

From: [Theodore Kleamenakis](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: NVNA
Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 10:03:41 PM

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To all council members,

It is my great disappointment to see that most likely this proposal of a new Publix and other stores will be located at the corner of Border Rd. and Laurel.

I am from Baton Rouge, Louisiana and as a child getting to the Florida Beaches was my greatest wish. My neighbor would purchase one or two baby alligators and we would have alligator races while they were very young. When they got larger they were placed in one of our beautiful wetlands.

I never wanted to move from our city despite pollution from oil refineries, increased crime and other things that were adding to our decline. Everyone in the South except the criminals are usually very friendly and polite. There are not many southerners in my neighborhood and many are very nice but still living here was never my plan. Except high crime has taken over most of the southern states or illegal immigrants, and the homeless have brought problems also. Before I left there were three incidents of men banging on my car windows at the gas station. When we returned for the first time this past Christmas we stayed in a guarded safe hotel. However one block over at the Christmas Parade and when we returned from our party early 9:30 pm our driver told us 5 people had been shot at the Christmas Parade. The route to Downtown from the suburbs were boarded up and many of the businesses I remembered were gone. Even the large mall near my nice neighborhood had been demolished. The sale of the mall had been up for 5 years. Finally Amazon bought this property.

Six years ago we moved here and the first home we bought, I thought the city had left a green belt open along the border of our first neighborhood. However when an automobile dealership built beside my entrance of my neighborhood and the round about was having multiple accidents; I told my husband we had to move. I told him I will never be able to drive with all the other businesses coming in and be able to make a left turn and get through the round about without having a car wreck and possibly serious injury.

My husband and I decided to return to Baton Rouge after being in Venice for 6 years. The statistics reported 200,000 people had moved from Baton Rouge in the last 2 years. This was our final good bye to a city that we once loved. The food, the music, LSU football has been a real loss to us. This past summer we had to sit everyday for different crews to repair our kitchen that had a slow leak underneath the slab where my kitchen island sat. They had to demolish everything in this area. I am 72 years old, we have not been able to go places for three years due to major construction problems. I had to go stay in a hotel because I have compromised lungs from 2 serious cases of pneumonia. This time the wood floors were defective and had to be replaced. It took 4 months to repair the kitchen. I also had to wash the dishes in the laundry room. This has shortened my time with my grandchildren and plans to travel. My husband and I had difficult jobs that required being on call 24 hours a day. We worked 40 years in our work and we hoped our retirement would be seeing our grandchildren and taking vacations that were not allowed during critical times, especially during Hurricane Katrina.

One Sunday we happened to go under the interstate and found Neal Signature Homes. Now our neighborhood is almost completely built out and the city council is ready to make the same traffic issues that will lead to backup traffic and possibly more wrecks at the intersections of Border Rd./ Jacaranda and Laurel/Jacaranda. Our taxes are high enough and you even allowed 4 story high condos to be built and single family homes all mixed together on

the property in back of Aria. The preserves that Mr. Neal sold as part of the backyards to some homeowners have a large gap where they see tall condos. The wildlife of the Sandhill Cranes have disappeared. I also saw a dead one near another brand new development. Someone profits off of these poor conglomeration of these buildings and homes taking away all the green except for small spots. This leads to more pollution, possible flooding and it certainly does not look like the Florida I dreamed of and finally thought I had achieved. Due to the approximate \$150,000 dollars worth of repairs needed on my house from the first night we moved in, our insurance company informed me they were suing Mr. Neal. I told them I did not think it was a good idea because he seems to have everyone in their pockets. He chuckled and said he thought the litigation department could handle it.

When I first brought my daughter to New College for an interview 24 years ago I thought the City of Sarasota was beautiful. However when I returned it just looked like one overbuilt hodgepodge of commercial buildings. I told my husband back to the drawing board. I later found Venice as a retirement city in a magazine.

Besides Mr. Neal, the council has to be profiting from these contracts. My daughter in high school worked in the legislation in Baton Rouge and in her college years at FSU she had a job with Governor Bush. She saw too many things that were dishonest and not for the good of the people.

The decision to put a Publix at the corner of Laurel and Jacaranda is not a good decision. Venice was a beautiful place six years ago, and the city council has seemingly approved everything big business or from any of Mr. Neal's requests. You are destroying the reason people come here. The beaches, the roads filled with cars, trucks adding to pollution, miles of paved concrete, more wrecks, and a city for retirement is just becoming one more conglomeration of misplaced commercial buildings, pollution, (not everyone can afford electric cars). Please vote against urban sprawl.

I do know some things had to occur that generated jobs and housing. I have had two emergency stays at the new SRQ Hospital. I was in perfect health according to my doctor. However I chose to live in Aria because I am in my final years of life and the hospital is 6 minutes from my house. The last time I had to go to SRQ; I had excruciating pain in my chest. I told my husband get me in the car and get to the emergency room asap. I felt at this point we would be quicker than calling 911. I had a twisted stomach which can be fatal, however my stomach resolved itself. I have faith I still have lots to do and God answered my prayers.

People will find new places, and Mr. Neal and other construction can find other places, and new business. Venice is special and the Island still maintains its beauty with all the wonderful volunteers. However the rest of Venice with back to back traffic, added pollution from trucks, storm damage, showing plans that look like paradise, but in actuality is not true. Prior to our purchase and picking out our lot I came over to walk over all the streets to see where the development held water. There were puddles left from the rain in lower areas of the development. When I walked up Aria from the end of the street the lot we wanted was dry along with the models, the mailboxes and the clubhouse. I told my husband Mr. Neal is not stupid. Just like my father many years ago with our house in Baton Rouge. Our entire neighborhood in BR was built on swamp land. My father brought 3 truckloads of dirt and poured it on our new lot before we built. Our house was at the highest level on the street. I even told my husband that the large lake where the more expensive homes were built will flood. The lake is in a rectangle shape and on the end nearest Border Rd. It had no levy. In fact I walked it off and I estimated about 14 ft. between the lake and their lanai. I told my husband due to the fact it was shallow, no levy, that if Northeasterly winds kick up the water during a hurricane it will flood these homes. Unfortunately I was right. The homeowners obtained a lawyer and Mr. Neal put some rocks up but apparently it is not up to a safe level and they are still fighting with him. This is not what you plan on doing in your retirement years.

There is turnover in homes, as I suspect my husband and I probably have at best 10 more years to live in Aria. Others are leaving because of some of the building issues or finding out they miss family. I pray that the council will do the right thing. Even if we wanted to sell it is not possible. I am still waiting for my Lanai to be built as it was considered a total loss after Hurricane Milton.

Please consider not approving this request by Mr. Neal. And if it is approved please help me understand why? This is not a pretty area any longer.

Sincerely,

Sharon R. Kleamenakis

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Tom Martz](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: Shopping center at Laurel & Jacaranda
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025 11:14:40 AM

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As a nearby resident I am voicing my concerns regarding the flooding and traffic issues this will bring to the area. I'm aware that a shopping center is inevitable due to zone change but please consider what this will do to the infrastructure and congestion that has already been compromised with excessive building on Laurel. Their proposal for traffic pattern with only stop signs is a dangerous one and needs to be looked at carefully before approving. Flooding issues are also a concern that needs to be addressed. This council meeting should address all of the above issues before any approval is made, thank you for serving as the voice of our community.

Thomas Martz

Sent from my iPad