With ecological restoration as a high priority, our staff carries out quality projects that meet our community's needs while also playing a vital role in support of improved public access to public lands. Learn about Martin County's

Remember when last year our area had 21 inches of rain in a matter of a few days? This pump station saved us from thousands of gallons of water flooding the farm lands and homes in this area. The Golf course lost their petition to dismantle and fill in this pump station last year. So they are now trying to do it illegally (which a warrant was issued for the person's arrest several weekends ago.)

The point is big money is going to continue to try to do what they want because it is unsightly on one of their pristine golf course tees. Couldn't the county have researched the lease we had with SFWD and redesign the course far away from this critical area? Presently Brian Elam said this proposal is in engineering's court. HERE is what the

[golf course](#)

developers have done so far:

1) took down the protective louvered roof system 2) dismantled the electric for the pump station 3) pulled out the fuel tanks 4) were in process of backfilling in the canal. This system is a crucial safeguard for the million of gallons of water that could flood this entire western area affecting sensitive conservation lands. So why did Greg Braun and the Guardian group purchase the 2 miles on Bridge road...? Was it not one future reason to ease the flooding in Hobe Sound?

Do people have a legal right for the use of their property and also sell their property? OF COURSE.... However, if you buy and own an Ag 20 property... (How do we take off golf course usage for AG 20?) These owners knew what they bought so why squeeze more density into the zoning? The zoning was there for a purpose for water filtration and farm lands. According to UF/IFAS there is always a best and highest use crop... In addition these property owners have had tax breaks with cattle leases, etc they are not losing money on the use of their property. My humble opinion is Growth

[Management](#)

and Commissioners are not to cave

in to the developers who want to clearcut and destroy the beauty of Martin County for greed not for what is right for their pocketbooks. Why does Martin County have to look like Miami Beach with traffic jams, flooding and water quality issues. Thanks for listening,
Diane

From: [candy](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek project
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:53:29 AM



Dear Martin County Commissioners:

My family first moved to Martin County in 1924. In fact, my grandfather would sail across the St. Lucie River to the farms in Palm City where he worked as a sharecropper. As a third-generation resident, I have seen my fair share of change over the course of my lifetime and I spend a good bit of my time working to preserve our natural trails.

I fully believe that the Calusa Creek project promotes smart growth in Martin County and should receive your support. With 91% open space and more than 1,200-acres of bona fide agriculture, this project safeguards the natural landscape we all know and love.

As we face new development projects here in Martin County, I suggest we support projects like these that aim to preserve and promote the natural environment, opposed to replacing it.

Best,

Candy New

From: [Paul Owens](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch comp plan amendments
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 12:04:48 PM
Attachments: [Martin County letter re Calusa Creek Ranch.docx](#)



Dear Commissioners,

Please see the attached comments from 1000 Friends of Florida regarding CPA 22-06 and 23-12.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Paul Owens

President, 1000 Friends of Florida

850-222-6277

Follow us on Twitter @FloridaFriends

Like us on Facebook



November 30, 2023

Martin County Commissioners
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, Florida 34996

via email

Re: CPA 22-06 and 23-12

Dear Martin County Commissioners:

On behalf of 1000 Friends of Florida, I write to express our opposition to approval of the pending request to amend the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to authorize construction of residences, golf course cottages, additional structures and two golf courses on lands outside the county's urban service districts for the Calusa Creek Ranch project.

While we did not support the creation of the Rural Lifestyle land-use category, the Commission's 3-2 vote in favor of it in October 2022 was somewhat mitigated by the requirement that to be eligible for approval under the new category, any new developments would have to abut one of the county's urban service districts. This requirement would at least contain the spread of development west in the county, and limit the scope and potential impact of this land-use change on the county's environment and public services.

Yet a little over a year later, a proposal is on the Commission's agenda to amend the comp plan to allow a Rural Lifestyles development more than a mile outside a district, validating the warnings of opponents that last year's limits would not hold. Considering this regrettable sequence of events, we are not reassured by the limits in the current proposal: the minimum of 3,000 acres, within 6,000 feet of an urban service district. How long will *those* limits last before *they* are expanded, or discarded?

We urge the Commission to reject these amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Owens".

Paul Owens
President

From: [Wesley Reins](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch Project
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 5:53:24 PM



Dear Commissioners:

As voting residents of Martin County, please add us to the list of those opposing the changes to the Comprehensive Plan that would increase the amount of land designated for Rural Lifestyle.

When the Rural Lifestyle was being debated as a new FLUM category we opposed it. I wrote to the Commissioners expressing concern over the future ramifications of approving Rural Lifestyle.

I am not going to go through the entire discussion again, but will reiterate the last paragraph of my previous letter:

“The last problem with this is that developers will be attracted and begin to put proposals out for different developments. Exceptions will be proposed. Zoning changes will be requested and this long process will wear down public resolve. People can keep on top of these things only for so long. Then.....we are sleeping with the camel.”

That last paragraph is now a reality. Please kill this proposed change now. We realize we are essentially one voice, but many others feel as we do, and we all vote.

Wes and Margie Reins
Hobe Sound, FL

Sent from my iPad

From: ron@jensenchamber.com
To: [Harold Jenkins](#); [Colleen Pachowicz](#)
Subject: Letter of support for The Ranch
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:50:22 PM
Attachments: [Letter of Support - The Ranch.pdf](#)



Attached is a letter of support for **The Ranch**, under consideration (File #24-0192) at the December 5, Martin County Commission meeting.

Ronald E. Rose, President CEO
Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce
Jensen Beach Community Center
1912 NE Jensen Beach Boulevard
Jensen Beach, FL 34957
w: (772) 334-3444
c: (772) 341-6772
Ron@JensenChamber.com
www.JensenChamber.com

From: [Mary Starzinski](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: CPA22-06 and CPA23-12
Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023 12:13:55 PM



Dear Commissioners,

Please reject the Calusa Creek Ranch amendments to our Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. We are stunned and appalled that you would even consider eliminating the requirement that land designated for Rural Lifestyle use be adjacent to an Urban Service Boundary.

The proposed amendment will also allow parcels of 3,000 (v.s. 1000) acres to be designated for Rural Lifestyle use if an urban service boundary is within 6,000 feet. The Calusa Creek Ranch amendments take Rural Lifestyle more than a mile outside the Urban Services District into farmlands, wetlands, marshes and cattle grazing land in western Martin County and will change our Comp Plan and development patterns forever.

You gave us your word that the Rural Lifestyle would be upheld and that projects like this would NOT be permitted. Your decision to vote "NO" is the only decision you can honorably make in lieu of your promises. Please don't disappoint us and destroy the County.

In the interest of the public health and the common good,
Mary E. Starzinski, DO and Kathy M Petteruti, DO

From: [Chip Barney](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Legacy of Conservation at Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 1:37:57 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

My family owned Calusa Creek Ranch in Martin County for more than 20 years with our primary focus being conservation across the nearly 4,000 acres.

We proudly ran a cattle ranch and a tree farm on the site and always kept a commitment to natural conservation. At one point, we received approval for 600 homes on the property. While we ultimately decided not to move forward with that plan for a variety of reasons, we continued to work the land.

About three years ago, we decided it was time to sell the property. We interviewed numerous potential buyers, but we weren't going to sell to just anyone. When we met Ken and Suzanne Bakst, we knew their family vision for private conservation and natural preservation matched ours.

Ken has a proven track record of being a conservationist. He created Friar's Head Golf Club in Riverhead, New York, which is a 400-acre preserve. The property is renowned for its ability to be in harmony with the natural environment. Now, he's looking to bring that mindset and investment to create The Ranch that will feature two golf courses and a low-density plan for homes.

What's important from my perspective is that the site would remain 91% in open space, continue operating a bona fide cattle ranch on more than a third of the land with hundreds of livestock, and preserve more than 660-acres of wetlands while making improvements to them. Plus, the plan eliminates the use of septic tanks and wells, which would benefit the nearby C-44 canal and St. Lucie estuary.

We carefully chose the Bakst family to keep the Barney family's legacy of conservation on this property moving in the right direction. The plan that has been brought forward for The Ranch does this in a thoughtful way that keeps conservation a priority.

Respectfully,

Chip Barney

From: [Nancy Endemann](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Save What's Left!
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 2:04:30 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Please, please, please stop the runaway development! Impossible traffic and negative environmental impact are key reasons. Keep Martin County special, beautiful, and more appealing than the mess we've got to our south and on the west coast. Thank you for your attention. Nancy and Fred Endemann, Stuart FL.
Sent from my iPhone

Dec. 1, 2023

To the Martin County Commission:

As a relatively new resident to the area, it is no doubt that what attracted my family and I to Martin County was its agricultural preservation and protection of wildlife corridor.

I was extremely pleased to hear that The Ranch is conserving 91% open space with more than 1,200-acres of bona fide cattle ranch and wetlands preservation – a refreshing example of the possibilities for private conservation in our community.

I believe that The Ranch will be a wonderful addition to Martin County and will help maintain the rural charm of our community for future generations.

Sincerely,

William Lindsey

From: [John Loughran](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: Comish@martin.fl.us
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 3:43:31 PM



Subject: Support for Agenda Item PH-2 and PH-3

Martin County Board of County Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Calusa Creek text amendment and The Ranch PUD, which is included on the December 5th agenda.

Smart Growth is sensible growth. By fostering a distinctive future land use plan, this project promotes unique open space, incorporates mixed land used, and preserves natural resources.

I am confident that there will be countless opportunities for community leaders and stakeholders to collaborate in unique partnerships, therefore bringing forth public benefit to Martin County.

Respectfully,
John Loughran
8889 SE Compass Island Way, Jupiter FL 33458

From: [r.steven Mahoney](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Comp Plan Amendment
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 1:30:22 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I am concerned that the comp plan amendments at issue would authorize construction of 175 residences, two golf courses, golf course cottages, and other structures on lands 6,000 feet beyond an urban service district for the Calusa Creek Ranch project as a development under the rural lifestyles land-use category. When commissioners narrowly approved creation of that category in October 2022 after months of debate and controversy, they limited eligible developments to land abutting an urban service district. Extending the limit more than a mile would vastly increase the area in the county vulnerable to negative environmental and community impacts from development, including water pollution, congested roads and higher taxes to stretch public services.

Please vote against the amendment.

Sincerely,

Prof R. Stephen Mahoney

Stuart, FL

From: [Anthony Mastroianni](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Paul Schilling](#); cdublin@martin.fl.us
Cc: shaykyla@yahoo.com; trailsidehoa@yahoo.com
Subject: Proposed "Storie" Development and Calusa Creek/The Ranch Golf Community
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:49:09 AM



Good afternoon,

My name is Anthony Mastroianni. I live in Trailside with my wife and two young children; a quaint, quiet, beautiful, old Florida agricultural community. We have cattle, horses and are surrounded by sugar cane, a flower farming operation, South Florida Water Management owned property, County owned property and sizeable cattle operations exist on these aforementioned parcels. We absolutely love the beauty of western Martin County, the sunsets, the nature, wildlife and all that comes with living in a rural/agricultural setting. Myself and my fellow neighbors did not spend hundreds of thousands and or millions of dollars to be surrounded by large Planned Unit Developments, similar to an Abacoa or Alton or even a Jupiter Farms type setting. No, we chose the vast openness of our community, more importantly the vast openness of western Martin County. Florida is ranked number 12 in the US for cattle production, as you all may be aware; Florida was the first state to have the cow and the first state to have the horse. This is our heritage; it is part of what makes our part of the county/state so beautiful and desirable. I own and operate a large cattle ranch, along with other farming operations in St. Lucie County and not a day, week or month goes by that I see more Ranches or Agricultural lands being bought and developed on and it truly is a shame. My point on St. Lucie is, within a 10-mile radius of my ranch there are roughly 80,000 homes in various stages of development. We DO NOT NEED to add to this pipeline and allow another large-scale housing development to be developed in our area, Newfield will provide a good amount of inventory to our local market. Indiantown needs to grow and develop into a great little village for the more affordable homes needed in the local market. We do not need more golf courses on Bridge Road, Pratt Whitney or Kanner Highway. Discovery is not sold out and have not filled their member base, Apogee the same. Both of these locations will provide plenty of opportunity for golfers amazing courses, homes and alternatively plenty of jobs for our residents. In turn a great stimulation to our local economy.

We do not need to be a St. Lucie County or a Palm Beach County, we do not need to flood the market with homes and golf course communities. What has been approved are appreciable additions to our community, tastefully done, they have provided great conservation opportunities, they value our local and state history and preserved both in many ways. The impacts that Storie and Calusa Creek will have on us rural residents are in no way needed and or wanted by the tax payers and shareholders of western Martin County and the Agricultural community. Pratt Whitney and Bridge Roads are already congested with traffic and at times unsafe driving conditions. Not to mention the unsafe and vexatious conditions coming from Pal-Mar directly to our south, gun shots all hours of the day and night, mud trucks and ATV's crossing Pratt Whitney, music, lights and loud motors all hours of the night...

I value property rights and am not one to stand in the way of a property owners' ability to do as they please with what they own. I am also in the real estate development industry and have vast knowledge in this field. The Harmony ranch approval is more fitting for this area of the county and you should not deviate from what has already been approved. I urge you all to stand strong and uphold the values and traditions that makes Martin County what it is. Do not allow this leap frog

development to continue.

Thank you for your time,

Anthony Mastroianni

President

Allied Capital & Development of South Florida

M-Ranch Properties

(c) 561-379-6923

(o) 561-799-0050

Anthony@acdsfl.com

From: [Kate Miller](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: deny amendments to Comp. Plan
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 12:51:47 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

You have been elected to serve the best interests of your constituents. By approving amendments tot the comp. plan you are serving development interests. Do you want to be known as the commissioners who ruined Martin County? Kate Miller 103 River Rd., Hobe Sound, FL 33455. Member of the Jupiter Is. Garden Club and Garden Club of America.

Benjamin Schuemann

Schuemann Farm

Indiantown, FL

Commissioner Stacey Hetherington

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

Re: Proposed amendments to the Rural Lifestyle Use

Ms. Hetherington,

Since you expectantly cast the deciding vote to adopt the very unpopular amendment to the Comprehensive Growth Plan, Rural Lifestyle, last September, it is most likely that you will cast the deciding vote again on December 5, 2023. It is VITAL that the Rural Lifestyle Designation IS NOT EXPANDED!! Do you fully understand the enormous repercussions this Rural Lifestyle Amendment will have on, not only on the environment, but the landscape of rural Martin County FOREVER? Developers are already lining up in droves to submit applications for development in large swaths of rural land in our western communities.

The proposals that Ken Bakst, owner of the Calusa Creek Ranch property is bringing to the table on Tuesday are not allowed under the current rules. The Comprehensive Plan states:

- In order to be eligible for the Rural Lifestyle future land use designation, a minimum of 1.000 contiguous acres located within unincorporated Martin County and outside the Primary Urban Service District are required. To minimize the extension of utility service, a portion of the minimum 1.000 contiguous acres must be adjacent to the Primary Urban Service District, the Secondary Urban Service District or a Freestanding Urban Service District. *Policy 4.13A.18*

Ken's land is NOT even near an Urban Service Boundary, he knew that when he purchased the land. Ken, a New York golf course designer, also wants to build more units per acre allowed under the current law. By the commission voting to approve Ken's demands will be UNETHICAL! I used that word in my letter to the rest of the commissioners last week, UNETHICAL. By voting yes to allow Ken special treatment will send the message to other developers that the Comprehensive Growth Plan is a farce and something that can be changed at will to suit builder's desires. It is not, the Comprehensive Growth Plan must be taken seriously; it was created in 1982 to protect the environment and guide growth and development within Martin County, not have it be a free for all. The commissioners and the state, despite a judge's ruling, approved the Rural Lifestyle Amendment with the above language, NOT 6,000 feet proposed by Ken. LIMIT the Rural Lifestyle Designation!

Benjamin Schuemann

From: [linda smithe](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: PH-2 Calusa Creek and PH-3 The Ranch PUD on the Dec 5 Commission meeting Vote NO!
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:27:41 PM



Dear Commissioners,

Please Vote No on the amendment you are scheduled to consider on Tues. Dec 5.

Why in the world would you loosen the restrictions on the Rural Lifestyle's restrictions.

Per your approved land-use designation developers could only develop tracts 1,000 acres or larger, adjacent to an urban services boundary. That seemed like a way to limit the number of opportunities developers would have to build housing subdivisions in what have historically been agricultural areas in the western part of the county.

We have not had enough time to evaluate this as a strategy. And you are already throwing it out!

If a parcel is at least 3,000 acres, then it could be up to 6,000 feet from an urban services boundary. This amendment would significantly extend the boundaries where development would potentially be allowed under the rural lifestyle rules, to Martin County's detriment!

What back-room deal was conceived to have the PH-3 The Ranch PUD heard the same day?

The developers are lining up to take advantage of this bad Comprehensive Plan Amendment before it is even approved.

This is an obvious example of where the financial benefit of the few will adversely impact the quality of life of the many.

Rural Lifestyle has nothing to do with protecting Martin County's rural lifestyle. I still can't believe you passed that a year ago, despite the loud and persuasive outcry from Martin County residents.

Just stop!

Linda Smithe,
[Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group](#), Executive Committee Chair
destinationloop@gmail.com
(561) 676-0277

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Brandon Tucker](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: "The Ranch" Calusa Creek Development
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 3:28:06 PM
Attachments: [FLA Letter BOCC Martin.pdf](#)

This Email Sent From External Sender

Please find attached letter of support.



December 1st, 2023

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

Sent via email

Dear Members of the Board,

I live in Martin County, and I appreciate how it still has an old Florida feel to it, despite being so close to urban areas. I'm pretty sure most residents here see it the same way.

While development is inevitable, balance is critical to the infrastructure of our state. Preserving what we know and love about Florida, like our vast Wildlife Corridor, is not only important, but is also necessary for all the creatures who live here.

This was never more apparent to me than after I attended the local planning agency meeting on November 16th. On the agenda was talk of a new development related to the Calusa Creek Ranch.

The new owners of the land Ken, and Suzanne Bakst, are no strangers to developing beautiful land. They built the Friar's Head Golf Course in Riverside, New York, which is known to be one of the most breathtaking golf courses in America.

So, when I heard about their plans for the land, to preserve the natural aesthetics of the 4,000 acres, 10 miles west of Hobe Sound, I was intrigued. Martin County has a reputation for its prohibitive outlook on growth, so I was interested to learn more.

From what I can tell, the Bakst's have planned for 91% of the land to be preserved as open space, two-golf courses that blend with natural elements, 175 homes, and the continuing operation of a cattle ranch.

Now when I think of developing our state, this is the kind of approach we should embrace where most of the area stays as it was and, in some cases, will be improved, like with the cleaning of waterways there that has been outlined in the project.

