

**From:** [Sharon Mathews-Bellendir](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Revised Site Development Epiphany Parking Lot  
**Date:** Monday, December 1, 2025 12:19:41 PM

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Dear Members of the Venice Planning Commission, below is my input regarding the revamped site plan for Epiphany Parking Lot.

I support improvements, upgrades, and beautification of the Church Parking Lot at Harbor Drive and Bayshore Drive. Thoughtful enhancements—such as regrading the lot or using more permeable materials to better absorb stormwater—would benefit both the church and the surrounding community.

I am concerned that the current approach appears to assume everything is acceptable simply because we are not experiencing a hurricane at this very moment. The absence of a storm today does not negate the predictable flooding risks we face in the coming years. Ignoring these risks now will only lead to larger and more expensive problems later.

The residents who live around this parking lot should not be treated as an afterthought. A church is meant to be a pillar of the community, not a source of harm or disregard. Yet the parking lot continues to be used in ways that negatively impact neighbors who live here year-round. During the season, events at the church occur nearly every day—sometimes twice a day—and the effect on the neighborhood is obvious: increased traffic, noise, congestion, and overwhelmed streets.

At the previous meeting, the planning committee directed the church architect to submit new drawings for the retention pond and drainage system—plans that would prevent stormwater from flowing down Bayshore Drive, into Park Place, and directly into the surrounding neighborhoods. To my knowledge, that issue has not been resolved. Without a corrected drainage design, I do not understand why this proposal is moving forward again. It is unfair to the residents on every block near this parking lot, who will be left to deal with the consequences.

Even in its updated form, the retention pond will only absorb some rainfall before overflowing into the same storm sewer system identified in the original plans. What is the actual capacity of the retention pond once it fills with its own rainwater? Based on the current design, the remaining runoff appears to follow the same old pattern—straight into the streets.

I do appreciate that the entry to the lot has been kept in its current location, which appears to be the only change in the architectural drawing..

Again, I support improvements and upgrades. But the residents who live around this parking lot deserve to be considered and protected. We already know the impact that excess stormwater has on our homes and blocks. The church should not be oblivious to these realities, and the planning committee should not overlook them. Before any revamping is approved—especially converting a sand lot (which absorbs water) into an asphalt lot (which does not)—the drainage design must be fully and properly addressed.

This neighborhood deserves protection, not disregard.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Bellendir  
309 Bayshore Drive  
Venice, FL 34285

312-342-3402

**From:** [David Walter](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [David Walter](#); [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment re Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot Project  
**Date:** Monday, December 1, 2025 3:00:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project Ltr 12.1.2025 Combine.pdf](#)

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

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Please find attached my comments regarding the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot Project. This matter is scheduled for a public hearing tomorrow, December 2, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

Thank you,

David Walter

Prof. David D. Walter

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Venice, Florida 34284-0433

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**786.390.7972      walterd@fiu.edu**

December 1, 2025

Re: The Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project,  
Sarasota County Parcel Identification Number: 0175-16-0018

I previously filed an objection to the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project in May 2025 (see attached May 5, 2025, letter, Exhibit A). The revisions to the original Project Plans resolve the ingress/egress/traffic problems that were created by the original Parking Project Plans.

**However, the Revised Project Plans do NOT address the serious stormwater runoff problem associated with the large parking lot, even though the original Project Plans were rejected by the Planning Commission, in part, for drainage issues. And second, while the lighting for the parking lot has been changed, the lights proposed by the Revised Project Plans will be brighter than the lighting proposed by the original Plan (and much, much brighter than the current parking lot lighting).**

As I stated before, my wife and I own and live at the duplex located at 418 Narvaezi Street, Venice, Florida, about a half block from the proposed Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project site.

**We ask that the revised Project proposal be rejected, for two reasons:**

- (1) the Revised Project Plans still fail to address the substantial stormwater runoff issue** that will affect Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive (and again, the Applicants have not submitted a Storm Water Drainage Plan);
- (2) the Revised Project Plans still fail to deal with the “light pollution” issues** that will result from the brighter, revised parking lot lighting.

