



Greater Pine Island Civic Association

Protecting Pine Island Since 1957

P.O. Box 3044
Pineland, FL 33945
GPICA.org

Sept. 8, 2025

Mikki Rozdolski
Director, Community Development
1500 Monroe St.
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Dear Ms. Rozdolski,

I'm writing today on behalf of the Greater Pine Island Civic Association (GPICA) Board and Membership regarding the results of a public information session related to a special exception (SEZ2025-00011) and zoning variances (VAR2025-00006) requested for a project called the "Bokeelia Tower." **The GPICA wanted to be sure you were aware of the overwhelmingly negative community response to the applicant's request for the special exception and variances.**

Background

As you know, all developers of multifamily residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and infrastructure projects and subdivisions are required to hold public meetings in some unincorporated areas of Lee County — including Pine Island — to inform residents of their plans.

On Pine Island, GPICA has historically been the designated forum for these public meetings. Per our meeting format, the GPICA allows the developer and/or their agent(s) to present their information, then opens the session for questions from GPICA members and other community residents in attendance.

After the Q&A session, the GPICA then gauges support by asking residents to vote for or against each request. While we know that these votes are non-binding, we believe they provide Lee County with important information to consider, weigh and respond to before making any decision to approve exceptions and/or zoning requests — especially requests that will not come before a hearing examiner.

On Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025, the GPICA hosted a public information session for the Bokeelia Tower project in partnership with RVI Planning + Landscape Architecture (RVI), presenting on behalf of Skyway Towers, LLC out of Tampa.

The in-person meeting was held at the First Baptist Church of Pine Island at 5363 Avenue D, Bokeelia, 33922. The meeting also included a virtual component — a

Board of Directors

Deborah Swisher-Hicks, President | Nadine Slimak, Vice President | Steve Eldredge, Treasurer/Secretary |
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livestream of the meeting held concurrently on the GPICA Facebook's page for those who could not attend in person.

We advertised the meeting in advance via our e-newsletter mailing list of 1,122 subscribers, posted the news on our website (www.GPICA.org) and via our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PineIslandCivicAssociation>). Additionally, RVI advertised the meeting in the Pine Island Eagle.

The RVI representative was Alexis Crespo, Vice President of Planning, who presented the Skyway Towers application special exception request and the three zoning variances being requested for the Bokeelia Tower.

Public Information Session Summary for Skyway Towers

One hundred, ten (110) people attended the meeting in person. Forty-three (43) attended virtually. Additionally, the recording was well-viewed on our Facebook page after the meeting.

While residents are widely supportive of having broader and better cell phone coverage on Pine Island — especially in Bokeelia — the community is widely opposed to this particular tower and its location.

Objections raised during the Q&A after the presentation revolve around four main points:

Adverse Impact on Property Values and Neighborhood Character

- Many residents believe this is an eyesore at the entrance to Bokeelia;
- The Project is inconsistent with the neighborhood character and scale;
- For a number of residents, the Project is within line-of-site and for several others the Project is literally “next door”;

Site Location, Selection and Available Location Alternatives

- There is significant unimproved land across Stringfellow Road to the east that would be better suited for this project;
- The property is simply NOT large enough to support the Project, thereby requiring significant variances;
- If the tower were to collapse in a hurricane — and we've taken direct hits by three hurricanes in the last three years — it would hit a nearby home no matter which way it fell;
- There is a cell phone tower that already serves Bokeelia residents. Residents wonder why this Project can't co-exist on the property with the existing cell phone tower;

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- By mandate, for approval, a variance requires an UNNECESSARY HARDSHIP. In this case, the owners say the hardship is the small size of the property. We say they chose the wrong property for this Project.
- It appears as if no other sites have been considered, and that the only reason to place the Project at the proposed location is passive income for the Naples-based land owner.

Approval Will Set a Bad Precedent

- Residents of Pine Island were extremely involved in the development of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan, especially the Pine Island Overlay, which dictates specific locations for commercial property;
- The location of this property is well outside that zone and approval would set a bad precedent and lead to the watering down of well-considered zoning rules.

Additionally, Some Expressed Health Concerns from the Microwave Emissions

- While the Applicant stated that Federal government studies indicate no health concerns, some residents do not believe this and several expressed concerns about the proximity of living next to high-emission towers.

The Vote Tally

At the end of the Q&A, the GPICA Board called for a vote, asking all in favor of the proposal to stand. Only four people — of the 110 people attending the Skyway Towers presentation — stood in support of the variances. Notably, the four who stood had stated during the Q&A that they had a personal business related to servicing cell phone towers.

In sum, residents attending this meeting agreed that a cell phone tower providing better coverage would serve the community. They also agreed that virtually all of the opposition to this particular project could be addressed by moving this tower to a location already zoned for this use.

Residents also indicated that there could be support for a rezoning application if an application were made for a different site — one of proper size — and in a location that was without nearby neighbors being negatively impacted.

The Greater Pine Island Civic Association submits this information in the hope that residents' concerns and opposition will be taken into consideration by the county staff as it reviews this application for special exception and zoning variances, and that the community's factual points against the project for the project carry the weight they deserve.

Respectfully,

Nadine Slimak
Vice President
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CC
Marc Washburn, Manager of Strategic Performance
Joseph Sarracino, Planner, Zoning Section
GPICA Membership