Well-planned and thought-out growth is essential to maintain the historic charm of Florida. The Ranch looks to be the ideal blueprint for our state's future.

-Brandon Tucker/Executive Director, Florida Landowners Association

From: [Betty Zondag](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Calusa Ranch
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 3:26:18 PM



Dear Commissioners,

Please deny the requested amendments to the Comp Plan that the Calusa Ranch is requesting. The whole project does not fit my idea of a Rural Lifestyle Property. Golf Courses, paved roads, groomed yards are not the same as open, undeveloped land dotted with houses every 20 acres. Too many people, pollutants, pesticides. And most importantly, loss of habitat for creatures big and small.

Betty Zondag

From: [Hedy Bressler](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural Lifestyle
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 3:27:44 PM



Interesting commentary in today's Stuart News. I was not opposed to the rural lifestyle amendment as initially approved. It seemed reasonable when the Becker Farm proposal kept the tree farm as open space forever and other areas of green. However, the amendment to be discussed on the 5th seems to start tearing down the premise that the potential areas to be developed are limited and are adjacent to the urban service district boundary. And to read that "open space" can now be golf courses and such seems wrong. I recommend that the rural lifestyle as currently written not be amended to increase the distance from the urban services boundary.

Hedy Bressler
7813 SE Bighorn Dr, Hobe Sound, FL 33455

From: [Robert Ernst](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Cc: [bbruner](#); [eclarke](#); [ccollins](#); [tmcdonald@ci.stuart.fl.us](#); [crich](#); [blake fontenay](#); [lina ruiz](#); [larry reisman](#)
Subject: Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Martin County Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 2:30:07 PM
Attachments: [img-0.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[USBHAT2.pdf](#)
[USBINFO.pdf](#)



Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Martin County Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida

Fellow Martin County Good Government Advocates,

MARTIN COUNTY, WE ARE DIFFERENT

More excellent reasons why we all need to be there, see below:

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Martin County Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida

SAVE USB, URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY - SAVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

According to attached letter below from previous owner of almost 4000 acre Calusa, the new owner who bought three years ago AG20 is a New York golf course developer - **He created Friar's Head Golf Club in Riverhead, New York,**

and now he wants to develop AG20 zoned land outside the sacred USB to develop golf courses and golf mansions on our Martin County Ag lands.

Once these ag lands are developed into golf courses and residences, they will never be ag lands again.

No ag lands, no farmers no food!! Golf balls are not that nutritious and they do not taste good!!

Commissioners, you have no choice, vote no on both comp plan change and Calusa golf courses and golf mansions.

SAVE OUR SACRED USB - SAVE OUR AG LANDS

Please forward this email to friends, neighbors, poas, hoas, condo associations, the world!

NOTE: A rally has been scheduled beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the Administration Center at 2401 SE Monterey Road by residents who object to increasing density and intensity of use of western agricultural and conservation lands.

Thank you/

Florida unique place with tradeoffs, but we'd better pay attention

Because of Florida's unique landscape and diverse environment, growth and development have differed from other states.

Most Florida communities have long fought to balance growth with preserving nature. Florida's free spirit and the love of its natural beauty have kept it a special place to call home.

Sometimes, it is not easy to immerse yourself in Florida life. One makes a certain sacrifice to survive and thrive in Martin County. We have limited culture and access to entertainment. We endure intense weather and annoying critters. Things erode and deteriorate quickly here. Mildew and corrosion are an everyday part of life. Bug bites and sunburn are things you get used to.

Despite these pitfalls, there is a bright side to this lifestyle. We choose to overcome these hazards to earn a place here. It is why people are leery of newcomers who are unfamiliar with our way of life. There is an instinct to protect this delicate wonder because we have learned to understand its fragility over time. It is anguishing to witness the demise of something you love. The concurrent cost of development is bankrupting the environment. The devastating number of trees that have been cut down this year alone should be cause for alarm. Displaced wildlife is having an adverse effect on the entire ecosystem.

Yet, some do not see the problem. They only see progress and betterment. They will condemn and criticize anyone who speaks out about this devastation. It is a travesty that there are sides to this debate. There should be only one thought and one solution: controlled growth and a plan that addresses critical environmental concerns.

There is a necessity for both, and we'd better figure it out sooner than later.

Nick Gulotta, Stuart

Conservation? Sprawl? Calusa Creek comp plan change on county commission agenda

Letters to the Editor

Treasure Coast Newspapers

December 2, 2023

Show up to fight more sprawling growth in Martin County

By Sam Hay, Stuart

Martin County has in place a Comprehensive Growth Management Plan intended to provide protections against over-development. However, for the past several years, our commissioners have consistently voted to chip away at these protections.

Only last year did our commissioners approve the euphemistically named "rural lifestyle" amendment, which opened the floodgates to further urban sprawl and environmental degradation. At its Dec. 5 meeting, the Martin County Commission will consider two more amendments that would further weaken the comp plan.

One of these would remove the requirement that rural lifestyle communities be adjacent to an urban services district, thus allowing such development more than a mile into existing farms and wetlands. The other proposed amendment would approve a development called Calusa Creek Ranch with 175 homes, two golf courses, a dock on the St. Lucie Canal and numerous support facilities over 3,902 acres.

Whatever the developers might say, there is little doubt that the heavy fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides of two golf courses would eventually wash into our already severely threatened waters. Both amendments would inevitably lead to more traffic congestion, natural habitat loss, increased levels of crime and higher taxes.

Does anyone still believe that development pays for itself? Our taxes keep rising year after year, even as development booms.

At this rate, there will be nothing left of Martin County as we have known it for future generations.

I encourage everyone to contact our commissioners to oppose this change (comish@martin.fl.us) and to turn up at the Dec. 5 meeting in Martin County Commission chambers to voice your opposition.

Stuart Golf course community would focus on conservation, cattle

By Chip Barney, Palm Beach Gardens

My family owned Calusa Creek Ranch in Martin County for more than 20 years with our primary focus being conservation across the nearly 4,000 acres. We proudly ran a cattle ranch and a tree farm on the site and always kept a commitment to natural conservation.

At one point, we received approval for 600 homes on the property. While we ultimately decided not to move forward with that plan for a variety of reasons, we continued to work the land.

About three years ago, we decided it was time to sell the property. We interviewed numerous potential buyers, but we weren't going to sell to just anyone. When we met Ken and Suzanne Bakst, we knew their family vision for private conservation and natural preservation matched ours. Ken has a proven track record of being a conservationist. **He created Friar's Head Golf Club in Riverhead, New York,** which is a 400-acre preserve. The property is renowned for its ability to be in harmony with the natural environment.

Now, he's looking to bring that mindset and investment to create The Ranch that will feature two golf courses and a low-density plan for homes. What's important from my perspective is that the site would remain 91% in open space, continue operating a bona fide cattle ranch on more than a third of the land with hundreds of livestock, and preserve more than 660 acres of wetlands while making improvements to them. Plus, the plan eliminates the use of septic tanks and wells, which would benefit the nearby C44 Canal and St. Lucie estuary.

We carefully chose the Bakst family to keep the Barney family's legacy of conservation on this property moving in the right direction. The plan that has been brought forward for The Ranch does this in a thoughtful way that keeps conservation a priority.

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/opinion/readers/2023/12/02/ex-owner-stuart-martin-county-ranch-sold-to-help-conserve-it-critics-worried-urbal-sprawl-letters/71752919007/>

From: "Robert Ernst" <rce@dslextreme.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 8:10:23 PM

Subject: Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Martin County Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida

Fellow Martin County Concerned Residents,

We need to be there, You need to be there!!!!

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Martin County Administration Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida

Our beloved MARTIN COUNTY WE ARE DIFFERENT is under attack.

Out of 67 counties in Florida, Martin County stood out because of the sacred USB, Urban Service Boundary, which protected the Agriculture 1 unit per 20 acre designation between the

USB all the way to Lake Okeechobee.

The so called Rural Life Style designation, which should have never been approved, is now doing exactly what we all lobbied against it for, allowing urban type development where it was never permitted before, on the Agricultural Lands. Once developed these Agriculture lands are gone forever, never to be Ag again.

The message is clear and simple - **DO NOT APPROVE ANYMORE so called Rural Lifestyle developments, PERIOD, SAVE THE SACRED USB!**

If you do not care about your quality of life, TRAFFIC - TAXES - AG LANDS OFF KANNER AND PRATT AND WHITNEY ALL THE WAY TO LAKE OKEECHOBEE - WATER QUALITY - OPEN SPACE - MARTIN COUNTY WE ARE DIFFERENT ETC, you need not be there, but on the other hand if you do care and do not want our sacred Martin County to be like Miami Dade County/Ft Lauderdale Broward County/West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County and Port St. Lucie/St Lucie County, **THEN YOU NEED TO BE THERE AND LET THE MARTIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS** know that they must vote to turn down the Rural Lifestyle development.

Please attend, it starts at 9:00 a.m., we all need to be there to protect Martin County We Are Different!!

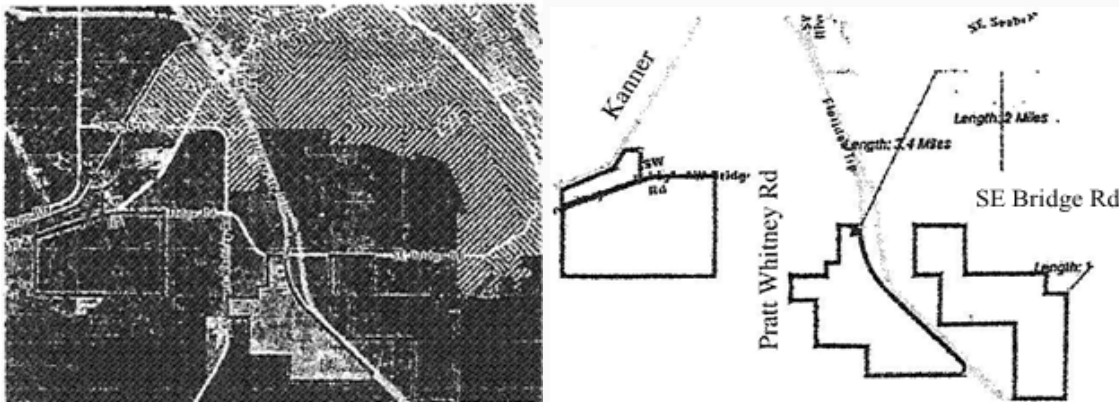
Thank you for caring and protecting our Quality of Life.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL/PASS ON THIS INFORMATION TO FRIENDS/NEIGHBORS/POA/HOA/CONDO ASSOCIATION,THE WORLD! Ask them all to please be there. Thank you.
ROSS@

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Enough Traffic - Enough Golf Courses - Enough Pollution - Enough Taxes

Tell Martin County Commissioners to reject the Calusa Creek Ranch amendments to our Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. On **December 5, 2023**, Commissioners will vote on proposed Amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12 which would revise the Rural Lifestyle land use designation to expand development and suburbanize more agricultural land in western Martin County. Attend the meeting at the Administration Center, **2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida, at 9:00 a.m.** to speak out for the Martin County Difference.



Commissioners are being asked to eliminate the requirement that land designated for Rural

Lifestyle Use be adjacent to an Urban Services District, allowing parcels of at least 3,000 acres to be designated for Rural Lifestyle use if an urban services boundary is within 6,000 feet.

Calusa Creek Ranch wants to build 175 homes, 24 golf cottages, employee dormitories, two golf courses, a multi-slip boat docking facility, and other amenities on 3,902 acres off SW Bridge Road and SW Kanner Highway bordering the St. Lucie Canal.

The Calusa Creek Ranch amendments take Rural Lifestyle more than a mile outside the Urban Services District into farmlands, wetlands, marshes and cattle grazing land in western Martin County and will change our Comp Plan and development patterns forever. **The project is not allowed under current rules. Calusa Creek Ranch wants Commissioners to change the rules for this development and others that follow.**

The cost to Martin County residents is enormous.

Ask anyone who tells you that growth pays for itself to explain why our taxes are increasing year after year as development booms.

Ask anyone who loves Martin County to explain how important it is to preserve water quality, wildlife habitat, native vegetation, free-flowing roadways, our urban boundaries and community character that make Martin County different from counties to our north and south.

Tell Commissioners that Enough is Enough! Reject the Calusa Creek Ranch Comp Plan Amendments.

Say "NO" to expanding Rural Lifestyle. Say "YES" to the Martin County Difference.

COMMISSIONERS • PLEASE VOTE FOR OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

ONCE AGRICULTURE LANDS ARE DEVELOPED THEY ARE GONE FOREVER

OUR MARTIN COUNTY USB/URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY IS SACRED - DO NOT DESTROY IT - BREAKING THE USB IS A STEP CLOSER TO DADE/BROWARD/PALM BEACH/PORT ST

LUCIE WE ALL NEED TO BE THERE - WE ALL NEED TO PROTECT OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

PLEASE COPY THIS HANDOUT - POST AROUND TOWN - HAND OUT

GIVE TO ANYONE -

URGE THEM TO ATTEND/SPEAK

Opinion

'Rural lifestyle' land-use rules already targeted for expansion, which isn't a good sign

By Blake Fontenay

Treasure Coast Newspapers

November 30, 2023

Among his many talents as an author, George Orwell was great at coming up with ironic euphemisms that, in the dystopian worlds in which his stories were set, meant pretty much the exact opposite of what you would expect. In his classic novel, "1984," for example, writings and photographs are fed into "the memory hole" — a large incinerator — so they'll be forgotten rather than remembered. The book's "Ministry of Truth" is actually dedicated to the spreading of untruths. And so on and so on.

I bring this up because the phrase "rural lifestyle" is starting to take on an Orwellian meaning in Martin County. And if the current trajectory doesn't change soon, I fear something similar could happen in the other counties along the Treasure Coast.

Redefining the meaning of 'rural'

On Dec. 5, the Martin County Commission is scheduled to consider granting preliminary approval to an amendment to its "rural lifestyle" land-use category. It's been only a little more than a year since the commission adopted the original version, despite significant public opposition and a legal challenge ultimately resolved in the county's favor by the state's Administration Commission.

The rural lifestyle land-use designation allows more intense development outside of the county's designated urban services areas, provided certain criteria are met. As originally adopted, the land-use designation could only be applied to tracts 1,000 acres or larger, adjacent to an urban services boundary. That seemed like a way to limit the number of opportunities developers would have to build housing subdivisions in what have historically been agricultural areas in the western part of the county.

Well, the amendment commissioners are scheduled to consider at their next meeting would loosen those restrictions: If a parcel is at least 3,000 acres, then it could be up to 6,000 feet from an urban services boundary. For perspective, there are 5,280 feet in a mile. So this amendment would significantly extend the boundaries where development would potentially be allowed under the rural lifestyle rules.

Critics' fears are coming true

Here's a shocker: On the same agenda, there's a request from a developer to build a golf course community near where Kanner Highway and Bridge Road intersect. This project would cover 3,902 acres. And yes, it happens to be within 6,000 feet of the urban services boundary.

All the people who argued the initial land-use change was going to set a precedent that would lead to more and more incursions into Martin County's agricultural lands must

feel like Nostradamus now.

It's not surprising developers avoided trying to get property rezoned for rural lifestyle while the lawsuit challenging the commission's initial decision was pending. But this is at least the second rural lifestyle project proposed since the lawsuit was resolved. And, less than 15 months after the regulations were adopted, there's already this movement to make them less restrictive so more farmland will be "in play" for real estate speculators.

It's probably not a great object lesson for St. Lucie County, where officials are considering changes to the "towns, villages and countryside" element of their comprehensive plan, which could lead to less-restrictive zoning in western agricultural areas. Nor for Indian River County, where a series of meetings are underway to help determine the future of growth and development there.

The goalposts keep moving

Sticking with my Orwell analogies, it's a bit like how in "Animal Farm," the pigs kept changing the rules about how the farm was run until their hold on power was firmly secured.

Oh, but don't those rural landowners have property rights? Of course they do. They have rights to build whatever was allowed by the zoning on their property at the time they purchased it. They don't have the unfettered right — or at least they shouldn't — to build whatever type of development suits their interests at the moment, without regard to what constitutes good public policy.

On that score, the staff's report on the development project up for consideration Dec. 5 seems pretty clear: "Changing the land use to Rural Lifestyle does not appear to fulfill a public service need," it says on Page 8.

Ken Bakst, the property owner, said the project will add money to the tax base, preserve open space and even provide treatment for some of the dirty water flowing through the C-44 Canal. All that may be true, but the amendment will still open the proverbial barn door for future developments that may not be as beneficial.

Bakst said he hopes to build 175 homes (not the 195 called for in the plans sent to commissioners), which is actually less than the current agricultural zoning would allow. However, the rural lifestyle designation allows the houses to be clustered much closer together than the agricultural zoning would. By clustering them together, that leaves more room for golf courses, as well as guest houses, so-called "golf cottages" and course employee dormitories.

One of the selling points of rural lifestyle was supposed to be a provision that requires a significant portion of the property to be designated as "open space." But this definition of open space allows golf courses, polo grounds or other recreational facilities to be built there. Not facilities that are necessarily open to the public, just the people who live there.

Is it really correct to say developers are "sacrificing" land for open space if what they're really doing is using it for amenities that will drive up profits on the land where they do build? I would say no.

Rules preserving agricultural land slipping away

Commissioners are likely to mention that whatever action they take on Dec. 5 won't be final, which is true. If they grant preliminary approval to the amendment, it will have to be forwarded to various state and local government agencies for review because it's a comprehensive plan change. Theoretically, commissioners could vote the change down after the other agencies have completed their review processes, but we all know that's not likely to happen.

After that amendment is ratified, it will just be a matter of time before another amendment is proposed, seeking to further weaken the rules in order to cater to some developers' specific wishes. And so on and so on, until the pigs are running the farm.

This column reflects the opinion of Blake Fontenay. Contact him via email at blake.fontenay@tcpalm.com or at 772-232-5424.

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/opinion/columnists/blake-fontenay/2023/11/30/developers-are-already-asking-to-expand-a-controversial-land-use-rule/71722001007/>

From: [Geraldine Genco](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural Lifestyle FLUM 12/5/24 Agenda items
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 4:52:26 PM



Ditto to the well stated article below. Its not just about development or the RLS designation, but about what will you the commissioner's protect and preserve in our County? We've been waiting..

Sent from GG's iPhone

Geraldine Genco Dube
District 3.

Conservation? Sprawl? Calusa Creek comp plan change on county commission agenda

Letters to the Editor
Treasure Coast Newspapers
December 2, 2023

Show up to fight more sprawling growth in Martin County

By Sam Hay, Stuart

Martin County has in place a Comprehensive Growth Management Plan intended to provide protections against over-development. However, for the past several years, our commissioners have consistently voted to chip away at these protections.

