

LongboatLetters



Longboat Key News encourages Letters to the Editor. Please mail, e-mail or fax to one of the following: 5370 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Ste. 210, Longboat Key, FL 34228; e-mail: sreid@lbknews.com; fax: 941-387-8288. We also print letters sent to Town Hall that address Key issues.

Thanks for the Support!

Dear Editor:

Thank you to the Town of Longboat Key for the excellent relationship and partnership that we both share together now, have for the past few years and hopefully well into the future.

A special thank you to the Town Commissioners, both past and present that have agreed the Town to be a Corporate Sponsor financially for the Chamber.

Thank you to Bruce St. Denis for his leadership, expertise and friendship to the Chamber and especially to our Executive Director, Gail Loefgren.

Thank you to the Town and Julius Halas for permitting Halas to be a representative on our Board of Directors. Halas is an invaluable resource and liaison for both organizations.

Thank you to Susan Ammons for her communication and information all the time and especially in times of emergency or hurricane. Because of her, we are always ahead of the curve.

And finally thank you to the Town staff and employees for all they always do all year round for the Chamber.

The Chamber sees itself as having three main func-

tions:

1. To support the Town and the community as a business representative and liaison

2. To support the businesses as a net working, marketing and voice for them

3. To support the residents and tourists by servicing them with the information they need to enjoy the lifestyle

In aligning with the Town's goals and future plans, we want to thank the Town for taking on the Visioning Process and all they are doing to make sure that it is being done for what is right on Longboat Key for years to come.

The Chamber also sees itself with the main goal for the future of being to bring more people to the island, in the form of visitors, tourists, part time and full time residents. This will help maintain and support the future of the business community of the island.

The Chamber suggests that this can be best accomplished in three ways:

1. To support having more relaxed rental restrictions that allow more occupancy of more properties on the island more often

2. To support having zoning changes that allow mixed use and variances so that business owners can survive all year round

3. To support having zoning changes that allow for commercial property owners to improve, update and/or build their properties to bring them to code and better

serve the community and the people on the island.

In closing, I want to thank every one of you that lives, works and enjoys Longboat Key. It is truly paradise! Thank you!"

Andrew Vac
Longboat Key

Beware of Nudists, Beer Cans, Screaming

Dear Editor:

This is to alert all new single-family home and condo owners to what life will be like if they let the Town Commissioners remove or reduce the 30-day rental restriction.

There will be a constant turnover of "Good time Charlie" renters next door. Partying college students will be outside in the wee hours playing loud music and leaving beer cans around. You will have young children running around screaming day and night. Europeans will be sunbathing nude in the back yard.

If they are renting your home, expect broken belongings and beat-up furniture because they are "here for only a short time and don't have to take care of things." It will be a disaster, as we found out before the 30-day ordinance went into effect.

Please contact the Town Commissioners and urge them not to tinker with the 30-day rental restriction.

Betty Blair
Longboat Key

KeyOpinion



The Beginning of the End

Every time I write one of these columns, I say, "this is the last one." Then I pick up my mailed edition of the two papers and read something that sets me off again...

First the Town is practically throwing out any observance of the 50% building rule, then it seems to be saying

if their wasn't any sign code, what a wonderful business we would have here on the Key and now they decide that the peace and quiet of residential homeowners must be discarded so a few weekenders can move in, families in tow, to enjoy a short inexpensive vacation by the sea. Since any of these ideas would have had the ones who suggested any of those courses tarred and feathered a few years ago, I wonder who is now living on the Key.

This idea that my good friend Harry Christiansen has been saying for years that the only reason we don't have any business on the key is because we don't allow short-term rentals. He neglects to say that the only reason we have had such a dramatic growth in the values on the Key is because by not allowing short-term rentals, Longboat Key did not turn into Siesta Key.

The restriction on rentals is not a secret. Every condominium and homeowners association on the Key has voluntarily voted to have their individual communities protected by including rental restrictions as tough and in most cases tougher than the Town regulations. To give you an idea of how most owners feel I can relate what happened when this issue came up at our last condo. We had a thirty-day rule but when it was rumored that a potential purchaser was planning to rent out his condo, the association changed their documents to require a minimum of three months and only twice a year for any rental. This change was voted upon unanimously.

Later in this piece I will attempt to demonstrate that even if it were passed, the impact would be minimal but my major objection is that non-elected officials even choose to bring it up. Anyone who was in the Commission Chamber the last time a change was being considered would think long and hard before trying to pull it off on an unsuspecting public. Some of my best friends of the Key are in business here and I wish them the best but having lived in Rancho Mirage, California in a condo where short term rentals were allowed, I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. For whatever reason, it seems that people who have only a short time to enjoy their vacation go about it in a most enthusiastic manner. The shorter the time, the more people they cram in the place and I guess it is probably not a proven fact but it seems the more kids they have.

If the change is made, it will have a different effect on individual homeowners than it would on condo owners. For the condo owner, it just means that you will have

to take any owner who violates your specific documents to court instead of just making a phone call and letting the police handle the matter. For the homeowner who is not in a strong association, your problem is much greater. You probably will have a major disruption of your peace and quiet with practically no way to find relief.

This is potentially one of the most serious abuses that the Gilbert led P&Z Board has attempted to perpetuate. If they pull this off, having buried FEMA and with their next proposal to bypass the density clause in the Charter, Longboat Key will become a place like all others in Florida — gated communities protecting their own turf and the hell with what goes on outside their gates.

Since the Chamber of Commerce is proposing this new approach and the P&Z is dominated by the PIC members, Sandy Gilbert, Jim Brown, George Symanski and Walter Hackett, the residents have no champions and seem to be defenseless against this onslaught. To compound the problem of the calves being led to slaughter, all of this will now be taken up during the summer months when no one is there to say a word.

The irony of all of this is the inconvenience and discomfort that the residents will experience will not do anything to solve the problem. We have roughly 10,000 residential units on the Key. Condos number 8,500 and private homes the balance. Since, as I stated, the condos are already protected by deed and according to my rough estimates, at least half of the private homes are subject to deed restrictions, it would appear that there are not that many homes that would even be affected. Since most owners are reluctant to rent in any case and especially not to short-term renters, the number of potential customers that this change would bring about would be too small to make any significant difference. However, for the guy who lives next door, even one is too many.

Some of us worked very hard to make Longboat Key the premier community it is, it is hard to see it all go down the drain. Unless some of the commissioners speak out and say stop to this runaway train, it will be too late. I always said that not buying the golf club was the worst decision ever made by a Longboat Key Commission. Not speaking and straightening out this group of mad bombers will make that look like a mild bump in the road.

GreenReport

By Al Green



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