**First, as I stated in our May 2025 objection regarding the stormwater flooding issue**, our home at 418 Narvaezi Street (as well as the neighboring home at 301 Parkdale Drive and several homes on the east and southerly side of Parkdale Drive), experience significant flooding 5-10 times each year from the stormwater runoff that travels from the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot, Manatee Court, and Park Lane Drive (the stormwater then flows west down Narvaezi Street and then north down Parkdale Drive). **Currently, these flood waters vary from 4-12 inches**, depending on the rainfall amount and the duration of the rainstorm, and the flood waters typically cover half to three-fourths of the yards facing Narvaezi Street and the east and southerly portion of Parkdale Drive. **Currently, there is NO city stormwater drainage control of any sort on Narvaezi Street or on the southerly portion of Parkdale Drive.**

**The Revised Project Plans should be rejected because they do NOT address the increased stormwater flooding that is likely to occur. Per the Narrative Plan, the original Project Plans were rejected, in part, for drainage issues—this Revised Project Plan should also be rejected because it does not address the drainage issues at all.**

The revised Narrative Plan still notes that there will be a retention pond and claims that water will drain from the retention pond to the Harbor Drive stormwater system, and concludes, without support, that: “stormwater impacts will not be significant due to the limited increase in impervious area. The runoff from the parking be directed to the on-site retention pond and ultimately to an existing storm drain in Harbor Drive North.” See the Project Narrative, Page One; see also the Landscape Plan.

**However, there is NO basis for the conclusion in the Revised Project Plan's Narrative that "stormwater impacts will not be significant" and that "runoff from the parking [will] be directed to the on-site retention pond". For example, per the Plan dimensions, there will be a SIGNIFICANT increase in the impervious, paved parking areas, which will likely increase the frequency, severity, and depth of stormwater on Narvaezi and Parkdale.** The lot size is 250 feet by 146.91 feet, thus totaling about 37,000 square feet (almost one acre in size). A heavy rain that currently creates flood water of 4-12 inches on Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive will create more frequent flooding and much greater flood heights when heavy rains fall on a paved parking lot that is almost an acre in size.

**Further, there is NO indication in the Revised Project Plans that the newly paved parking lot will be graded to drain all or nearly all the parking lot stormwater into the retention pond at the center of parking lot.** The Revised Project's Landscape Plan shows the elevation of the current gravel parking lot ranging from about 13 to 14 feet, the elevation of Manatee Court at 12-14 feet, and the elevation of Park Lane at 11-12 feet (the elevation of Narvaezi Street is about 10 feet). As it is currently designed, what is not absorbed by the gravel parking lot runs to Manatee Court and Park Lane and then to Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive.

The Revised Project's Landscape Plan shows elevations ranging from 13.4 to 14.3 in the newly paved parking lot, with no indication that the parking lot will be graded to the center so that water can flow into the retention pond. **Considering that the parking lot elevations are much greater than the adjacent street elevations, much of the stormwater will run off the new paved parking lot and pour additional water onto Manatee Court and Park Lane Drive, thus increasing the flooding on Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive.**

**Finally, as for the lighting of the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot,** as I stated in my May 2025 letter, the current parking lot is lighted by one small light at the back of the parking lot. There is also a street light at the corner of Narvaezi Street and Park Lane Drive. Those in our neighborhood appreciate the fact that Prentiss French Park and our homes are not fully lighted at night (for one reason, it makes it much easier to see the stars at night). Although the Park has three street lights at various intersections on the north, south, and west sides, as well as some lighting coming from the various condominium units, the park and our homes are not fully lighted at night.

The original Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot Lighting Plan showed four new lights, projecting .8-5.7 foot-candles of light (although it was not clear that the installation would actually be limited to the lighting specified). **While the Revised Project Photometric Plan now shows only two lights, those two lights will now project .6-10.6 foot-candles of light—this lighting will be much brighter than the lighting proposed by the original Project plans, and much, much brighter than the current lighting and what is needed for a parking lot that should be empty on most nights.**

Thus, for the reasons stated above, I ask you to reject the revised Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project Plans. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the telephone number or email address provided above.

Thank you,

*/s/ David D. Walter*

Prof. David D. Walter  
Attorney at Law  
Florida Bar No. 47401

**EXHIBIT A**

**Prof. David D. Walter**  
*Professor, Emeritus, Florida International University College of Law*  
*Attorney at Law*

**P.O. Box 433, Venice, Florida 34284-0433**  
**786.390.7972      walterdd@fiu.edu**

May 5, 2025

Re: The Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project,  
Sarasota County Parcel Identification Number: 0175-16-0018.

My wife and I own and live at the duplex located at 418 Narvaezi Street, Venice, Florida, about a half block from the proposed Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project site. While we would have preferred to share our thoughts live at the May 6, 2025, meeting, we are currently out of town (we were at a funeral in Iowa on Saturday).