Only last year did our commissioners approve the euphemistically named "rural lifestyle" amendment, which opened the floodgates to further urban sprawl and environmental degradation. At its Dec. 5 meeting, the Martin County Commission will consider two more amendments that would further weaken the comp plan.

One of these would remove the requirement that rural lifestyle communities be adjacent to an urban services district, thus allowing such development more than a mile into existing farms and wetlands. The other proposed amendment would approve a development called Calusa Creek Ranch with 175 homes, two golf courses, a dock on the St. Lucie Canal and numerous support facilities over 3,902 acres.

Whatever the developers might say, there is little doubt that the heavy fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides of two golf courses would eventually wash into our already severely threatened waters. Both amendments would inevitably lead to more traffic congestion, natural habitat loss, increased levels of crime and higher

taxes.

Does anyone still believe that development pays for itself? Our taxes keep rising year after year, even as development booms.

At this rate, there will be nothing left of Martin County as we have known it for future generations.

I encourage everyone to contact our commissioners to oppose this change (comish@martin.fl.us) and to turn up at the Dec. 5 meeting in Martin County Commission chambers to voice your opposition.

From: [Jimmy Hodges](#)
To: [Commissioners](#)
Subject: Fwd: Calusa Ranch Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 11:46:56 AM

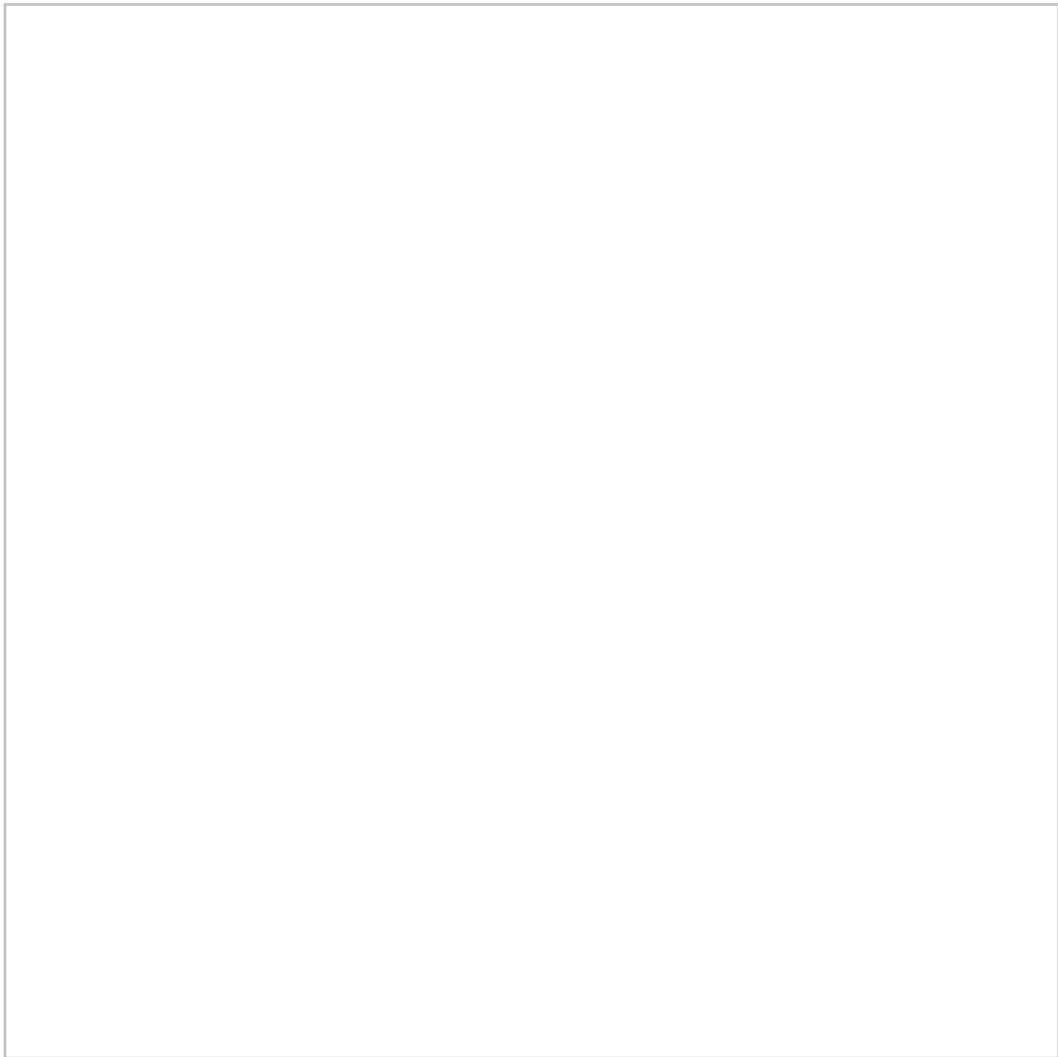


Please don't change our Comp Plan!!!
We don't want to be like Dade and Broward Counties south of us!!!
Than you for your consideration!
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: The Guardians of Martin County <Theguardiansofmartincounty@gmail.com>
Date: December 1, 2023 at 12:17:41 PM EST
To: jghod@bellsouth.net
Subject: Calusa Ranch Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Reply-To: Theguardiansofmartincounty@gmail.com

[View this email in your browser](#)



The Guardians of Martin County are aware that the public hearing on December 5th regarding the Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Amendments is a Transmittal Hearing, and that the FL Dept. of Economic Opportunity and other state agencies will be given time to review and comment on the project before it comes back to the County for a potential Adoption Hearing. Questions that we have about the project that we hope you will share with the commissioners, include:

The Review Process

1. Why is there a perceived rush to get the project approved, and what considerations have been made regarding the timing in relation to public awareness and engagement?
2. Can the Commissioners elaborate on the decision-making process and criteria used to determine that the project does not constitute urban sprawl?

Water and Environmental Impact:

3. Without requiring water quality monitoring, how can the public be assured that

converting low-impact cattle rangeland to a development with homes, golf courses, cottages, and support facilities will not further degrade the quality of our surface waters?

4. How will the enhanced nutrient-reducing septic systems be implemented, and what guarantees are there for their effectiveness?

5. What measures are in place to mitigate potential environmental consequences of the development, especially given the lack of municipal water and wastewater services?

6. Regardless of how storm water and leachate from on-site water treatment systems are managed, isn't it likely that pharmaceuticals, forever chemicals (PFAS and PFOS), and chemicals related to the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers will make their way off-site and/or into our surficial aquifer?

Infrastructure and Services:

7. Without having details for the multi-slip docking facility, it is impossible to determine the extent to which the project is consistent (or not) with the County's Manatee Protection Plan, and its associated Boat Facility Siting Plan, and how that element of the project aligns with other environmental conservation efforts.

8. What considerations have been made for traffic management and public services (e.g., emergency response), considering the extension of development beyond the Urban Service District?

Community Impact:

9. What assessments have been made regarding the potential increase in traffic on Kanner Highway and its impact on the community?

10. Are there plans to address the potential strain on local resources and services due to the introduction of new residential and commercial elements outside the Urban Service District?

Conservation and Open Lands:

11. We believe that the requirement for a conservation easement or agricultural easement (with a third party easement holder) was a valuable addition to the off-site component of Rural Lifestyle projects that exceed a density of 1 unit/20 acres. As described in the Guardians Position Paper on Golf Courses proposed outside the Urban Service Districts (which was transmitted as an attachment to our comments for the LPA mtg. at which the Calusa Ranch project was considered), we urge the County to require a conservation easement or agricultural easement that will apply to the undeveloped portions of the Calusa Ranch property that will not be protected by a PAMP. Additionally, we are interested in understanding how the proposed development aligns with other components of the existing Rural Lifestyle Regulations and the character of the surrounding area, particularly when it abuts Pal-Mar's "Chimney" to the west.

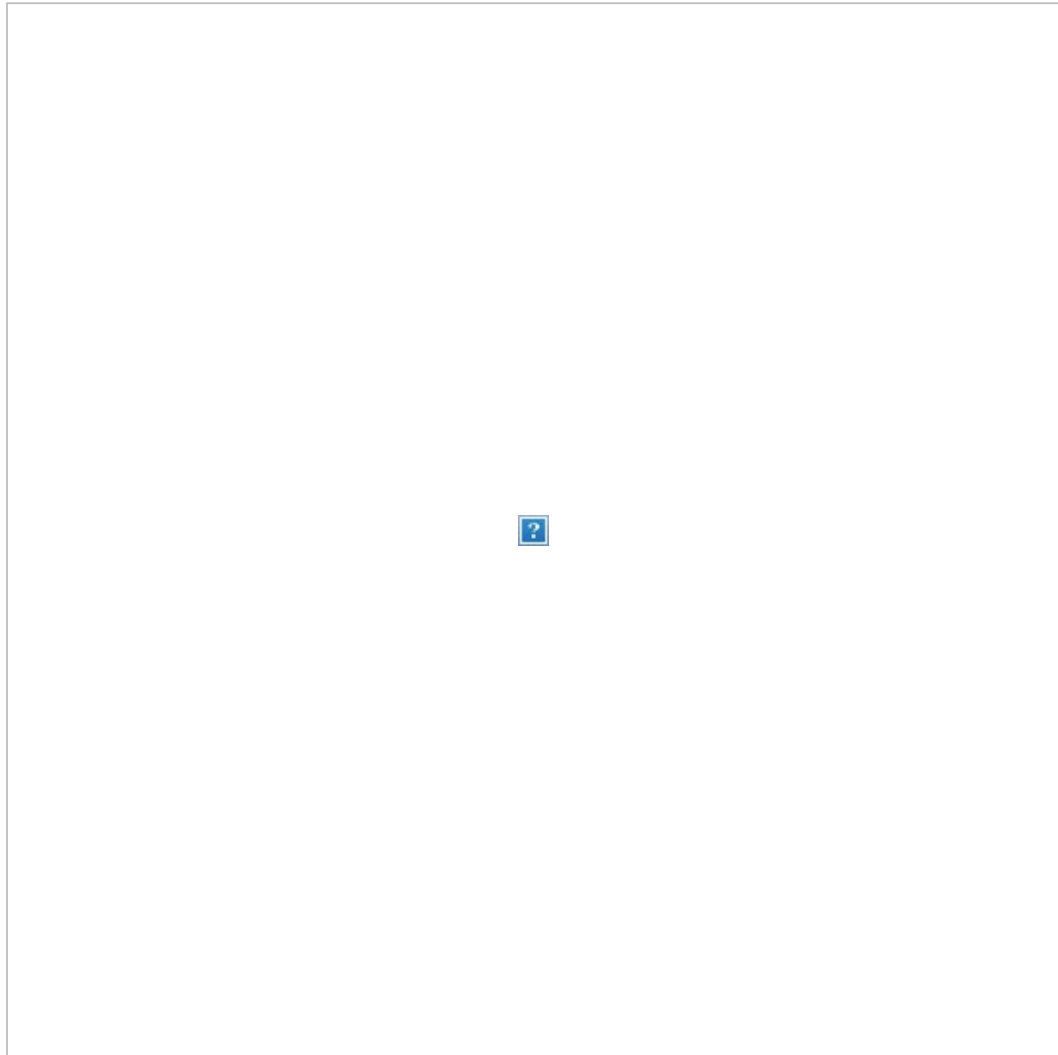
12. How will the development impact open lands that would otherwise not be protected, and what efforts are being made to ensure conservation?

13. We supported the proposal to allocate a percentage of new tax revenues that will be generated by Rural Lifestyle projects for the purposes of acquiring environmentally

sensitive or strategically valuable properties. Please consider adding that provision to the Calusa Ranch project as a means of mitigating the conversion of rangelands to housing, golf courses and other lands uses of comparably lower-value open space.

Please join the Guardians, 1,000 Friends of Florida, and others in urging county commissioners to either deny the requested amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, or continue the transmittal hearing to a later date to give the applicant and the community the opportunity to discuss refinements that would address concerns about water quality, economic issues, wildlife corridors and land conservation.

Please attend the County Commission meeting on Dec 5th at 2401 SE Monterey Rd – rally beginning at 8:15, public comment soon after the meeting starts at 9 AM. If you can't attend in person, you can email all the commissioners at: comish@martin.fl.us

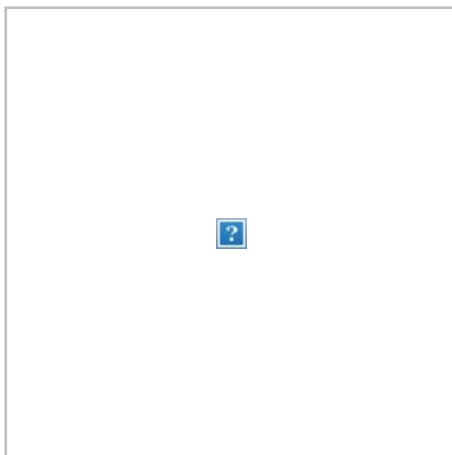


[Source: Staff Report for Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Text Amendment.](#)

6,000 foot new extension (swirled area) to the USD for contiguous development under proposed RLZ amendment, as well as the Calusa Ranch.

Please share this message with your friends and neighbors!

Live Responsibly, Protect Our Future.



Share



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From: [Mary Win OBrien](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#)
Subject: Rural lifestyle amendments
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 8:48:53 AM



You don't need to approve this. We don't even have experience with one of these massive developments let alone three. Yes property owners can sell and buyers can develop that land consistent with its designation at the time of sale. They do not have an automatic right to a new more extensive development.

Now it is a Mike from USB next it will be another mile and we will have dozens of private golf courses and no room for the natural environment that protects us and wildlife some less of water, open space (a golf course is nit open space despite you saying so) This type of development has external costs that developer does not pay for either initially or long term. Water, sewer, fire and emergency service, traffic, traffic control and just general wellbeing of the community.

You should listen to Jim Moir and his facts and not Tom Campenni and his beliefs. Please do not make the wrong decision for Martin County. Wait to see the impact of the first project and all the other development on Kanner Highway before all we have left as natural areas are man made water treatment areas.

Mary-Win O'Brien
2600 SE Ocean Blvd W-1
Stuart,FL,34996
772-485-9140

-

From: [Barbara Schmucker](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Amendment to the Rural Lifestyle Plan and FLUM
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 3:05:00 PM



Commissioners:

We are AGAINST the new text Amendment to the Rural Lifestyle Plan that will be voted on, Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

We are also definitely AGAINST the Land Use Map project that includes plans to expand the Calusa Creek Ranch.

You have voted for EXPANSION again and again against concerned residents of Martin County constantly going to Commissioner meetings, attending rallies and expressing their desire to maintain Martin County with conservative development plans.

STOP the over development of farm land and our rural conservation preserves.

Concerned Residents,

Barbara Gingras-Schmucker

John R. McArdle Jr.

From: [Chris](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural voting
Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023 12:55:22 PM



Martin County Commissioners

I appreciate the time and effort you spend on this Commission.

However, I do hope you keep in mind the original purpose and definitions of Rural Life style before issuing another amendment.

While population growth is a given, I think you might take a step back and ask yourselves, “what is our 5 and 10 year plan” for Martin County? After you have done this, let the community know and comment.

Doing this may alleviate the need for all the annual “redefinitions” of rural.

Thank you for considering my thoughts

Chris Wiedenmayer
6322 SE Morning Dove Way
Hobe Sound, FL 33455

From: [Roy Speiser](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#)
Cc: [Stacey McKindles](#)
Subject: Ammendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12- From Tres Belle BOD
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 4:08:59 PM



Board of Directors
459 SE Tres Belle Circle, Stuart, FL 34997
bod@tresbellehoa.com
772-320-9617

From: Tres Belle Board of Directors
Re: Amendments to Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Dear Commissioner Ciampi,

The Tres Belle Board of Directors is strongly opposed to revising the Rural Lifestyle Land use designation that will expand residential development into agricultural land outside the Urban Services District.

In the past 4-5 years there has been a rapid increase in approval of high-density residential developments on Cove Road and surrounding areas in Martin County. This has resulted in a significant increase in traffic congestion along Cove Road to the point where it is almost impossible and dangerous to exit our community to turn left towards Kanner Highway during peak hours.

Our residents are deeply concerned that unrestricted growth of high density residential and commercial developments will further increase traffic congestion, air pollution, and have long term negative health impacts. These developments have clear cut most of the trees, displacing wildlife and causing the loss of their natural habitats. It has ruined the beauty of our bucolic environment that will never be restored.

Opening thousands of agricultural acres to residential and commercial development will require new roads, generate tons of sewerage and consume millions of gallons of water. Also, covering the ground with homes and roads reduces the recharge

of our aquifers that will inevitably deplete them causing substantial water shortages.

Therefore, the Tres Belle Board of Directors on behalf of our community urge all the Martin County commissions to vote No to amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12.

Respectfully,

Dr. Roy M. Speiser

PRESIDENT, TRES BELLE BOD

From: [Roy Speiser](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Cc: [Colleen Pachowicz](#)
Subject: Ammendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12- From Tres Belle BOD
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 4:03:36 PM



Board of Directors
459 SE Tres Belle Circle, Stuart, FL 34997
bod@tresbellehoa.com
772-320-9617

From: Tres Belle Board of Directors
Re: Amendments to Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Dear Commissioner Jenkins,

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amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12.

Respectfully,

Dr. Roy M. Speiser

PRESIDENT, TRES BELLE BOD

From: [Roy Speiser](#)
To: dssmith@martin.fl.us
Cc: [Kathleen Boden](#)
Subject: Ammendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12- From Tres Belle BOD
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 3:57:10 PM



Board of Directors
459 SE Tres Belle Circle, Stuart, FL 34997
bod@tresbellehoa.com
772-320-9617

From: Tres Belle Board of Directors
Re: Amendments to Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Dear Commissioner Smith,

The Tres Belle Board of Directors is strongly opposed to revising the Rural Lifestyle Land use designation that will expand residential development into agricultural land outside the Urban Services District.

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Therefore, the Tres Belle Board of Directors on behalf of our community urge all the Martin County commissions to vote No to amendments CPA22-06 and CPA23-12.

Respectfully,

Dr. Roy M. Speiser

PRESIDENT, TRES BELLE BOD

From: [Jo baxter](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Rural lifestyle expansion
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:31:15 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I am opposed to any further expansion of the rural lifestyle zoning. I see our county growing in ways that will strain our resources and will cost dearly to create infrastructure to support more people.

What you should be doing is looking for ways to incentivize development of affordable housing, which is sadly lacking

Please don't approve the expansion of rural lifestyle zoning.

Thank you for your consideration..

Jo Baxter
5018 SW Anhinga Ave, Palm City, FL 34990

From: [LINDA BOOTHBY](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Subject: Do NOT expand Rural Lifestyle or amend Martin County Comp Plan
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:12:53 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Rural Lifestyle is degrading Martin County. Do not make any more disastrous changes to the Martin County Comp Plan.

