



July 14, 2023

Dear Commissioner Pendergrass,

I'm writing on behalf of the Greater Pine Island Civic Association (GPICA) to follow up on the recent Lee County Commission discussion of changes to the Lee County Land Development Code.

As you know, the GPICA is a coalition of residents that came together in 1957 and has been dedicated to protecting Pine Island's unique habitats and environment since then. That work really coalesced in the 1990s as the GPICA led the development of the Greater Pine Island Plan of the Lee Development Code (Goal 14; also commonly referred to as the Pine Island Plan) which manages growth on the Island. While that plan has undergone several updates and revisions, it remains in place to protect our island from over-intrusive development that puts residents at risk.

In fact, we cannot overstate the importance to our residents of this special section of the Land Development Code in protecting Islanders — which became all too obvious in the lead up and aftermath of Hurricane Ian on Sept. 28, 2022.

As you can imagine, Islanders are distressed today at discussion of any changes to the Pine Island Plan that would allow for increased development, increased densities and increased building heights.

While much of the discussion related to the proposed changes in the Lee County Development Code has been focused on the impacts to Captiva related to South Seas Plantation, GPICA members and our Island's residents feel that the proposed changes have never received proper public notice prior to the June hearing and that we have MANY unanswered questions — particularly related to building height changes.

As it stands, we oppose the proposed changes because:

- While section 33-1087 would be restated in Section 34-2175, 34-2175 does NOT provide the same level of protection that the Pine Island Plan currently has;
- The entire section on height restrictions — section 33-1087 — would be removed entirely from the Pine Island Planning Community regulations and move them into the overall county rules, thus taking away the special protections we have now under the Pine Island Plan;
- There are currently no structures on the Island that would necessitate the building height change calculation remedy;
- The proposed changes also offer a different calculation method that allows more livable space, leaving open the possibility that three-story buildings would be allowable under the new rules.
- We are concerned this change will allow for the further dilution of the Pine Island overlay that residents worked as a community so hard and so long to implement.

Further, we remain gravely concerned that we already have a density problem with more homesites **already approved** on Greater Pine Island **than the existing roads can accommodate safely** for hurricane evacuation — assuming the roadway doesn't collapse again from the next storm. Bringing in taller buildings will only add to our issues.

Board of Directors

We also stand with our Island neighbors on Sanibel, Captiva and Upper Captiva in opposing the proposed changes related to South Seas Plantation.

Once again, we thank you for your commitment to supporting Pine Island and for proactively working with our community on these and other issues. We urge you to vote NO on the proposed changes.

Best regards,

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