**We ask that the proposed Project be rejected, as it is currently written, for three reasons:**

- (1) the proposal fails to deal adequately with the stormwater runoff issue** that will affect Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive (to our knowledge, no Storm Water Drainage Plan has been submitted);
- (2) the proposal fails to deal with the increased likelihood of serious pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle accidents** that will occur at the new proposed entrance to the Parking Lot (to our knowledge, no Vehicle Turning Path Analysis or other traffic or safety analysis has been submitted); and
- (3) the proposal fails to deal adequately with the “light pollution” issues** that will result from typical parking lot lighting (to our knowledge, no Exterior Lighting Plan has been submitted).

**First, regarding the stormwater flooding issue**, please understand that our lot at 418 Narvaezi Street, as well as the neighboring lot at 301 Parkdale Drive and several homes on the east and southerly side of Parkdale Drive, experience significant flooding 5-10 times each year from the stormwater runoff that travels west down Narvaezi Street (from Park Lane Drive and the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot) and then turns north onto Parkdale Drive. Flood waters vary from 4-12 inches, depending on the rainfall amount and the duration of the rainstorm, and the flood waters typically cover half to three-fourths of the yards facing Narvaezi Street and the east and southerly portion of Parkdale Drive. **Currently, there is NO stormwater drainage control of any sort on Narvaezi Street or on the southerly portion of Parkdale Drive.**

**The Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project, as currently conceived, should be rejected because the proposal fails to deal with the increased stormwater flooding that is likely to occur.** The plans note that there will be a retention pond, and that water will drain from the retention pond to the Harbor Drive stormwater system, and concludes that: “stormwater impacts will not be significant due to the limited increase in impervious area. The runoff from the parking be directed to the on-site retention pond and ultimately to an existing storm drain in Harbor Drive North.” See the Project Narrative, Page One; see also the Landscape Plan.

**However, there is NO basis in the plans to conclude that the “stormwater impacts will not be significant”, especially considering the SIGNIFICANT increase in the impervious, paved parking areas. There is NO indication in the Landscape Plan or any other plan that the newly paved parking lot will be designed or graded to drain all or nearly all the Parking Lot stormwater into the retention pond at the center of Parking Lot. The current gravel parking lot absorbs much of the rainfall, except during heavy rainstorms—but a paved parking lot will instead pour additional water onto Parklane Drive and Narvaezi Street, thus increasing the flooding on Narvaezi Street and Parkdale Drive.**

**Second, as for the increased likelihood of serious pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle accidents,** please understand that the current parking lot borders Parklane Drive, which is on east side of Prentiss French Park. The streets around the Park are heavily used by walkers, runners, bicycles, electric bicycles, skaters, skateboarders, golf carts, and vehicles. At present, there is one stop sign located at the corner of Park Lane Drive and Manatee Court (directly adjacent to the parking lot), and a second stop sign located at the corner of Park Lane Drive and Narvaezi Street (also directly adjacent to the parking lot). **Unfortunately, virtually no one stops at these two stop signs, with most vehicles driving through the stop signs at 5-15 miles per hour.**

**However, the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Project proposes to move the new parking lot entrance from its current location on Manatee Court to Park Lane Drive, directly between the two intersections with the two ineffective stop signs, which means that vehicles exiting the Parking Lot will be greeted by pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles coming from FOUR directions:**

- (1) folks turning north at the Manatee Court corner onto Park Lane Drive (who typically do not stop at the stop sign);
  - (2) folks moving south from Park Lane Drive (who typically do not stop at the stop sign);
- as well as,
- (3) folks traveling east from Narvaezi Street, and
  - (4) folks traveling north from Park Lane Drive.

**The problem will likely be compounded by the vegetation and shrubbery installed near the west and south side of the new Parking Lot (see the Landscape Plan), which will make it more difficult for vehicles leaving the parking lot to see the oncoming pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles, especially those that have not stopped at the stop signs.** Although the current entrance on Manatee Court is not ideal, that is still the best location for the entrance to the Parking Lot, given that folks exiting the Parking Lot will only need to look left (east) and right (west) to avoid pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

**Finally, as for the lighting of the Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot,** the Parking Lot is currently lighted by one small light at the back of the parking lot. There is also a street light at the corner of Narvaezi Street and Park Lane Drive. To our knowledge, those in our neighborhood appreciate the fact that Prentiss French Park and our homes are not fully lighted at night (for one reason, it makes it much easier to see the stars at night). Although the Park has three street lights at various intersections on the north, south, and west sides, as well as some lighting coming from the various condominium units, the park and our homes are not fully lighted at night. The Epiphany Cathedral Parking Lot Lighting Plan appears to show only four new lights, projecting .8-5.7 foot-candles of light, but it is not clear that the installation will actually be limited to the lighting specified.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the telephone number or email address provided above.

Thank you,

*/s/ David D. Walter*

Prof. David D. Walter  
Attorney at Law  
Florida Bar No. 47401