Linda Boothby
7 Harmony Lane, Hobe Sound 33455
Member, Jupiter Island Garden Club

From: [Christopher Burkhardt](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 5:21:49 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I grew up either working in my family's construction business, or hunting and fishing, often in Martin County. To this day, I still guide on Martin County's woods and waters, and I deeply appreciate how careful the county has been about growth. I grew up in Royal Palm Beach, and would hate to see western Martin County make the same horrendous mistakes that Palm Beach County allowed in terms of sprawling development. Many of the places I hunted and fished happily as a kid are now concrete and asphalt and inhabited by people that have no connection to what truly makes Florida special. But as someone who understands project design and management, I assure you that profitable projects that protect the landscape are possible and desirable.

The Calusa Creek Ranch project very much appears to be one such marriage of old Florida know-how and considerate planning – both for fish and wildlife and for the residents of Martin County. I urge you to use your highest and best judgement as you evaluate this project and others that will inevitably follow. This project looks good for everyone.

Sincerely,

Capt. Chris Burkhardt

From: [Robert Ernst](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: AG LANDS OF MARTIN COUNTY - USB - KAI KAI FARM
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 3:52:27 AM



AG LANDS OF MARTIN COUNTY - USB - KAI KAI FARM

Greetings Martin County Commissioners,
Greetings Commissioners Ciampi, Heard, Hetherington, Jenkins and Smith,

I had an opportunity to visit the Saturday Farmers Market at Kai Kai Farm, Kanner Hwy, on Saturday.

<https://www.kaikaifarm.com/>

I was very impressed at what a very impressive farming operation this is. At the Farmers Market were other thriving farmers from Martin County selling their products.

This shows farming is alive and well in Martin County and must be protected, the sacred USB must be protected and the Ag lands must be protected.

Once Ag lands are converted to golf courses, homes, non Ag use, the Ag lands are gone forever, they will never be thriving Ag lands again.

Please, save the sacred USB and save the all important Ag lands.

Thank you,

Bob and Margot Ernst

From: [Carol Ann](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Subject: Comments for Dec. 5 BCC meeting
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:31:47 PM
Attachments: [Dec. 5 BCC meeting comments.docx](#)



Commissioner Jenkins

I am attaching my comments for the Dec. 5 BCC meeting.

Commissioner,

PH-2 Agenda Item 24-0317 (CPA) 22-06 Please do not pass

I don't want expansion of the Rural Lifestyle to be done. We don't need to change the text of the Rural Lifestyle to allow 3,000 acres allowed to be 6,000 ft from a Principal Urban Service Boundary or Freestanding Urban Service Boundary.

Stop trying to overdevelop our agriculture and open lands. The people have spoken numerous times that they are opposed to this.

The owners knew the type of land they were buying when they did. If they need to find new crops or do environmentally sound cattle raising, which is possible, then they should do that. Perhaps either grants or a county program to help them changeover would be beneficial.

We need to stop trying to go outside the USBs and keep the Comp Plan in tact as much as possible. The inside area isn't filled up yet but it's fast becoming that way. We aren't supposed to go outside the USB until it is.

PH-3 Agenda I 24-0318 (CPA) 23-12) Please do not pass this.

The meeting packet says the 3,902.64 acres will change from Agriculture to Rural Lifestyle. Up to 20 units per acres can result in multiple structures. One county report states that it's possible for 195 single family homes to be built on 3,902.64 acres.

It is outside the USB. The county report states that Martin County Utilities will have to evaluate if they can serve the area and a field test is currently being done. The developer may have to do well sites, transmission and treatment plant components. We don't need every future 3,000 acres within 6,000 feet of the USB to be building such components. In past discussions, I have heard they were often not good quality. We need less septic tanks too.

Another report states traffic is not an issue. Being close to Kanner Hwy. and Bridge Rd does make a huge potential for more traffic issues. We already have mega traffic issues in Martin County now. We will need to increase Bridge Rd to a four lane at the county expense in the future with Atlantic Fields and Three Rivers Golf course already there. No need for Calusa Ranch to be near there too.

In my opinion the land owners are being tantalized by developers of huge mega mansions, golf courses, golf cottages and more. The developers seem to think they can sell for big prices so they can pay the land owners large amounts of money and make a big profit for themselves.

In the past some county commissioners, when considering Atlantic Fields to be allowed, said they expected to get mega taxes from these mega mansion owners. They said the county would have few expenses. Hartman on the LPA made the same statement about gaining taxes from the Calusa Ranch development. There's no guarantee on taxes. There will be county expenses. Road expansion. These new developments will use the Sheriff, fire and rescue, ambulance and schools to name some. The county could easily be forced to pay for the expansion of these services.

The environment is a major concern. Storm water runoff and more pollution from fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides into ground water and waterways is possible. The 70% open spaces that the developer of Calusa Ranch touts applies to golf courses and polo fields. It's not just open land with trees, plants and habitat for wildlife.

Carol Ann Leonard, Stuart

Patricia Higginbotham

From: Carol Ann <bonbinifromcal@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:26 PM
To: Stacey Hetherington
Subject: Dec. 5 BCC meeting comments
Attachments: Dec. 5 BCC meeting comments.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

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Commissioner Hetherington,
I am attaching my comments. I hope as my representative you will not pass the two.
Thank you
Carol Ann Leonard
Stuart

Commissioner,

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The environment is a major concern. Storm water runoff and more pollution from fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides into ground water and waterways is possible. The 70% open spaces that the developer of Calusa Ranch touts applies to golf courses and polo fields. It's not just open land with trees, plants and habitat for wildlife.

Carol Ann Leonard, Stuart

From: [Tom D'Alessandro](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:48:58 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I live in Tequesta, am a 3rd generation landscape owner, and I own the Pontiki party boat cruise vessels. I am also a third-generation Floridian who grew up hunting and fishing in South Florida. Throughout my career, I've anguished over big development done with a minimum of concern for the environment. I have also felt resentful when this or that advocacy group opposes a good concept with religious fervor but few or any substantial facts. Martin County has wisely prevented sprawl west of I-95, and I encourage you to prevent the unsustainable growth we've witnessed throughout Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. However, I encourage you to carefully consider projects that protect open spaces and use the best technologies to protect private and public resources from pollution.

The Calusa Creek Ranch Project is the type of concept that's good for Martin County, and many other rural areas facing growth pressure around the state. As you know, they're protecting upland and wetland habitats, paying for water and sewer, and clustering fewer houses than allowed in a small footprint. As someone with extensive golf course management experience, I assure you that a well-designed course, vegetated properly, and managed with "smart" irrigation and fertilization programs will provide wildlife benefits and serve as nutrient "sink."

I encourage you to permit the Calusa Creek Project.

Sincerely,

Tom D'Alessandro

From: [Stephanie Duvall](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: The Ranch Project support
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:25:37 PM



Good evening!

I grew up in Martin County and happily returned to raise my family here about 5 years ago after several years out of state. I love the area and appreciate its commitment to measured development. While I know there is a lot of debate regarding advancement outside the Urban Service District, we should embrace projects like The Ranch that emphasize conservation. This nearly 4,000-acre plot of land is being designed to keep open space and agricultural preservation as a centerpiece. And, having private investment of this magnitude provides certainty for this land for decades to come. It's hard to argue that this exclusive golfing community will bring a lot of financial benefits for the county. But perhaps more important, this project has the potential to be a shining example for how smart development can maintain the area's character as it progresses. That is what can help ensure people want to continue to raise their families here.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Regards,
Stephanie Duvall

5076 SW Hammock Creek Drive
Palm City, FL

Stacey McKindles

From: Marty S <martystern26@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:55 PM
To: Doug Smith; Stacey Hetherington; Harold Jenkins; Sarah Heard; Edward Ciampi; Don Donaldson
Subject: Calusa Creek The Ranch

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
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Dear County Leaders,

My name is Marty Stern and I am a proud Martin County resident. I'm a long-time youth baseball coach in Martin County, and my son was fortunate to represent Martin County in the Little League World Series in Pennsylvania in 2021. I got to know the people from Calusa Creek because they were one of the first families to step up and sponsor local families who couldn't afford to attend the World Series and see our kids play.

Our family loves Martin County, we cherish this community... and that's why we fully support the private preservation plan known as The Ranch. This project is just what our community needs.... it emphasizes open space, agricultural preservation and creates a significant tax base, \$25 million a year for our community.

Please support and approve this The Ranch and Calusa Creek.

Marty Stern/Palm City

From: [Carol Ann](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: Dec. 5 comments
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:25:47 PM
Attachments: [Dec. 5 BCC meeting comments.docx](#)



Commissioner Smith,
I am attaching my comments.

Commissioner,

PH-2 Agenda Item 24-0317 (CPA) 22-06 Please do not pass

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Carol Ann Leonard, Stuart

From: [Rosemary Metal](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Urban Boundary Line
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:08:55 PM



Dear Martin County Board of Commissioners,

I moved to Martin County 6 years ago from Miami Dade County. We were drawn to this area because of the slow growth mandate and beauty of the area. We settled in a community at the north end near the county line boundary. When we lived in Miami we saw the constant pressure to build beyond the boundaries that were set long ago. When we visit the area now we see nothing but new communities being built with zero lot lines and where the Everglades used to be. It is sad to see.

Just north of our home here the Port St. Lucie County new building has exploded in the same way. When I brought my daughter there, who was visiting for the Thanksgiving holiday, and is an urban planner, she said she wanted to cry when she saw what they have done in just a few years.

It would be so sad for Martin County to go down this same route. We have a unique and special place to live and I urge you to be thoughtful about the future of this area and not succumb to the enticement of more tax dollars from overbuilt communities. The residents of Martin County are relying on you to not expand the Urban Boundary line.

Regards,
Rosemary Metal
Resident

From: [Bonnie Mulvaney](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Think of the residents FIRST please
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:52:19 PM



Sad what is s happening to Martin County! Driving on US 1 and Kanner Highway is like driving in Miami! And it seems the more the Commissioners, who are supposed to be looking out for the people Are not here for the residents. And they wonder why people are moving out of Martin County, which was one of the best little secrets.

Bonnie Mulvaney

From: [Fred Ruffino](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Fwd: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:43:59 PM



----- Original Message -----

From: Fred Ruffino <fruff@comcast.net>
To: "comish@martin.fl.us" <comish@martin.fl.us>
Date: 12/04/2023 2:30 PM EST
Subject: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Dear Commissioners:

I came from a little town back many years when it was known as the place to live. Stamford Connecticut. The big money people came in and decided to develop it into high risers, get rid of all the vacant land, chase out mom and pop business and then they left and when asked what they think of Stamford when they drive by on I-95 they said they CLOSE THEIR EYES. Yes it is no longer the nice little town.

I feel this is the same thing happening here in Stuart. I moved here in 2000 and now in 2023 I say "WHAT HAPPENED" A simple example is trying to get out of The Florida Club on Kanner Highway in the morning and it is a disaster, no one knows what the speed limit means. Traffic is so bad that what took me 15 - 20 minutes to get to Ocean Blvd now takes me over a half hour and if the trains come forget it.

What happened and what is happening? When are we going to stop.

Sincerely

Ferdinand Ruffino
851 SW Tamarrow Place
Stuart, Florida 34997
772-463-1136

From: [Jade Smith](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: The Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:56:55 PM



To: Martin County Board of County Commissioners

As a lifetime resident of Martin County, I am all in for new projects that impact Martin County in a positive light and align with our values of preservation and conservation. The Ranch is a project of substance that recognizes the importance of low density, meanwhile, preserving the land's natural habitat.

This state-of-the-art golf course community of nearly 4,000 acres will provide 91% open space, no more than 175 homes, and play a pivotal role in habitat restoration efforts by adopting sustainable practices. This project will also contribute an annual tax revenue of \$25 million to Martin County's annual budget. I believe that The Ranch will boost our economy and bring economic relief to small businesses in our surrounding areas all the while attributing to Martin County's rural character and way of life. I am in support of The Ranch and ask that you consider all the benefits that it will bring to Martin County.

Thank you,

Jade Smith

--

* It is your responsibility to double check the accuracy of items, quantities, times, dates and addresses on all orders **

j a d e smith

www.uneearthedrentals.com

office: 305.987.6946 | jade@uneearthedrentals.com

[facebook](#) | [instagram](#) | [pinterest](#) | [twitter](#) (wait, do people still use twitter?)

U N E A R T H E D RENTALS
Stuart Warehouse
7766 S.W. Ellipse Way
Stuart, FL. 34997

From: [captjimsullivan](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:37:56 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I have been in landscaping and landscape design literally since I was a teenager right here in Martin County. Our company manages golf courses and neighborhoods throughout the region. I am also a licensed charter captain, avid hunter, and a father of a young child. I hope that my family will continue to thrive here in Martin County for generations to come.

Martin County is now in a place in time where we must decide to grow wisely, with a premium placed on preserving open spaces, wildlife habitats, and projects that include water conservation and water quality improvements. I worry about more high-density development that's a drain on everyone including the county's finances. On the other hand, we should be open to projects that entail sound infrastructure planning, and land conservation.

The Calusa Creek Ranch Project, which you will vote on tomorrow, seems like the type of project that checks those boxes. I'm hearing people say that golf courses pollute. As someone who has managed them, I assure you that today's fertilization and irrigation techniques conserve water and keep nutrients on site. They will protect and restore the wetlands, preserve much of the piney flatwoods, and create great lakes for wildlife and fishing. This project seems like the kind of place that would also create good jobs for people serious about proudly maintaining a property the right way. Please remain open to such projects.

Sincerely,

Capt. Jimmy Sullivan
Jensen Beach

From: [captjimsullivan](#)
To: [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:37:01 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I have been in landscaping and landscape design literally since I was a teenager right here in Martin County. Our company manages golf courses and neighborhoods throughout the region. I am also a licensed charter captain, avid hunter, and a father of a young child. I hope that my family will continue to thrive here in Martin County for generations to come.

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Sincerely,

Capt. Jimmy Sullivan

Jensen Beach

From: [captjimsullivan](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:37:18 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I have been in landscaping and landscape design literally since I was a teenager right here in Martin County. Our company manages golf courses and neighborhoods throughout the region. I am also a licensed charter captain, avid hunter, and a father of a young child. I hope that my family will continue to thrive here in Martin County for generations to come.

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Sincerely,

Capt. Jimmy Sullivan
Jensen Beach

From: [captjimsullivan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:36:34 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I have been in landscaping and landscape design literally since I was a teenager right here in Martin County. Our company manages golf courses and neighborhoods throughout the region. I am also a licensed charter captain, avid hunter, and a father of a young child. I hope that my family will continue to thrive here in Martin County for generations to come.

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Sincerely,

Capt. Jimmy Sullivan
Jensen Beach

From: [Jason Sullivan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch Development
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 6:38:59 PM



Commissioners,

After learning more about the Calusa Creek Ranch development, it seems like a no brainer. Sure, there's going to be golf courses and some houses, but having most of the site stay as open space and keeping the cattle on the property is unusual for a development like this. Our area is going to continue to grow. We should support projects like this that make the most of the nature that's there while providing an upgrade to the community. We should secure this now or someday we might regret we didn't when another project comes along.

Jason Sullivan
Palm City

3339 SW Bicopa Pl
Palm City, FL 34990
Cell 561-644-7360

[Email Disclaimer](#)

From: [Alyssia Jaume](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Stop Developments beyond the Urban Services District
Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:14:03 PM



Dear Commissioners,

Please do NOT vote to further degrade our Comp Plan by allowing developments to be established more than a mile from the Urban Services District. Martin County is a safe haven for those seeking a more rural ways of life. Historically, developers have never truly paid for their impact to our roads and environment and it falls on the middle class taxpayers. This amendment will lead to further unchecked growth and deterioration of our quality of life.

Thank you,
Alyssia Jaume

From: [Natalie Jaume](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: NO to degrading Comp Plan
Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:07:17 AM



Dear Commissioners,

Please do Not vote to further degrade our Comp Plan by allowing developments to be established more than a mile from the Urban Services District. Traffic is increasing along with our property taxes. Historically, developers have never truly paid for their impact to our roads and environment, it falls on the backs of us middle class taxpayers. This amendment will lead to further unchecked growth and deterioration of our quality of life.

Best regards,

Natalie Hyatt Jaume
Palm City, FL

To the Martin County Commission:

As a longtime resident and business owner in Martin County, I've experienced firsthand the importance of smart growth when it comes to new developments.

Our county has progressively grown and shaped into being a true gem on the Treasure Coast thanks to developments like The Ranch that take our natural habitat and lands into conservation. This project is subject to attract visitors and individuals who truly appreciate nature and wildlife, while also contributing to our economical structure for future generations to come.

I believe that The Ranch is a beneficial addition to Martin County for residents and businesses alike. I urge you to consider the potential public benefit this will bring to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B Love", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert B Love

To the Martin County Commission,

I'm proud to be a third-generation resident of Martin County. My grandmother grew up in a tiny house that was located on a creek close to where the Basin Seafood Market sits today. My extended family were a few of the first to settle in Palm City near the river. I was raised in western Martin County and grew up hunting, fishing, and working cattle on many of the large tracts of agricultural land throughout the county.

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed development at The Ranch. I understand they will work to protect the natural aspects of the site, especially those tied to agriculture, ensuring more than 1,200 acres will remain a viable cattle operation.

Additionally, The Ranch has proposed nearly 3,500 acres of open space which will include both wetland and upland preservation components. It is no secret that the preservation of native habitat and conservation of ranchlands is detrimental to wildlife sustainability and water quality.

In conclusion, The Ranch is an excellent example of prioritizing agriculture and native habitats when planning a development. I hope you decide to approve this project, which intends on preserving both agricultural and native lands.

Sincerely,

Adam Yingling

From: [Karen Kerwin](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Martin Development
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 11:36:48 PM



Unique Martin County is soon to be gone, but not forgotten.
Karen Kerwin
Stuart, FL 34997

From: [Michael Panella](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Stop Urban Sprawl!!!
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:32:08 AM



Commissioners

Stop Urban Sprawl!!!

The financial gain of a few with the destruction of open and agricultural land is a BIG mistake. We pay for their gain. We lose all the free ecological services and gain air and water pollution, loss of open space, wildlife habitat and a less peaceful environment, etc. And we know our taxes will go up to pay for these mistakes. Stop it now! Think about your and my children , grandchildren and on!

Let people make their second and third homes elsewhere. We need affordable housing, not these destructive developments.

Save Martin. County now!

Claire and Michael Panella

Stuart 772-485-5611

From: [Julian](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Amendments
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:51:30 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I am looking for responses to the following questions regarding the potential Calusa Ranch Comp Plan Amendments.

The Review Process

1. Why is there a perceived rush to get the project approved, and what considerations have been made regarding the timing in relation to public awareness and engagement?
2. Can the Commissioners elaborate on the decision-making process and criteria used to determine that the project does not constitute urban sprawl?

