

From: [Douglas B Taylor](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Venice Theatre Height Variance
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 6:01:54 PM

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the subject of the Venice Theatre tower height.

My name is Doug Taylor. I reside at 113 Asti Ct, North Venice, and have been a resident of the Venice, FL area since 2006. In full disclosure, I am a member of the Venice Theatre Board of Directors, however I am writing as a long-time volunteer fly rail operator at Venice Theatre (VT).

As I'm sure you know, the fly rail is (was) an area back stage at VT. It was located on the left side, from the audience perspective, about 10-15 feet above stage level. The purpose of the fly rail is to operate a series of ropes and pulleys connected to "rails" that hold the giant curtains covering the stage, set pieces such as doors or even entire room facades, and lighting or other equipment. These rails, and their hanging curtains, set pieces or equipment, reside out of sight in the VT tower until they are "flown in" (lowered to the stage) for the audience to see.

The large curtains and set facades often weigh hundreds and hundreds of pounds. To enable volunteers like me (weighing 145 pounds) to pull them in or out of the tower during rehearsals and shows, the pulleys have counterweights loaded on the opposite side from the ropes. Because of the height of the old VT tower, it was only possible to load counterweights from the bottom of the fly rail. This meant people generally balancing on a small platform 10-15 feet above stage level, or even on beams about the size of gymnast balance beams, and contorting themselves in a way that enabled them to stack 10lb, 20lb, 50lb weights on the back side of the fly ropes. We got to be pretty good at it, but it was certainly a risky and sometimes painful process.

On the front side of the ropes, attaching curtains, set pieces and equipment to rails, often required theatre personnel or volunteers to lean out from "cherry picker" lifts raised 10, 20 or 30 feet above the stage. Again, VT people are pretty good at this, but because of the relatively low height of the old tower they were required to assume a higher level of risk.

The height variance requested by VT for the new tower is not a request based on vanity or even on aesthetics (although the proposed tower would be aesthetically pleasing, as well as consistent with Venice architecture.) The height variance request is based on safety.

The additional height of the new VT tower will allow for the loading areas to be stationed not just at the bottom of the fly rail, but at the top and in the center. This means that counterweights and equipment can be properly and permanently stationed at the appropriate elevations in the tower to ensure a significantly safer working environment for fly rail volunteers and VT employees. It will also allow VT to meet industry "best practice" standards for this type of theatre operation.

Thank you for your consideration and I encourage you to approve the VT tower variance.

Regards

Doug

From: [Mary](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Re: Support of Venice Theater rezoning application
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 8:19:25 PM

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I am writing in support of Venice Theater for their application for rezoning as a move to the Edge District, as per the Planning Commission.

I have been an active volunteer with the theater, as they have gone through their IAN trauma, and efforts to build a better theater for the community with this unexpected remodeling.

I understand this will assist the actors and stage hands below the stage, and allow for the new/better equipment with higher (fly loft) above the stage.

Hopefully we can help the theater with their recovery efforts, as they are truly an asset to our area, both with their ongoing performances, and education for our local children and grandchildren.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Mary Veeder
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From: [Tommye Whittaker](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Fernandez](#); [Dan Lobeck](#); [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: The PUD and changes to Venice Theatre
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 8:00:10 AM

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Good morning City Council members,

Today will be a very busy schedule. These are my opinions. I'm not speaking on behalf of Venice Thrives.

Venice Theatre is a gem for the community. The majority of former Venice Unites understand why they switched to the Downtown Edge District. It is necessary for the protection and preservation to rebuild the theater stronger and better than the part built in the 1980s that came down in the hurricane. I wholeheartedly support their endeavors. As far as I know, there won't be pushback about the height issue. These are extenuating circumstances. It's why the final say is from the Council members.

The next issue is awkward and uncomfortable. Mr. Neal, as a developer, is renegeing on his promises to his homeowners in Milan, Ceilo, and Airea, to name a few—a good old-fashioned bait and switch. In as late as 2021, the map he gives the new homeowner shows the preserves. (See below part of a purchase and sales agreement. They must sign it with their initials). It shows the wildlife estuary, as well. How can you sell homes with the promise of living with nature, a park-like setting, then put up a 47,000 sq feet Publix, 18,000 of nail salons and a 5,000 sq feet resturant with all its light, traffic and sound pollution? Mr. Neal induced reliance.

Thank you.
Tommye Whittaker
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Venice, FL.



Sent from my iPad