Water and Environmental Impact:

3. Without requiring water quality monitoring, how can the public be assured that converting low-impact cattle rangeland to a development with homes, golf courses, cottages, and support facilities will not further degrade the quality of our surface waters?
4. How will the enhanced nutrient-reducing septic systems be implemented, and what guarantees are there for their effectiveness?
5. What measures are in place to mitigate potential environmental consequences of the development, especially given the lack of municipal water and wastewater services?
6. Regardless of how storm water and leachate from on-site water treatment systems are managed, isn't it likely that pharmaceuticals, forever chemicals (PFAS and PFOS), and chemicals related to the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers will make their way off-site and/or into our surficial aquifer?

Infrastructure and Services:

7. Without having details for the multi-slip docking facility, it is impossible to determine the extent to which the project is consistent (or not) with the County's Manatee Protection Plan, and it's associated Boat Facility Siting Plan, and how that element of the project aligns with other environmental conservation efforts.
8. What considerations have been made for traffic management and public services (e.g., emergency response), considering the extension of development beyond the Urban Service District?

Community Impact:

9. What assessments have been made regarding the potential increase in traffic on Kanner Highway and its impact on the community?
10. Are there plans to address the potential strain on local resources and services due to the introduction of new residential and commercial elements outside the Urban Service District?

Conservation and Open Lands:

11. We believe that the requirement for a conservation easement or agricultural easement (with a third party easement holder) was a valuable addition to the off-site component of Rural Lifestyle projects that exceed a density of 1 unit/20 acres. As described in the Guardians Position Paper on Golf Courses proposed outside the Urban Service Districts (which was transmitted as an attachment to our comments for the LPA mtg. at which the Calusa Ranch project was considered), we urge the County to require a conservation easement or agricultural easement that will apply to the undeveloped portions of the Calusa Ranch property that will not be protected by a PAMP. Additionally, we are interested in understanding how the proposed development aligns with other components of the existing Rural Lifestyle Regulations and the character of the surrounding area, particularly when it abuts Pal-Mar's "Chimney" to the west.

12. How will the development impact open lands that would otherwise not be protected, and what efforts are being made to ensure conservation?

13. We supported the proposal to allocate a percentage of new tax revenues that will be generated by Rural Lifestyle projects for the purposes of acquiring environmentally sensitive or strategically valuable properties. Please consider adding that provision to the Calusa Ranch project as a means of mitigating the conversion of rangelands to housing, golf courses and other lands uses of comparably lower-value open space.

Thank you,
Julian DiGialleonardo

From: [Robert wehner](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Martin commerce park in palm city.
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:10:44 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Good evening,

As a resident of Stuart west and long time Martin county resident I oppose the proposed project from Ashley capital and the vast majority of my neighbors in Stuart west/cobblestone are not for any business park being built across the street from our quiet community. It saddens me that this county is starting to sell out to big developers and apartment complexes if steps aren't taken to persevere our great county we will turn into broward county in no time.

Robert Wehner

Lifestyle expansion & Calusa Ranch. If a permanent conservation easement & a robust water quality monitoring program were to be included, I think that there is a likelihood that the Guardians would not object at the Adoption hearing

Just to be clear. I voted against it as being an exception to rule lifestyle. The development was a perfect example of how we should allow development west and take as many of these properties out of play for future development. We must come to a conclusion on how we are going to

From: [Barbara Clowdus](#)
To: [Kathleen Boden](#)
Subject: Part 4: They all told the truth, and they all lied
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 9:02:08 PM



[Read in browser »](#)

MARTIN COUNTY CURRENTS



Part 4: They all told the truth, and they all lied

Dec 11, 2023 08:34 pm

Revealing the unsavory path to a 'new' Port Salerno

The irony is unmistakable. During the same week that Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard denounced fellow commissioners for amending the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan in a public hearing to permanently preserve 70 percent of a project's 4,000 acres of open space in western Martin County, she's plotting behind the scenes with developers to build a whole new city without public input.

Their plan contravenes Port Salerno's CRA (Community Redevelopment Area) plan, thus violating the Comp Plan, with no public hearing, no resident input, and no vote taken.

Don't believe it? Hold your judgment until you've read the 240 or so emails among Heard, Jupiter developer J. Corey Crowley, and Assistant County Administrator George Stokus starting in June 2022. All three convinced themselves and others that the developers' desires follow Salerno's CRA plan and respect this small fishing village's history. They do not. The residents know it, but seem powerless to stop it.

Crowley's emails even suggest to Heard to halt other CRA projects in order to increase the Salerno CRA "trust fund" pot for "bigger priorities" on the west side of the FEC tracks, where he now owns 14 properties, 12 of which he purchased since January 2022.

To that end, Crowley convinced Park Drive residents that the project to elevate the south end of their road, designed to protect their homes from storm surge and king tides, would instead cause their houses to flood. He also emailed Stokus and Heard multiple times that Crowley would sue the CRA if they "continued to bully the residents" into accepting the project.

"Once we end the Park Drive project," Crowley tells Heard in his April 26 email, "the CRA office will have the time and money to be refocused on what is actually needed."

Crowley got what he wanted. On June 8, Stokus told NAC members that “the administration and the commissioner” withdrew the parking project, according to minutes of the meeting, although it had been a Port Salerno priority since 2019 and strategies to add parking east of the FEC tracks had been discussed for decades.

The Salerno NAC had voted to have the parking project’s consulting engineers re-examine the plans, and the CRA Board requested they attend the May 22 CRA meeting personally to address residents’ concerns.

Both requests were ignored.

CROWLEY TELLS HEARD: SKIP NAC, CRA, GO TO BOCC

Crowley decided by December of 2022 that it was necessary “to start going around the CRA staff,” he wrote in an email Dec. 5 to Heard.

“I have been very aggressive in my communication of the opportunity (to redevelop Port Salerno) only to be met with obstacles and bureaucracy,” Crowley said in his email. “That will not change without intervention.”

The county staff had insisted on following the CRA process — ideas originate with the NAC, go to the CRA, then to the BOCC for approval. Crowley had been told repeatedly that his ideas were not Port Salerno projects, and to present them to the Neighborhood Advisory Committee for consideration.

Crowley went on to tell Heard to direct CRA Manager Susan Kores to lease the FEC railroad rights-of-way along Railway Avenue. The next day, Heard sought and received permission from the Board of County Commissioners to seek FEC leases in Port Salerno for parking. As a result, the CRA staff persuaded the NAC to add FEC leases to their list of parking concepts to investigate, although it had been considered years earlier and rejected due to cost.

In January, after Heard presented Crowley’s pet projects as her own priorities Jan. 24, the CRA administrative staff presented the same list of priorities as “potential Port Salerno projects” at the NAC’s Feb. 8 meeting.

Perhaps not recognizing the potential projects as part of Crowley’s “master plan,” which the NAC previously rejected Dec. 8, 2022, the NAC selected some (marked by asterisks) for a feasibility analysis by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council:

- Railway Avenue Extension (Cove-Salerno)*
- Parking Lot at Railway/Salerno
- Driftwood Avenue Roadway Improvement*
- On-street Parking, Ebbtide from Cove to Salerno (and other potential streets)*
- Creekside Linear Park/Boardwalk
- FEC leases*

The NAC also voted to complete their other projects first, including the Park Drive/Seaward Avenue parking project, while they considered future projects.

By October, the “potential” was dropped from the list prepared by the CRA staff for CRA board and NAC meetings, and this month, those became part of Port Salerno’s 2024 budget project list with no discussion or vote, according to the Salerno NAC’s Dec. 14 agenda.

AN ABRUPT CHANGE OF DIRECTION

After Heard's Jan. 24 announcement of her priorities, the commissioner notified Crowley in an email Feb. 1, "We will immediately create a Capital Improvement Program sheet for the (linear park) project and advance design funding."

Heard confirmed to Crowley that the plan would include the area surrounding the current stormwater treatment area — known as the Salerno retrofit — not just the creek. She told commissioners that building a linear park is part of Salerno's original Community Redevelopment Plan. It is not and never was.

After Heard told Crowley Feb. 1 that she was submitting requests for design and funding for the linear park, Crowley purchased an additional property Feb. 16, adjacent to the county's Salerno retrofit right-of-way.

The county's public works engineer, who inspected Salerno Creek for Crowley in December, told him that a bridge to provide public access from Ebttide Avenue would be needed. Crowley bought the property Feb. 16 and now owns the Ebttide property identified by county staff as needed for access to the STA, as well as two other parcels along Salerno Creek itself.

Crowley told Heard in his February emails that the linear park plan was "great" but it was going to be insufficient incentive for developers to build mixed-use projects like Stuart's Osceola-style streetscape, instead of just residential units. They needed to see a "significant investment" in the county's parking infrastructure.

"This dream can ONLY be realized if the county builds parking BEFORE we build," Crowley told Heard. "Otherwise no developer will take the risk and, will instead, build multi-family apartments for which there is endless demand." (Crowley's threats to build apartments increased more frequently and intently after the governor signed the Live, Local Act that promotes affordable housing in commercial or industrial areas.)

In a March 23 email, Crowley proposed to Heard a "downtown Salerno summit" to bring together all county stakeholders and investors to find common ground, opportunities, and "with the goal of creating a common vision we are all working together on."

Although the CRA staff had suddenly become cooperative — "what a difference a year makes," he said — Crowley also proposed the county hire someone outside of the CRA staff to manage it.

ANOTHER PIVOTAL MONTH IN MAY

After Crowley created "concept designs" of his intended downtown streetscape, emailing them to Heard on May 8, she responded: "I'm forwarding this concept plan to others," she wrote, "so that they can visualize potential future redevelopment in Pt. Salerno."

She did not name the "others."

When Crowley suggested a "Salerno summit" to Heard, which she arranged for May 30, he proclaimed in a May 19 email to Heard, Stokus, Community Development Manager Susan Kores and County Administrator Don Donaldson that the meeting of Port Salerno stakeholders and investors will "reinforce to anyone at the county who still does not know that we have a unified voice and a unified vision."

At the CRA Board's May 22 meeting, Crowley announced the meeting May 30 "to bring the

Salerno community together” to plan its future. He also prepared an agenda for Stokus and Heard, according to Crowley’s May 29 email to Heard.

“Ideally, George will run things but I will step in if required,” he told her.

The Port Salerno projects and their status were to be presented, Crowley wrote, including the linear park, FEC parking, the Railway Avenue extension, and the master plan update. He also wanted Port Salerno’s CRA budget presented, “including how much cash we have in reserve.”

The most telling item in Crowley’s agenda list, however, was the second one: “Presentation of the larger plan that includes commerce to Indian street and its status.”

The only “larger plan” that includes Commerce Avenue to Indian Street is the Innovation Hub, which would not be presented until July 11 to the county commission and the public by Stokus and Kevin Crowder of BusinessFlare.

Crowley added, “The final 30 minutes would be a roundabout discussion so that the investors can talk about their plans and identify their needs.” Meeting materials should go to them in advance, he said.

Every member of the Port Salerno NAC was called and told NOT to attend the meeting, or they would be violating state Sunshine laws. The meeting also did not follow Crowley’s agenda.

Heard, Stokus and Donaldson sat at the front of the Port Salerno Community Center as four business owners explained their potential projects in the room of around 20 people, according to an attendee. No update on Salerno projects or the “larger plan” was given, according to the audience member who wishes to remain anonymous.

(The attendee also revealed that meetings were held among county staff, Heard, Crowley and various other landowners throughout the summer, beginning in June. They were provided the 127-page Innovation Hub Recommendations report prepared by BusinessFlare and attached to the county commission agenda July 11.)

Is there more to the story? Yes, unfortunately. Much more; however, it should seem clear by now that Port Salerno residents have had little input into what’s happening to their CRA plan. They knew something was not right, but when they spoke up, they were criticized for it. That criticism should now end, even if the story does not.

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Patricia Higginbotham

From: Robert Ernst <rce@dslextreme.com>
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2023 9:33 AM
To: Edward Ciampi; Stacey Hetherington; Doug Smith
Cc: Sarah Heard; Harold Jenkins; bbruner; eclarke; ccollins; tmcdonald@ci.stuart.fl.us; crich; blake fontenay; keith burbank; larry reisman
Subject: Want to save rural land? Great. When do we start?

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information**

Want to save rural land? Great. When do we start?

Greeting Commissioners Ciampi, Hetherington and Smith,

This is the current take also by your constituents/voters across our treasured Martin County.

But I don't trust this current bunch of county commissioners to get us there.

At the December 5, 2023 Martin County Commission meeting your constituents/voters pleaded with you not to support the proposal by the Calusa Ranch New York developer, but you for some reason voted for the New York developer instead of your constituent/voters who were there urging you to protect our longstanding treasured sacred USB/URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY and our Martin County long protected Ag-20 Western Ag Lands.

Commissioner Ciampi, Hetherington and Smith, we plead with you again to please change your votes so as to represent your constituents/voters and thereby upholding the long treasured sacred Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT USB and Ag -20 Ag Lands.

The New York developer relied on numerous factors that do not hold water:

1, CONSERVATION - This is not true conservation, this is better described as AT THE WHIM OF THE DEVELOPER. True conservation would have a third party conservation easement to remove all future development rights, this Calusa proposal does not do that, this is conservation in unenforceable rhetoric only.

2. SEPTIC V CENTRAL SEWER - Yes the proposed cluster would require central sewer (Another attack on the USB, extending sewer outside the USB.). One family, as is currently allowed on Ag-20, 4 people in the family using a septic system would have zero negative impact and may even be beneficial since the well water going into the septic system would be filtered in the septic leaching field and returned to the ground water.

Central sewer on the other hand would create sludge at the treatment plant and that sludge is now land applied and/or landfilled, both very detrimental practices!

3. SAVE WETLANDS - As you well know Martin County is probably the only county out of 67 Florida counties that totally protects wetlands. A case study of this may be Trailside A-20 where those 20 plus acre AG-20 lots protect the onsite wetlands.

The so-called cited benefits of the New York developer disappear.

Please change your votes to **NO** as you know is the correct thing to do, you may be rewarded for that decision, you will be applauded for standing up for Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT.

A hearty thank you to Martin County Commissioners Heard and Jenkins, for listening to your constituents/voters and voting **NO** and thereby continuing the long sacred treasured USB/Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT.

Thank you,

Bob

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO THE WORLD

Want to save rural land? Great. When do we start?

Martin commissioners favor developers' plans#

#

I owe Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard an apology.#

Last year, after the commission voted, over her objections, to create a new land-use category called "rural lifestyle," there was talk about launching a comprehensive process to discuss how the county's rural lands should be developed.#

Heard resisted having those discussions, and her colleagues on the commission abandoned the idea, at least temporarily.#

At the time, I thought Heard was making a tactical mistake. I thought the process could lead to some constructive planning decisions, rather than allowing the western part of the county to be carved up on a piecemeal basis. I also thought that process would reveal the

true agendas of those who want free and unfettered development from the beaches all the way to Lake Okeechobee. #

However, in the wake of the commission's Dec. 5 vote to make the rural lifestyle land-use even easier for developers to utilize, I now realize what Heard saw back then. #

The agendas are already clear. The majority of commissioners aren't interested in striking a balance between what current residents want and what developers want. #

No sense negotiating against oneself#

The Dec. 5 vote made abundantly clear those commissioners are going to give developers of western lands whatever they want, whenever they want it. #

It's unwise to negotiate with people who are unwilling to make any concessions of their own. #

I'm fearful, by the way, that may be happening already in St. Lucie County, where a review of the county's "towns, villages and countryside" land-use element is under way. That element essentially requires development in a large section of St. Lucie's western lands to cluster higher-density housing around town centers, with housing density gradually decreasing into "countryside" areas. #

That type of design, which is popular with land planners worldwide, is intended to reduce car trips within urban clusters, while leaving surrounding property untouched or designated for less-intensive rural uses. #

But I can foresee developers whining to county commissioners the land-use rules are too restrictive, impeding their ability to favor the Treasure Coast with more and more of the same cookie-cutter subdivisions found throughout the Sunshine State. #

'Martin County Difference' is fading into folklore#

So maybe it's a blessing in disguise if Martin County doesn't go through a sham process where its development rules are bound to only get weaker, not stronger. People talk about the "Martin County Difference," but that notion of limiting growth already seems to be out of political favor. #

It was painful to listen to the discussion about the rural lifestyle amendment Dec. 5. The land-use adopted last year made it easier to develop in areas previously zoned for agricultural uses, provided the properties were adjacent to one of the county's designated urban service areas. #

The amendment expands the concept further into the rural hinterlands, allowing more development within 6,000 feet of an urban service boundary, provided the tracts to be developed are at least 3,000 acres. #

During the meeting, Heard got the county planning staff to admit there was no public policy rationale behind the change. It's just what the developer of the Calusa Creek Ranch project wants. #

Commissioner Harold Jenkins, who joined Heard in voting against the amendment, acknowledged it wasn't a good planning practice to change a law just because one developer requested it. #

Barn doors wide open for developers now#

What happens next? It's just a matter of time before other developers come forward with more amendments tailored to allow them to do whatever the heck they want in the western areas. #

At the Dec. 5 meeting, the Calusa Creek Ranch backers made the bogus argument their project, with hookups to water and sewer, would prevent the area from being developed with environmentally unfriendly septic tanks. They, and the commissioners, must be well aware of a new law that will require all properties to have sewer or greatly improved "nutrient reducing" septic systems by 2030. #

The project's backers also said their project would add to the county's property tax base, which is a commonly used argument for any type of new development. #

This point is highly debatable. Much has been said and written about whether growth actually pays for itself, when factoring in the cost of providing government services to the newly developed areas. #

Giving new meaning to the term 'mobile home' #

But let's say, for the sake of argument, that's correct. Calusa Creek Ranch and Atlantic Fields, which was approved in tandem with the original rural lifestyle rule, are both expected to be high-end golf course communities with expensive homes that could add substantially to the tax rolls. #

By that logic, we want to keep that momentum going, by approving other upscale housing developments in that same area, right? #

What that will do is drive up the costs of property elsewhere in the community, where adequate affordable housing is already lacking. #

Housing affordability will only become more of an issue if the western part of the county becomes a resort playground for the rich. #

Consider what's happening in Sedona, a popular resort area in Arizona. Many of that community's restaurant servers, housekeepers, landscapers, maintenance workers, cooks, cashiers and other service workers are forced to live in their cars because they can't afford housing there. #

That's not some bleak, worst-case scenario. It's happening there right now. #

Is that the kind of future we'd like to see anywhere on the Treasure Coast? I think most reasonable people would say no, but the actions of some of our elected officials are leading us straight down that path. #

I think we can do better. **But I don't trust this current bunch of county commissioners to get us there.** #

This column reflects the opinion of Blake Fontenay. Contact him via email at blake.fontenay@tcpalm.com or at 772-232-5424. #

From: [Robert Ernst](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Cc: [Sarah Heard](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [bbruner](#); [eclarke](#); [ccollins](#); tmcdonald@ci.stuart.fl.us; [crich](#); [keith burbank](#); [blake fontenay](#); [ed killer](#)
Subject: PLEASE VOTE NO ON OUTRAGEOUS NEW YORK DEVELOPER CALUSA REQUEST
Date: Sunday, December 31, 2023 10:05:43 AM



PLEASE VOTE NO ON OUTRAGEOUS NEW YORK DEVELOPER CALUSA REQUEST

Greetings Commissioners Ciampi, Hetherington and Smith,

The letter to the editor below mimics and substantiates what you heard from your constituents' at the December 5, 2023 meeting on the Calusa outrageous USB/AG-20 Martin County Comp Plan, Martin - WE ARE DIFFERENT destroying comp plan change request from the New York developer!

A hearty thanks to Commissioners Heard and Jenkins for voting **NO**, the both of them heard the December 5th **voters** speakers loud and clear, and they both voted **NO** to protect our long treasured and sacred USB, Urban Service Boundary and our western AG-20.

They knew a yes vote was a vote to forever negatively change Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT, NO AG LAND, NO FARMERS, NO FOOD.

Commissioners Ciampi, Hetherington and Smith, why did you not hear your constituents on December 5th, why do you want to vote to destroy what MARTIN COUNTY - WE ARE DIFFERENT has stood for for so long, through generations?

What is your **incentive** to vote for the outrageous request of the New York developer and vote to destroy what your constituent **voters** so eagerly requested you to protect?

Calusa is not conservation as the developer represents, it is only the whim of the developer, there is **no enforceable conservation easement!**

There is no protection of continuing agriculture, it is only the whim of the developer.

There is no beneficial protection of the onsite wetlands, protection of wetlands in Martin County is part of Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT.

Removing the USB is a horrendous precedent that only attracts more developers, as the New York developer now exemplifies, to further destroy what so many have for so many years fought to protect, our beloved Martin County, our cherished Quality of Life.

Commissioners Ciampi, Hetherington and Smith, please join with Commissioner Heard and Jenkins and vote **no** on the New York developer Calusa outrageous request.

Please make it a unanimous vote for Martin County - WE ARE DIFFERENT!

Make it a Happy New Year 2024!

Thank you,

Bob and Margot Ernst

Martin County ‘rural lifestyle’ amendment more than ‘wordplay trickery’

Martin County’s “rural lifestyle” comprehensive plan amendment is just wordplay trickery. The amendment will negate any expectation of an authentic rural lifestyle.

Expanding the urban service boundaries ensures a developer’s success, and under the current county commission, zoning changes are an entitlement.

Defending the encroachment of real urban sprawl is what the rural lifestyle amendment should be promoting, not touting a fictitious narrative disguised as protection.

This amendment forever changes the landscape by opening the door to further growth and higher density. County officials are dismantling the comprehensive plan, while telling us they are preserving it — the baby-step approach. We have been down this road before. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

Each of us has an opinion of what our quality of life means. Some enjoy living near restaurants, stores and amenities, while others find congestion overwhelming. Some revel in community, while others sacrifice convenience for serenity.

Having distance between neighbors, clean air and space for the kids to play makes rural living attractive. Separated from bright lights, traffic jams and noise pollution, it affords a sense of independence and freedom for those who desire quiet living and paying lower taxes.

The amendment’s proponents may genuinely believe that a rural lifestyle is being preserved, but everyone knows that development comes in phases. It only takes slight foresight to see what is in store next. The

developers have already tipped their hands; their task is not complete while trees still stand.

Next will come the necessary zoning changes for shopping centers, office buildings and professional centers. In essence, a new city is being born.

The inevitable invasion of the development-industrial complex is coming. Soon, it will force those living the true rural lifestyle to relocate and find shelter elsewhere. Maybe there'll be room to take the wildlife with them.

Nick Gulotta, Stuart

From: [paul vallier](#)
To: [Barbara Newspaper Clowdus](#)
Cc: [Comish](#)
Subject: Barbara....An important topic you care about..
Date: Sunday, December 17, 2023 10:28:09 AM



Blake Fontenay had a telling article today in Stuart News

Evidently he believes Sarah Heard continues to be “on the right team”,

Paul Vallier
Stuart

Fontenay

12/16/23

WANT TO SAVE RURAL Martin County LAND?

Great.

When do we start?

Martin commissioners favor developers’ plans!

I owe Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard an apology.

Last year, after the commission voted, over her (Sarah Heard’s) objections, to create a new land use category called “rural life style,” there was talk about launching a comprehensive process to discuss how the county’s rural lands should be developed.

(Commissioner) Heard resisted having those discussions, and her colleagues on the commission abandoned the idea, at least temporarily.

At the time, I thought Heard was making a tactical mistake. I thought the process could lead to some constructive planning decisions, rather than allowing the western part of the county to be carved up on a piecemeal basis. I also thought that process would reveal the true agendas of those who want free and unfettered development from the beaches all the way to Lake Okechobee.

However, in the wake of the commission’s Dec. 5 vote to make the rural lifestyle land-use even easier for developers to utilize, I now realize what Heard saw back then.

The agendas are already clear. The majority of commissioners aren’t interested in striking a balance between what current residents want and what developers want.

No sense negotiating against oneself...

The Dec. 5 vote made abundantly clear those commissioners are going to give developers of western lands whatever they want, whenever they want it.

It's unwise to negotiate with people who are unwilling to make any concessions of their own.

I'm fearful, by the way, that may be happening already in St. Lucie County, where a review of the county's "towns, villages and countryside" land-use element is under way. That element essentially requires development in a large section of St. Lucie's western lands to cluster higher-density housing around town centers, with housing density gradually decreasing into "countryside" areas.

That type of design, which is popular with land planners worldwide, is intended to reduce car trips within urban clusters, while leaving surrounding property untouched or designated for less-intensive rural uses.

But I can foresee developers whining to county commissioners the land-use rules are too restrictive, impeding their ability to favor the Treasure Coast with more and more of the same cookie-cutter subdivisions found throughout the Sunshine State.

'Martin County Difference' is fading into folklore

So maybe it's a blessing in disguise if Martin County doesn't go through a sham process where its development rules are bound to only get weaker, not stronger. People talk about the "Martin County Difference," but that notion of limiting growth already seems to be out of political favor.

It was painful to listen to the discussion about the rural lifestyle amendment Dec. 5. The land-use adopted last year made it easier to develop in areas previously zoned for agricultural uses, provided the properties were adjacent to one of the county's designated urban service areas.

The amendment expands the concept further into the rural hinterlands, allowing more development within 6,000 feet of an urban service boundary, provided the tracts to be developed are at least 3,000 acres.

During the meeting, Heard got the county planning staff to admit there was no public policy rationale behind the change. It's just what the developer of the Calusa Creek Ranch project wants.

Commissioner Harold Jenkins, who joined Heard in voting against the amendment, acknowledged it wasn't a good planning practice to change a law **just because one developer requested it.**

Barn doors (are) wide open for developers now

What happens next? It's just a matter of time before other developers come forward with more amendments tailored to allow them to do whatever the heck they want in the

western areas.

At the Dec. 5 meeting, the Calusa Creek Ranch backers made the bogus argument their project, with hookups to water and sewer, would prevent the area from being developed with environmentally unfriendly septic tanks. They, and the commissioners, must be well aware of a new law that will require all properties to have sewer or greatly improved “nutrient reducing” septic systems by 2030.

The project’s backers also said their project would add to the county’s property tax base, which is a commonly used argument for any type of new development.

This point is highly debatable. Much has been said and written about whether growth actually pays for itself, when factoring in the cost of providing government services to the newly developed areas.

Giving new meaning to the term ‘mobile home’

But let’s say, for the sake of argument, that’s correct. Calusa Creek Ranch and Atlantic Fields, which was approved in tandem with the original rural lifestyle rule, are both expected to be high-end golf course communities with expensive homes that could add substantially to the tax rolls.

By that logic, we want to keep that momentum going, by approving other upscale housing developments in that same area, right?

What that will do is drive up the costs of property elsewhere in the community, where adequate affordable housing is already lacking.

Housing affordability will only become more of an issue if the western part of the county becomes a resort playground for the rich.

Consider what’s happening in Sedona, a popular resort area in Arizona. Many of that community’s restaurant servers, housekeepers, landscapers, maintenance workers, cooks, cashiers and other service workers are forced to live in their cars because they can’t afford housing there.

That’s not some bleak, worst-case scenario. It’s happening there right now.

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This column reflects the opinion of Blake Fontenay. Contact him via email at blake.fontenay@tcpalm.com or at 772-232-5424.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

From: [NICK DANDOLA](#)
To: [Kathleen Boden](#); [Patricia Higginbotham](#); [Colleen Pachowicz](#); [Sarah Phillion](#); [Stacey McKindles](#); [Kimberlee Levee](#)
Subject: Old Martingale Estates Pud Across street from Stuart West/Cobblestone - Zone Change
Date: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 2:26:54 PM
Importance: High



Good afternoon,

This is to inform you that we are **strongly opposed** to allowing the zoning change to commercial / industrial on the old Martingale Estates pud property across the street from our community. We moved to this community 7 years ago due to the country feel and allowing for industrial buildings to be built on that parcel would destroy our property values and the pristine feel of our community. There are not a lot of communities in the area that have acreage and that is what attracts people to our community. Allowing for industrial to be built a stones throw away would be detrimental. Martin county is very desirable but allowing it to go in the direction of Port St. Lucie and Ft. Pierce will destroy its desirability.

I would highly recommend voting against this change.

Thanks

Melissa & Nick D'Andola
2601 SW San Antonio Drive
Palm City, FL 34990

Clyde Dulin

From: SHARON <smcginn1@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 5:08 PM
To: Comish; Clyde Dulin
Subject: Comprehensive Plan

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information**

The proposed changes to the Rural lifestyle in the comprehensive plan have elements that I believe can be, and should be, changed in order to protect our lifestyle. I hope to get these issues into the workshop.

1. the applicant who is asking for the changes to the RLS does not need the description to allow property within a mile of the **freestanding USB** in order to move forward with his project. Allowing development next to or a mile from the FSUSB will put a **pin on the map in northern MC adjacent to St Lucie and Becker blvd. I don't understand how we can allow ourselves to become exposed to growth along this area of SLC.**

2. One of the protections within the current RLS limited the utilities within a PUD designated as RLS to be restricted for use on within the PUD. Now you are proposing to change that boundary to definition to RLS. The developer did not request this change so it should be removed. I can see this a way to start a daisy chain of development across our agricultural lands. **This does not give me and confidence that we are limiting the scope of changes to our comprehensive that provide the best protection to the quality of life in MC.**

3. One of the protections we also had was the restriction of RLS to have to follow sewage as outlined in chpt 10 of the compl plan. Now we giving them 2 ways to avoid these conditions. One it doesn't matter how **close they are to utilities** they can choose not to connect. Second, we are allowing **weak language of "reasonable cost"** as an exception to not to connect. MC is undergoing a transformation to protect our water and water table. **I don't think you are dedicated to our clean water protection initiate if you allow these changes to become part of RLS. This is a big step IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.**

Regards,
Sharon McGinnis

February 2, 2024

Ben Schuemann

Schuemann Farm

Indiantown, FL

Martin County Board of County Commissioners

Members of the Board,

I am bringing to light the vote held a few months ago by the Martin County Commissioners to endorse the JWA Ranch/Calusa Creek's Future Land Use Map change *and* Comprehensive Plan text amendment. Many letters were written urging the LPA and the commissioners to reject these proposed changes, but unfortunately, the letters fell on deaf ears as they always do.

Commissioners, why have a Comprehensive Growth Plan if we do not follow it or keep amending it at every whim of a developer? Wouldn't it have been easier to just have the Rural Lifestyle amendment specify any property outside of the USB is available for this designation? Each time the Comp. Plan is amended in favor of a developer, the council loses credibility and trust in the eyes of the constituents. Furthermore, the consequence on granting special treatment to one developer in this instance is enormous and will most definitely change the face of Martin County's rural lands forever. Voting yes, gave the signal to all developers that Martin County's rural and agricultural lands are open for development, no rules apply. Ken Bakst purchased his land knowing the consequences and the limitations of development, he knew his property was WELL outside of the USB. Landowners must be held to the rules set forth by the county and county leadership must not enable developer's fantasies. The JWA project at Calusa Creek should have been rejected by the LPA and just maybe, one more of the commissioners would have rejected it as well. By approval, a very dangerous and slippery slope has been created.

Rural Lifestyle is just urban sprawl in disguise. By bringing urban elements such as private golf courses, pro shops and gated communities, into rural settings does not make them rural, even if the developer promises to keep a few cows. Nothing prevents the establishment of rural communities more than urban sprawl. Bringing elements such as these into our western lands exponentially raises the price of surrounding agricultural land discouraging rural life to exist. Is the explicit goal of this commission to enable outside developers to dictate the outcome of these precious lands over the county's own citizens? The people of Martin County have clearly stated over and over that the preservation of rural life and our natural resources is what is important to them. After attending the two TCRPC meetings as part of the Evaluation and Appraisal report review of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan, that fact is crystal clear.

At the December 5 meeting of the council, a map was presented by Stacey, boasting of the land that has not been developed yet. Please review the attached map (Illustration A),

highlighted are the huge swaths of land where landowners have submitted applications for western development in the past year since the Rural Lifestyle was approved by Harold Jenkins, Doug Smith and Stacey Hetherington. This illustration clearly shows the urban sprawl, spreading like cancer through our beloved western, rural lands one project at a time. Many of these projects have unfortunately been approved and the destruction of land has already progressed, others such as Storie, by Divosta are awaiting the county's still to come approval. This friends, is the Browardization that the residents have fought so hard to prevent.

My family were early pioneers in our great state. The Bell family settled here 20 years before statehood. After the Civil War, one of my uncles, Alexander Bell, a Unionist, left Jasper in Hamilton County, traveled the Capron Trail and homesteaded in this area well before it became Martin and St. Lucie counties. The Bell family donated plots of land for two public cemeteries and have many namesakes throughout this area. In 1880 the governor appointed Alexander to serve on the newly formed Brevard County Commission (at that time Brevard encompassed Martin and St Lucie Counties) and later was asked to serve on the Florida senate but declined because he enjoyed his rural life best. The Bell family were cattlemen as well as sailors. His son James was the first keeper at the House of Refuge on the Indian River. Their pioneer life is documented by my aunt, Emily Lagow Bell in her book "My Pioneer Days in Florida 1878-1897". My ancestors were true leaders; whether serving on a newly formed county commission such as Alexander Bell did, or serving as one of the first Representatives of the state of Florida, as his father, Daniel Bell did, they never forgot that they served their constituents first. I am proud of that heritage.

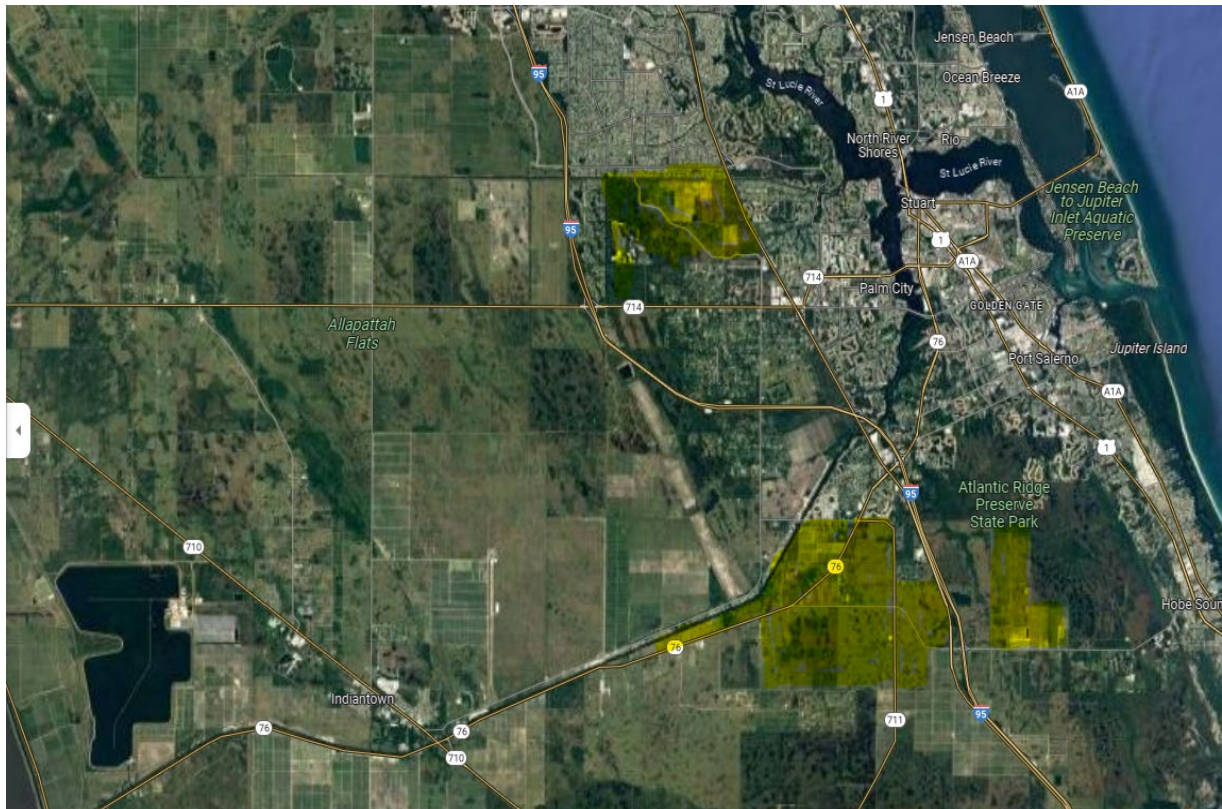
Appointed and elected officials acting on interests other than the constituents is the problem we are handed today. Not long ago, there was such thing as the Martin County difference, but not anymore. Although an election is coming and it is vital to our county's future that we elect officials that realize as my ancestors did, that they serve the people, not the other way around. Thanks be to God that there are good challengers who truly understand the concept of public service! It's not too late, start listening to the constituents. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Schuemann

Schuemann Farm, Indiantown

Illustration A: Urban Sprawl in Western Martin County since September 2022



From: villagebootery@comcast.net
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Submittal for Tuesday Meeting
Date: Saturday, February 3, 2024 3:08:29 PM
Attachments: [feb 2.docx](#)



To Whom It May Concern,
Please submit this to the commissioners. Thank you so much
Have a nice day

Ben Schuemann

February 12, 2014

Board of Martin County Commissioners

Commissioners,

The "High Priority" letter dated January 23, 2024 from the South Florida Water Management District stating that district has completed its review of the proposed amendment package from Martin County and has found that the Ranch PUD development , which lies more than one mile outside the Primary and Secondary Urban Districts of Martin County, is located within the boundaries of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project area (PALMAR Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Improvement project). The amendment package, which includes two amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan: a Text Amendment (DOC #23-5ESR) to the Future Land Use Element and a Future Land Use Map Amendment (#23-6ESR) that proposes to change the land use from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle on 3,902 acres.

The CERP was authorized by Congress in 2000 as a plan to "restore, preserve, and protect the south Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection." At a cost of more than \$10.5 billion and with a 35+ year time-line, this is the largest hydrologic restoration project ever undertaken in the United States. The citizens of Martin County have a vested interest in the outcome. As you may recall in 2006, Martin County voters approved a sales tax referendum for clean water, wildlife habitat, beaches and parks. This ½ cent sales tax was projected to generate approximately \$60 million to be split 50/50 between purchasing conservation lands and creating improved parks. These funds were used to purchase the properties PALM-MAR, the properties for the Indian River Lagoon South project, Allapattah Flats and Atlantic Ridge.

My question to the LPA and the Commissioners; where was the due diligence on your part when this amendment package was approved? This project should have been stopped in its tracks or at the very least, strongly discouraged by the LPA. A thorough review of all assets and liabilities should have been performed PRIOR to approval. What impacts will this development, which includes 2 golf courses, 198 homes ("cottages" are homes), a marina, pro shops and other urban elements, have on the environment and the efforts made so far by the CERP? Furthermore, what will the implications be going forward? By granting special treatment to this specific developer, you have opened up unlimited lands outside the Urban Service Boundary for development, some within the boundaries of the CERP. According to district, "Martin County Utilities Department says they have yet to evaluate plant and infrastructure capacity in order to serve the project and that a wellfield study and plant expansion analysis is yet to be completed." The district is still waiting for detailed information regarding the availability and impact of water supply sources proposed to

serve this project. In all honesty, this issue should have taken precedence over a bogus traffic study that only benefits the developer.

A plan that costs an excess of \$10.5 billion with \$60 million in Martin County alone, needs due diligence to ensure that future county development projects are in the best interest of the citizens of Martin County, our natural resources, including sensitive lands set aside for CERP, and our vital aquifer system, the lifeblood of our drinking water. This pertinent information from district should have been included in the decision-making process in which the commissioners approved the Ranch PUD. Don't you think that the constituents who have contributed to Everglades Restoration and the Indian River Lagoon Project should have known about these findings prior to the county voting? Instead, two poorly written, purposely vague amendments submitted by the developer, were hastily approved by the LPA and the commissioners without properly researching the entire scenario. These "yearly amendments" to our Comprehensive Plan will have lasting negative effects. By constantly amending the plan in favor of any developer simply shows that no rules apply. This is no way to lead, going forward, please use the amendment process wisely.

How does the county plan on getting the districts findings to their constituents in a timely manner and how do our county planners and commissioners prevent such a thing from happening again? The citizens of Martin County deserve to know.

Benjamin Schuemann

Schuemann Farm, Indiantown

From: [Denise Belizar](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#)
Subject: VOTE "NO" ON AMENDING THE RURAL LIFESTYLE LAND USE CATEGORY
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:06:26 PM



Scant weeks ago, those of us who spoke against Comp Plan Amendment 21-08 to create a “rural lifestyle” land use category were assured in various presentations that the Becker Holdings case was a one-off! This situation won’t happen again! We were shown maps of surrounding agricultural lands to demonstrate why none of these other parcels would be eligible for development under the terms of this amendment. I guess, that is, until you decide to move the goalposts. And wow, that sure didn’t take long.

I plan to be there to protest prior to tomorrow’s meeting, but honestly I question why. We attend meetings to learn more, then write to you and speak out about the problems that we see these developments would bring to our county. We share our concerns over the expedited and out-of-control departures from our Comp Plan. Yet you, our elected commissioners, for the most part don’t seem to care. We stand outside of the county building prior to your meetings, and – with the exception of Sarah Heard – the rest of you slink in another entrance, without having the courtesy to stop and speak with us. We never get replies or any acknowledgments from your offices.

Your lack of concern honestly makes me wonder what you have to gain from your actions. What possible reason can there be to treat your constituents in this way? To destroy what little natural space is left in Martin County that hasn’t been hacked to death by overbuilding? Don’t you value the rapidly disappearing Martin County difference at all? (BTW, if you think any of these developments is going to pay for itself, I have a bridge I want to sell you.)

I’m sure you’ve read Blake Fontenay’s December 2 column on this situation. He is so on target it is staggering. If you haven’t read it, you certainly should.

It is ironic that in Florida we name developments after what isn’t there anymore: i.e., Osprey Preserve has neither ospreys nor a preserve. The “rural lifestyle” areas, as they are proposed, are anything but rural – they are golf course communities that will pack in as much housing density as possible, and count their golf courses as “open spaces” – open spaces that no one but their resident golfers can access.

I URGE AND IMPLORE YOU TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND EVALUATE WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO OUR COUNTY. VOTE “NO” ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING RURAL LIFESTYLE LAND USE CATEGORY!

denise belizar
Martin County Resident for 22+ Years

wridea@aol.com
772-971-0430

From: [LINDA BOOTHBY](#)
To: [Sarah Heard](#)
Subject: Do NOT expand Rural Lifestyle or amend Martin County Comp Plan
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:10:34 PM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Rural Lifestyle is degrading Martin County. Do not make any more disastrous changes to the Martin County Comp Plan.

Linda Boothby
7 Harmony Lane, Hobe Sound 33455
Member, Jupiter Island Garden Club

From: [Christopher Burkhardt](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 5:21:50 PM



Dear Martin County Commissioners,

I grew up either working in my family's construction business, or hunting and fishing, often in Martin County. To this day, I still guide on Martin County's woods and waters, and I deeply appreciate how careful the county has been about growth. I grew up in Royal Palm Beach, and would hate to see western Martin County make the same horrendous mistakes that Palm Beach County allowed in terms of sprawling development. Many of the places I hunted and fished happily as a kid are now concrete and asphalt and inhabited by people that have no connection to what truly makes Florida special. But as someone who understands project design and management, I assure you that profitable projects that protect the landscape are possible and desirable.

The Calusa Creek Ranch project very much appears to be one such marriage of old Florida know-how and considerate planning – both for fish and wildlife and for the residents of Martin County. I urge you to use your highest and best judgement as you evaluate this project and others that will inevitably follow. This project looks good for everyone.

Sincerely,

Capt. Chris Burkhardt

From: [Tom D'Alessandro](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Project
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:48:58 PM



Dear Commissioners,

I live in Tequesta, am a 3rd generation landscape owner, and I own the Pontiki party boat cruise vessels. I am also a third-generation Floridian who grew up hunting and fishing in South Florida. Throughout my career, I've anguished over big development done with a minimum of concern for the environment. I have also felt resentful when this or that advocacy group opposes a good concept with religious fervor but few or any substantial facts. Martin County has wisely prevented sprawl west of I-95, and I encourage you to prevent the unsustainable growth we've witnessed throughout Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. However, I encourage you to carefully consider projects that protect open spaces and use the best technologies to protect private and public resources from pollution.

The Calusa Creek Ranch Project is the type of concept that's good for Martin County, and many other rural areas facing growth pressure around the state. As you know, they're protecting upland and wetland habitats, paying for water and sewer, and clustering fewer houses than allowed in a small footprint. As someone with extensive golf course management experience, I assure you that a well-designed course, vegetated properly, and managed with "smart" irrigation and fertilization programs will provide wildlife benefits and serve as nutrient "sink."

I encourage you to permit the Calusa Creek Project.

Sincerely,

Tom D'Alessandro

From: [Brian Schwan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Re: Calusa Creek, The Ranch
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:12:20 AM
Attachments: [Letter of support.docx](#)



Dear commissioners and county administrator,

As a lifelong Martin County resident and a fisherman, sportsman and boat captain there's no place I'd rather call home than right here in Martin County. This is where I was raised and went to high school. I've lived here for most of my 40-years and I am raising my three children here.

The Calusa Creek Ranch proposal is a project that not only makes sense, it should be the model for rural planning and conservation. As an avid golfer, it's certainly attractive to be adding 36 holes of top-tier golf here, the fact that the site will be almost entirely open space and hardly noticed by those driving by should not be taken lightly. The consideration taken for conserving natural green space is in line with what I find makes Martin County attractive.

Martin County should continue to develop in a practical way. It will just make this an even better place for us all to live and enjoy the area. There's no place I'd rather live than in Martin County and Calusa Creek, The Ranch will continue our legacy of slow growth, yet highly valuable growth.

Thank you,

Brian Schwan/Palm City

From: Brian Schwan <BSchwan@commercialrealestatellc.com>

Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 10:13 PM

To: dsmith@martin.fl.us <dsmith@martin.fl.us>; shetherington@martin.fl.us <shetherington@martin.fl.us>; hjenkins@martin.fl.us <hjenkins@martin.fl.us>; sheard@martin.fl.us <sheard@martin.fl.us>; eciampi@martin.fl.us <eciampi@martin.fl.us>; ddonaldson@martin.fl.us <ddonaldson@martin.fl.us>

Subject: Calusa Creek, The Ranch

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Martin County should continue to develop in a practical way. It will just make this an even better place for us all to live and enjoy the area. There's no place I'd rather live than in Martin County and Calusa Creek, The Ranch will continue our legacy of slow growth, yet highly valuable growth.

Thank you,

From: [Mary Peng](#)
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Overdevelopment and Calusa Ranch Plan
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 10:38:13 AM

This Email Sent From External Sender

Dear Commissioner,

I am deeply concerned and strongly opposed to the aggressive residential and commercial development going on in Martin County over the last several years. From what I understand, the county has a comprehensive growth management plan to protect against over-development and the protections have eroded in recent years. Just looking around, it seems obvious!

I urge you to vote AGAINST REMOVING the requirement that Rural Lifestyle communities be adjacent to urban services districts. It's bad enough that for example that so many natural habitat areas around Stuart have been destroyed. To allow development well into agricultural and wetlands areas would be a shame.

I urge you to vote against the Calusa Ranch plan as it stands. How can there be assurances that 175 houses plus two 18-hole golf courses plus 24 cottages and various amenities on 3902 acres be a good thing for our county?

I envision traffic congestion even worse than it is now.... Beginning immediately with construction vehicles, then more residents on roads, highways and streets, more stores and services needed etc. etc. What about our taxes? Homeowners and auto insurance rates? The infrastructure doesn't seem able to handle the current traffic demands. Then there's the hourly Brightline train schedule.

I am a resident, taxpayer and voter. Yes, I am only 1 person but I urge you to consider the impact of any further "chipping away" at the protections set in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan AND the impact of a Calusa Ranch project which would only open the gates for similar development proposals. Do we really need more golf courses? Wild habitat loss? Higher taxes? I say no.

Thank you,

Mary Peng
5985 SE Riverboat Dr.,
Stuart FL 34997

From: [Leslie Ertl](#)
To: [Harold Jenkins](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Subject: developement in Martin County
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 6:49:07 PM



Commissioners - PLEASE!!!!!!Reevaluate your job and who you serve. We are getting bombarded with developers in Martin County. There is a comp plan in place that you are obliterating. Please do not approve the new text amendment that is degradating our comp plan. Martin County will no longer shine as a beautiful area but instead, will be a nightmare for all who live here. We already have terrible traffic without all this new developement. AND, who is paying for all of the infrastructure and is it even being considered? Please stop moving forward with various ways to help developers get their way and making Martin just like all the counties south of us. You are all in the developers' pockets and should be ashamed of your record.

Leslie Ertl

From: jhamel5221@aol.com
To: [Sarah Heard](#); [Doug Smith](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#)
Cc: elzer@gate.net
Subject: CPS 22-06
Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:20:01 AM



Dear Commissioners.

Once again I renew my objections to the proposed changes to the county's Comp Plan. This newest assault on the plan further erodes our green space and tranquility provided to us in the original Comprehensive Plan.

It is beyond comprehension why our elected officials continue to change life in this county. What you are proposing does not increase affordable housing as one commissioner stated. Much the opposite. Workforce housing? Really? A joke.

The majority of residents in Martin are against further development outside of the USB. This will not change no matter how many time you "move the goalposts."

Please stop and consider all the implications of the proposed change. Some are;

- * pollution of ground water and waterways.
- * increased traffic congestion.
- * sewage.
- * additional services including schools, fire, police, and maintenance.
- * loss of habitat for many already endangered species.

Please cast a "no" vote to CPA 22-06.

Joanne Hamel
5574 SE Forest Glade Trail
Hobe Sound

*

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: [Virginia Sherlock](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#); [Virginia Sherlock](#)
Subject: SFWMD raises concerns about Rural Lifestyle FLUM amendment
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024 4:01:49 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image009.png](#)



Dear Commissioners:

Please take a look at the South Florida Water Management District's review of the proposed FLUM amendment to change the land use designation for the Calusa Ranch project property from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle. As you can see, very serious and specific concerns have been raised by the District, including location of the property within the Indian River Lagoon South project area. It is my understanding that the same concerns may apply to the Three Lakes Golf Course project. Please ask staff to address these concerns at your next BOCC meeting when the Three Lakes FLUM amendment is presented for your consideration.

Thank you.

Ginny Sherlock
LITTMAN, SHERLOCK & HEIMS, P.A.
P.O. Box 1197
Stuart, FL 34995
Telephone: (772) 287-0200
Facsimile: (772) 872-5152
www.lshlaw.net

MACO_23-6ESR- proposed amendment - Martin County

From Jefferson, Althea <ajeffers@sfwmd.gov>
To Don Donaldson <ddonalds@martin.fl.us>, Paul Schilling <pschilli@martin.fl.us>, Clyde Dulin <cdulin@martin.fl.us>

Cc barbara.powell@deo.myflorida.com
<DCPexternalagencycomments@deo.myflorida.com>, Stephanie Heidt (sheidt@tcrpc.org)
<sheidt@tcrpc.org>, Weaver, Lindsay <Lindsay.Weaver@FloridaDEP.gov>

Date 2024-01-23 17:49

Priority Highest

Dear Mr. Donaldson:

The South Florida Water Management District (District) has completed its review of the proposed amendment package from Martin County (County). The amendment package includes two amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan: a Text Amendment (DOC #23-5ESR) to the Future Land Use Element and a Future Land Use Map Amendment (#23-6ESR) that proposes to change the land use from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle on 3,902 acres. The subject property, which lies outside the Primary and Secondary Urban Districts of Martin County, is located within the boundaries of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project area (PALMAR Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Improvement project).

No comments are being raised on the Text Amendment (DOC #23-5ESR). However, the District has determined that regional water supply, wetlands and floodplain management will be impacted by the proposed Map Amendment, DOC #23-6ESR.

The District provides the following comments for the Future Land Use Map Amendment under Section 163.3184(4)(g), Florida Statutes, (F.S.). These comments need to be addressed before final adoption of the amendment (DOC #23-6ESR). If these comments are not addressed prior to adoption, the District may recommend the state land planning agency, the Department of Commerce, challenge the amendment.

- The Indian River Lagoon South project (IRL-S) is a federally authorized project with the goal of reducing freshwater inflows and generating habitat and water quality improvements in the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon. The Project Implementation Report (PIR) for the IRL-S was authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. Included in this plan is approximately 92,000 acres of Natural Storage and Water Quality Areas. Of these areas, the Pal-Mar Natural Storage and Water Quality Area (17,143 acres) was identified and included in this project acreage. The 3,904-acre parcel, related to the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and associated development project, is located entirely within the designated Pal-Mar Natural Storage and Water Quality Area. Project features for restoration of the natural storage and treatment areas involve removing, filling, or plugging drainage features such as culverts, ditches and swales to retain site runoff to restore former wetland (and adjacent upland) hydrology to those areas. The proposed project associated with the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment, appears to be inconsistent with the goal of this federally authorized project. Once approved, the project will not allow for the use of the entire 3,904-acres as water storage and upland/wetland restoration. In addition, if approved, these lands will no longer be for public use and do not appear to allow for the use as Natural Storage and Water Quality Areas as defined by the IRL-S project. The proposed project associated with the proposed Comprehensive Plan

Amendment will conflict with the Indian River Lagoon – South project (IRL-S). As the IRL-S is a CERP program, it is a 50-50 partnership between the State of Florida and the federal government. As a result, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will need to be contacted and coordinated with as well. The applicable contact with the USACE is Michael Drog (904-303-2358, michael.j.drog@usace.army.mil). The applicable CERP contact with the District is Patrick Murphy (561-682-6419, pmurphy@sfwmd.gov).

- The Applicant must detail the methodologies, assumptions, data sources, and analyses that will be used to assess whether its development program will have adverse impacts to the CERP project.
- It is unclear where the development is deriving water for both consumption and irrigation. The staff analyses says "the site has access to the C-44 canal for irrigation water", while other sections infer water and sewer will **potentially** be served by Martin County Utilities with the costs borne by the persons in the project area. Martin County Utilities Department says they have yet to evaluate plant and infrastructure capacity in order to serve the project and that a wellfield study and plant expansion analysis is yet to be completed. Please provide more detailed information regarding the availability and impact of water supply sources proposed to serve this project.
- An analysis of stormwater management needs and potential flooding issues have not been included in the proposed amendment. The amendment should be revised to include the following information:
 - An analysis of stormwater management needs for the proposed land uses, including an identification of the appropriate stormwater management infrastructure needed.
 - A demonstration that the development proposal minimizes and mitigates negative impacts on existing flood control facilities.
 - A demonstration that there will be no adverse offsite impacts, including impacts to adjacent rivers (e.g., the adjacent St. Lucie Canal), and District Surface Water Projects.
 - Acknowledgement that a Stormwater Management Permit may be required from the District. Pre-application meetings with District staff are strongly encouraged to identify issues early in the process.
- Please describe the use of alternative water supply sources such as reclaimed water to meet future water needs and incorporation of water conservation projects, consistent with the District's UEC Water Supply Plan Update and the County's Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.
 - The amendment should be revised to demonstrate how the County will conserve, appropriately use, and protect existing or proposed water sources as required by Section 163.3177(6)(d), F.S.

- The proposed amendment should be revised to include amendments to the Capital Improvements Element (CIE) and the Five-Year Capital Improvements Schedule (CIS) for the needed facilities. This includes both publicly and privately funded projects necessary to achieve and maintain adopted level of service standards, including projects needed to serve all adopted or anticipated large-scale developments, even if the County is not responsible for the improvements. The following issues should be addressed, as applicable:
 - Amendments to the CIE and CIS to include the list of projects (alternative and traditional) to be undertaken to be consistent with the revised data and analysis for the plan amendment.
 - Indicate if the projects are funded or unfunded. If a project is unfunded, provide a level of priority for funding. If planned improvements for DOC #23-6ESR extend beyond the Five-Year CIS and how they will be implemented and funded.
- Revise all maps to include a title, date, legend, and source of information. Please ensure all maps are legible.

The District requests that the County forward a copy of the adopted amendment to the District at SFLOCALGOVPLAN@sfwmd.gov.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Respectfully,

Althea P. Jefferson, AICP

Senior Policy & Planning Analyst



From: [Jason Sullivan](#)
To: [Doug Smith](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Edward Ciampi](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch Development
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 6:39:01 PM



Commissioners,

After learning more about the Calusa Creek Ranch development, it seems like a no brainer. Sure, there's going to be golf courses and some houses, but having most of the site stay as open space and keeping the cattle on the property is unusual for a development like this. Our area is going to continue to grow. We should support projects like this that make the most of the nature that's there while providing an upgrade to the community. We should secure this now or someday we might regret we didn't when another project comes along.

Jason Sullivan
Palm City

3339 SW Bicopa Pl
Palm City, FL 34990
Cell 561-644-7360

[Email Disclaimer](#)

From: villagebootery@comcast.net
To: [Comish](#)
Subject: Concerns for the commissioners
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024 11:38:57 AM
Attachments: [feb 12.docx](#)



Good morning,

Can you please be sure that the commissioners get this letter of concern

Thank you so much

Ben Schuemann

February 12, 2014

Board of Martin County Commissioners

Commissioners,

The "High Priority" letter dated January 23, 2014 from the South Florida Water Management District stating that district has completed its review of the proposed amendment package from Martin County and has found that the Ranch PUD development , which lies more than one mile outside the Primary and Secondary Urban Districts of Martin County, is located within the boundaries of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project area (PALMAR Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Improvement project). The amendment package, which includes two amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan: a Text Amendment (DOC #23-5ESR) to the Future Land Use Element and a Future Land Use Map Amendment (#23-6ESR) that proposes to change the land use from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle on 3,902 acres.

The CERP was authorized by Congress in 2000 as a plan to "restore, preserve, and protect the south Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection." At a cost of more than \$10.5 billion and with a 35+ year time-line, this is the largest hydrologic restoration project ever undertaken in the United States. The citizens of Martin County have a vested interest in the outcome. As you may recall in 2006, Martin County voters approved a sales tax referendum for clean water, wildlife habitat, beaches and parks. This ½ cent sales tax was projected to generate approximately \$60 million to be split 50/50 between purchasing conservation lands and creating improved parks. These funds were used to purchase the properties PALM-MAR, the properties for the Indian River Lagoon South project, Allapattah Flats and Atlantic Ridge.

My question to the LPA and the Commissioners; where was the due diligence on your part when this amendment package was approved? This project should have been stopped in its tracks or at the very least, strongly discouraged by the LPA. A thorough review of all assets and liabilities should have been performed PRIOR to approval. What impacts will this development, which includes 2 golf courses, 198 homes ("cottages" are homes), a marina, pro shops and other urban elements, have on the environment and the efforts made so far by the CERP? Furthermore, what will the implications be going forward? By granting special treatment to this specific developer, you have opened up unlimited lands outside the Urban Service Boundary for development, some within the boundaries of the CERP. According to district, "Martin County Utilities Department says they have yet to evaluate plant and infrastructure capacity in order to serve the project and that a wellfield study and plant expansion analysis is yet to be completed." The district is still waiting for detailed information regarding the availability and impact of water supply sources proposed to

serve this project. In all honesty, this issue should have taken precedence over a bogus traffic study that only benefits the developer.

A plan that costs an excess of \$10.5 billion with \$60 million in Martin County alone, needs due diligence to ensure that future county development projects are in the best interest of the citizens of Martin County, our natural resources, including sensitive lands set aside for CERP, and our vital aquifer system, the lifeblood of our drinking water. This pertinent information from district should have been included in the decision-making process in which the commissioners approved the Ranch PUD. Don't you think that the constituents who have contributed to Everglades Restoration and the Indian River Lagoon Project should have known about these findings prior to the county voting? Instead, two poorly written, purposely vague amendments submitted by the developer, were hastily approved by the LPA and the commissioners without properly researching the entire scenario. These "yearly amendments" to our Comprehensive Plan will have lasting negative effects. By constantly amending the plan in favor of any developer simply shows that no rules apply. This is no way to lead, going forward, please use the amendment process wisely.

How does the county plan on getting the districts findings to their constituents in a timely manner and how do our county planners and commissioners prevent such a thing from happening again? The citizens of Martin County deserve to know.

Benjamin Schuemann

Schuemann Farm, Indiantown

From: [Virginia Sherlock](#)
To: [Edward Ciampi](#); [Harold Jenkins](#); [Sarah Heard](#); [Stacey Hetherington](#); [Doug Smith](#)
Cc: [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#); [Virginia Sherlock](#)
Subject: SFWMD raises concerns about Rural Lifestyle FLUM amendment
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024 4:01:46 PM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.jpg](#)



Dear Commissioners:

Please take a look at the South Florida Water Management District's review of the proposed FLUM amendment to change the land use designation for the Calusa Ranch project property from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle. As you can see, very serious and specific concerns have been raised by the District, including location of the property within the Indian River Lagoon South project area. It is my understanding that the same concerns may apply to the Three Lakes Golf Course project. Please ask staff to address these concerns at your next BOCC meeting when the Three Lakes FLUM amendment is presented for your consideration.

Thank you.

Ginny Sherlock

LITTMAN, SHERLOCK & HEIMS, P.A.

P.O. Box 1197

Stuart, FL 34995

Telephone: (772) 287-0200

Facsimile: (772) 872-5152

www.lshlaw.net

MACO_23-6ESR- proposed amendment - Martin County

From Jefferson, Althea <ajeffers@sfwmd.gov>
To Don Donaldson <ddonalds@martin.fl.us>, Paul Schilling <pschilli@martin.fl.us>, Clyde Dulin <cdulin@martin.fl.us>
Cc barbara.powell@deo.myflorida.com <DCPexternalagencycomments@deo.myflorida.com>, Stephanie Heidt (sheidt@tcrpc.org) <sheidt@tcrpc.org>, Weaver, Lindsay <Lindsay.Weaver@FloridaDEP.gov>
Date 2024-01-23 17:49
Priority Highest



Dear Mr. Donaldson:

The South Florida Water Management District (District) has completed its review of the proposed amendment package from Martin County (County). The amendment package includes two amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan: a Text Amendment (DOC #23-5ESR) to the Future Land Use Element and a Future Land Use Map Amendment (#23-6ESR) that proposes to change the land use from Agricultural to Rural Lifestyle on 3,902 acres. The subject property, which lies outside the Primary and Secondary Urban Districts of Martin County, is located within the boundaries of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project area (PALMAR Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Improvement project).

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- The Indian River Lagoon South project (IRL-S) is a federally authorized project with the goal of reducing freshwater inflows and generating habitat and water quality improvements in the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon. The Project Implementation Report (PIR) for the IRL-S was authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. Included in this plan is approximately 92,000 acres of Natural Storage and Water Quality Areas. Of these areas, the Pal-Mar Natural Storage and Water Quality Area (17,143 acres) was identified and included in this project acreage. The 3,904-acre parcel, related to the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and associated development project, is located entirely within the designated Pal-Mar Natural Storage and Water Quality Area. Project features for restoration of the natural storage and treatment areas involve removing, filling, or plugging drainage features such as culverts, ditches and swales to retain site runoff to restore former wetland (and adjacent upland) hydrology to those areas. The proposed project associated with the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment, appears to be inconsistent with the goal of this federally authorized project. Once approved, the project will not allow for the use of the entire 3,904-acres as water storage and upland/wetland restoration. In addition, if approved, these lands will no longer be for public use and do not appear to allow for the use as Natural Storage and Water Quality Areas as defined by the IRL-S project. The proposed project associated with the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment will conflict with the Indian River Lagoon – South project (IRL-S). As the IRL-S is a CERP program, it is a 50-50 partnership between the State of Florida and the federal government. As a result, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will need to be contacted and coordinated with as well. The applicable contact with the USACE is Michael Drog (904-303-2358,

michael.j.drog@usace.army.mil). The applicable CERP contact with the District is Patrick Murphy (561-682-6419, pmurphy@sfwmd.gov).

- The Applicant must detail the methodologies, assumptions, data sources, and analyses that will be used to assess whether its development program will have adverse impacts to the CERP project.
- It is unclear where the development is deriving water for both consumption and irrigation. The staff analyses says "the site has access to the C-44 canal for irrigation water", while other sections infer water and sewer will **potentially** be served by Martin County Utilities with the costs borne by the persons in the project area. Martin County Utilities Department says they have yet to evaluate plant and infrastructure capacity in order to serve the project and that a wellfield study and plant expansion analysis is yet to be completed. Please provide more detailed information regarding the availability and impact of water supply sources proposed to serve this project.
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 - Acknowledgement that a Stormwater Management Permit may be required from the District. Pre-application meetings with District staff are strongly encouraged to identify issues early in the process.
- Please describe the use of alternative water supply sources such as reclaimed water to meet future water needs and incorporation of water conservation projects, consistent with the District's UEC Water Supply Plan Update and the County's Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.
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following issues should be addressed, as applicable:

- Amendments to the CIE and CIS to include the list of projects (alternative and traditional) to be undertaken to be consistent with the revised data and analysis for the plan amendment.
- Indicate if the projects are funded or unfunded. If a project is unfunded, provide a level of priority for funding. If planned improvements for DOC #23-6ESR extend beyond the Five-Year CIS and how they will be implemented and funded.
- Revise all maps to include a title, date, legend, and source of information. Please ensure all maps are legible.

The District requests that the County forward a copy of the adopted amendment to the District at SFLOCALGOVPLAN@sfwmd.gov.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Respectfully,

Althea P. Jefferson, AICP

Senior Policy & Planning Analyst



From: rwg461938@aol.com
To: [Commissioners](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek Ranch Development
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:19:10 AM



Dear Commissioners:

Martin County will continue to grow but it should be in a “Smart Growth” manner. I was all in favor of your decision regarding Atlantic Fields since it abutted the USB and provided a large amount of open space.

The proposed Calusa Creek Ranch development will destroy our County’s unique character in that it is far from the USB!

Please reject it!

Bob Gordon

Hobe Sound

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: [carol.fitzpatrick](#)
To: [Comish](#); [Don Donaldson](#)
Cc: [Margie Garren](#); [Patricia Davis](#)
Subject: Fw: CONCERNS RE Calusa Creek Ranch -- Calusa PUD
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 4:59:20 PM



Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: elzer@gate.net <elzer@gate.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:20 AM
To: Donna S. Melzer <donnasmelzer@gmail.com>
Subject: CONCERNS RE Calusa Creek Ranch -- Calusa PUD

Action Needed: Please consider joining Ginny Sherlock and Loxa-Lucie in emailing in concerns about our western lands that impact important environmental areas. Below is Ginny's email to the County Staff and CC. to Commissioners that you can forward and tell them you share these concerns. I will forward a Loxa-Lucie Flyer soon. The LPA meeting is Thursday, TOMORROW.

FROM:
Virginia "Ginny" Sherlock vsherlock@lshlaw.net
To: "pschilli@martin.fl.us" <pschilli@martin.fl.us>, "pwalden@martin.fl.us" <pwalden@martin.fl.us>
Cc: "Don Donaldson" <ddonalds@martin.fl.us>, "Sarah Woods" <swoods@martin.fl.us>, "Commissioner Sarah Heard" <sheard@martin.fl.us>, "hjenkins@martin.fl.us" <hjenkins@martin.fl.us>, "Edward Ciampi" <eciampi@martin.fl.us>

The Local Planning Agency is being asked to recommend approval of the Ranch PUD Zoning Agreement, Master Site Plan and Phasing Plan at next Thursday's meeting. However, it is not clear what is being presented for approval. I will not be available to attend the meeting. Please include this e-mail in the public comments to be considered by the LPA.

The Staff Report identifies the property as 3,460 acres on the south side of SW Kanner Highway and 442 acres on the north side of Kanner Highway (adjacent to the C-44 Canal) with a Future Land Use designation of Agricultural and a zoning category of A-2 Agricultural. Staff says the property has a pending Comprehensive Plan amendment for future land use change and text amendment "to enable the PUD, clustering of residential units and extension of water and wastewater service to the property", which is outside

the Urban Services Boundary. The Staff Report does not identify the pending land use change and text amendment, concealing the fact that the property was the subject of a highly controversial proposed Comp Plan amendment to change the land use to Rural Lifestyle and that it is more than a mile outside the USB.

The PUD Agreement for which approval is sought is not included in the packet available for public review. It is impossible to determine the terms of the proposed agreement which LPA members are being asked to approve. The agenda packet includes only the proposed master site plan and proposed phasing plan.

The Disclosure of Interest Affidavit which is supposed to disclose all "natural persons" and entities with any interest in the property identifies five limited liability companies and a single "natural person" (Kenneth S. Bakst) as owners, making it impossible to determine whether any staff members, Commissioners, administrative officers, or other individuals associated with the government approval process have any interest in the subject property. Martin County Land Development Regulations -- and the Disclosure of Interest Affidavit itself -- specifically require all "natural persons" with an interest in the property to be identified. Why is staff constantly ignoring this requirement of the LDRs?

The staff report says the PUD and Master Site Plan applications are contingent upon final approval of the Comp Plan text and Future Land Use Map Amendments (apparently referring to the Rural Lifestyle amendments). But the Project Narrative submitted by the applicant says the property is designated with the Agricultural Future Land Use and is zoned A-2 Agricultural and "the applicant is not proposing any change to the Future Land Use designation, maximum residential density, or urban service boundaries."

Has Calusa Creek Ranch abandoned its application to change the land use designation to Rural Lifestyle?

Staff makes no reference to the South Florida Water Management District's scathing review of the proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment to change the land use designation to Rural Lifestyle.

Citizens are entitled to full disclosure of the owners of property for which

development approval is requested. Citizens are entitled to review the proposed development order for which approval is sought (the PUD Zoning Agreement in this case). Citizens are entitled to an accurate, understandable explanation of an application by staff in a report that does not conceal details or include statements that conflict with application materials. When there has been widespread public interest in an issue -- such as Rural Lifestyle development -- it is even more imperative that staff not conceal the details of a proposed development project and that full and thorough public discussion be facilitated.

The agenda packet for the Ranch PUD project application to be presented to the LPA next week is confusing, incomplete, and apparently designed to thwart citizen participation.

Ginny Sherlock

LITTMAN, SHERLOCK & HEIMS, P.A.

Joan Seaman

From: Paul Owens <powens@1000fof.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 10:10 AM
To: Edward Ciampi
Subject: Following up on yesterday's lunch

**Caution: This email originated from an external source.
Be Suspicious of Attachments, Links, and Requests for Login Information**

Commissioner Ciampi,

Thanks so much for being so generous with you time yesterday. I appreciated our discussion.

I have attached a brief summary of 1000 Friends' reasons for opposing the adoption and final approval of the comprehensive plan amendment for the Calusa Creek Ranch proposal, and suggestions for mitigating policies if the project advances. However, we would still much prefer to see this proposal rejected rather than mitigated.

To address one point you made during our discussion, the Calusa Creek proposal is arguably better than a theoretical alternative to place one home for every 20 acres within the property, as allowed under current zoning. But is that alternative realistic, or simply a talking point from supporters to justify a vote for approval?

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks again for your time, and your service to Martin County.

Sincerely,

Paul Owens
President, 1000 Friends of Florida
850-222-6277
Follow us on Twitter @FloridaFriends
Like us on Facebook

The Case Against Final Approval of Calusa Creek Ranch

Allowing a Rural Lifestyles development 6,000 feet from an urban services district boundary violates the conditions established in the 2022 comp plan amendment after months of deliberation that created the land use to require such developments to abut a USD to limit their impact on the environment and public services and put the brakes on development across western Martin County

How long before the goals posts are moved yet again?

Extending rural lifestyles projects more than a mile from USD boundaries would vastly increase the area vulnerable to negative environmental and community impacts from development, including water pollution, congested roads and higher taxes to stretch and maintain public services

The South Florida Water Management District highlighted numerous shortcomings with the project

It's located entirely within the Pal-Mar Natural Storage and Water Quality Area of the Indian River Lagoon South project (IRL-S), federal programs included in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)

If Calusa Creek is approved, it won't allow for use of its property for water storage and upland/wetland restoration as called for under the IRL-S project

This would disrupt CERP, which is jointly funded between Florida and the federal government, yet applicants did not coordinate their plans with the U.S. Army Corps

Before its preliminary approval, Calusa Creek did not detail the "methodologies, assumptions, data sources and analyses" necessary to assess whether its project would have adverse impacts on the IRL-S project

Calusa Creek didn't include an analysis of its stormwater management needs and potential impacts on existing flood control facilities

Calusa Creek didn't show there would be no "adverse offsite impacts" to adjacent waterways

Calusa Creek didn't lay out plans for alternative water supply and conservation as required by state law, the district and the county

Calusa Creek didn't include necessary amendments to the Capital Improvements Element and the Five-Year Capital Improvements Schedule showing how it would achieve and maintain adopted level of service standards

Approval of Calusa Creek would open the door to more developments in rural areas that would threaten the viability of agriculture in the county and raise the cost of acquiring conservation land

Plans for septic tanks in the Calusa Creek development would undermine legislation enacted in 2023 at Gov. DeSantis' direction to eliminate tanks in basins connected to the Indian River Lagoon

Conditions for ultimate approval

Require permanent conservation easements to prevent golf courses from being converted to more intense development in the future utilizing water and sewer lines

Require use of water from C-44 reservoir, canal, Lake O and/or Lake O water to irrigate golf courses rather than aquifer withdrawals. Nutrients in water from those sources will reduce need for fertilizer.

Require water monitoring for any new projects that discharge into impaired water bodies, with requirement for remediation if degradation is found. If no degradation after five years, requirement can be lifted.

From: [Deana Peterson](#)
To: [Comish](#); [Don Donaldson](#); [Sarah Woods](#)
Subject: Calusa Creek/ The Ranch
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 3:24:13 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



Hello commissioners, County administrator, County attorney and LPA members,

I am a long time resident of Martin County and I am writing to ask you to slow down and breathe. We are ramming through project after project with no break in between. You voted to approve the rural lifestyle amendment and then without even waiting to see the repercussions, you voted to expand it. Now yet another project is asking for a future land use change and amendment. Please LPA board, do not approve of this project. Please County commissioners do not approve.

We do not need more traffic, more houses, more construction, more any of it. We need to preserve our green spaces and our agricultural land and heritage. Please vote for what is best for Martin County residents, not developers, not campaign donors, not state fundraisers- but the residents you were elected to represent.

I implore you.

Deana Peterson

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