

Carol B. Knopka and William N. Knopka
309 Cipriani Way
Venetian Golf and River Club
N. Venice, FL 34275
Phone: 941.484.7687/Cell: 770.329.7922.

**Reference: Pat Neal Petition for a Regional Shopping Center
Across from the Venetian Golf and River Club (VGRC)**

Dear City Councilmember:

We oppose the Neal Petition because it may adversely affect our lifestyle with potential negative effects on our property values. We bought our home in VGRC in August 2006. VGRC is a lovely community, and we came here because of the quality of life.

At the time, traffic was reasonably light, and we had only one choice when leaving the club, turning right, since the Jacaranda extension did not exist. After completion of the Jacaranda extension to Laurel Road, traffic increased but with the building of Milano, Cielo and Aria (Neal Communities), it measurably increased. Although we can still safely leave our community via either left or right turns, it has become riskier and more difficult depending on the season. And with the added communities (Fiore & Visera) southwest of VGRC, we predict even heavier traffic putting our personal safety into more jeopardy.

The commercial center proposed by Neal (a 5,000 SF complex with a grocery store, restaurant, and gas station) will become a magnet drawing people from at least 7,000 homes (per Neal documents). The entrance will be directly across from the VGRC entrance. The County has refused to consider a light at this intersection.

This is unsatisfactory. Not only from a driving perspective, but increased risk of crime and theft, as well as an attractive nuisance for vermin, raccoons, and rats. If the proposal is approved the shopping center in the proximity of several developments will have increased traffic, noise, and lights from delivery trucks at all hours of the day and night. Parking lot lights may overtake our neighborhood nighttime view.

The irony of the Neal proposal is it will replace a known wildlife pond/habitat. The result: no more shore birds, perching birds in the bushes and trees. The 2017 Milano PUD Binding Master Plan and the Cielo Final Plat of 2019 said there would be no commercial establishment in Milano PUD.

We oppose the Neal Petition because it may adversely affect our lifestyle with a potential negative effect on our property values. Please take the above points into consideration as you review the Neal Proposal.

Sincerely,

Carol & William Knopka

From: [Randy Fluharty](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: PID #0391-04-1000 Milano PUD
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 11:40:33 PM

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Hello,

I will keep this simple. We did not move from Maryland from a semi-rural area outside of Washington DC to be around lots of people and traffic, if we wanted that we would have bought in Lakewood Ranch or further north.

We currently live in a Neil community - Milano on a pond that faces Jacaranda s that we bought to live in while our new house is being built. Living in Milano we hear constant noise from I-75 along with vehicles going on Jacaranda, pick up trucks you really hear not only the exhaust but the tire noise sounds like it is coming in the house. When a big truck goes by you hear like it is in the house which is very annoying, making me consider Naples which is much quieter.

Currently, we are building a \$1.2 million dollar home in Neil property - Aria across the street from Milano, the noise from I-75 after the trees where torn down is loud and annoying since we are on an another lake...the next thing you will have to fund will be sound walls like Fruitville Road. Had we really spent some time in the area we would have chosen elsewhere away from the noise so we do not want more added which will not only be annoying while driving down our property values.

We along with other neighbors are perfectly fine driving less than 2 miles to two different Publics to get what we want. Please vote down Neil's plan to build a Publix with a "Fast Food" place in our neighborhood. I will personally never visit the Publix on Laurel - Jacaranda nor will many neighbors thus leaving a sub-standard or closed store in our area.

Don't cave to big developers and please do not destroy my home value.

Thank you for your consideration,

Randy and Barbara Fluharty
Milano Development - 283 Cassano Drive - Nokomis, FL

Aria Development - 488 Boccelli Drive - Nokomis, FL

From: [Gordon Hiltz](#)
To: [Nicholas Pachota](#); [Jim Boldt](#); [Mitzie Fiedler](#); [Rachel Frank](#); [Rick Howard](#); [Richard Longo](#); [Helen Moore](#)
Cc: [City Council](#); [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Neal Communities want to enhance our lifestyle!
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 10:46:28 PM

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To Venice Mayor and City Councillors:

My wife and I have been homeowners in Venetian Golf and River Club since 2013 and previously we rented in Venetian for 5 years. We love Venice and where we live. Mr. Neal, the developer says they want to enhance our lifestyle and they went to some expense to prepare and send a brochure to all residents. They wasted money because the majority of Venetian residents are far from convinced.

Their proposed development on Laurel, opposite the Venetian entrance, is not going to enhance our lifestyle because, in fact it is going to do the opposite. I am sure as Mayor and Aldermen you are aware of the reasons the majority of Venetian residents as well as Neal's three developments on Jacaranda are not in favour of this development. I am not going to repeat all of the very solid reasons for you folks to turn down this development. The reasons are all valid. I have only two additional reasons my wife and I would like to express.

Commercial development ruining a 5 mile tranquil residential area:

Approximately two miles from the Venetian entrance on Laurel and about three miles on Jacaranda we have 5 existing subdivisions and two more are being built on Laurel. There is a commercial development on Laurel near Knight's Trail that has service stations, fast food locations and some general shopping areas. Now Neal Properties wants to open up a new Commercial area as though we have a need. We don't! Our concern is that the proposed development is a negative because in addition to not needing it, the development will be an eyesore for our area. We are happy with Laurel having greenery and ponds contributing to a country like atmosphere. Trading this for a large parking lot and bright lights, traffic including truck noise and busy entrance/exit is a complete negative for what is now a pleasant drive, even when Laurel becomes a 4 lane road. I would suggest that you folks drive down Laurel and Jacaranda and you can see why seeing Commercial Development at Knight's Trail on Laurel and below I-75 on Jacaranda. We simply don't need this Commercial development in the middle of our tranquil environment.

Neal Community Motivation:

Neal Communities seems to be motivated by development at all cost. They have a total of 5 mixed developments on Laurel and Jacaranda. They have generally done a good job creating a nice community, particularly on Jacaranda. It is too early to tell what will happen on the new Laurel developments across from Willow Chase.

It appears that as they prepared development proposals for new communities, they

realized there was a few acre piece of land that was isolated from their development plans because of it being bordered by Preserves etc and they just had to find an excuse for development, so they created a need for retail development to consume the space. They decided they would try to sell the idea to enhancing residences lifestyle and at the same time, enhance their own lifestyle. The simple fact is we don't need this retail anomaly in an area which is very well developed Residential area and this should not be ruined by planting a retail entity that is not needed. All for the ultimate benefit of a developer.

We believe the Venice Planning Committee made the right decision and we are very hopeful you folks will agree.

**Regards,
Paula and Gordon Hiltz
148 Pesaro Drive
Venetian Golf and River Club**

May 12, 2023

To Venice City Council:

My name is Barbara Puccia and I live in the Venetian Golf & River Club (VGRC). The entrance to VGRC is directly across from the proposed entrance to the shopping center Neal Communities is planning to build in the Milano PUD. I adamantly oppose this project along with the vast majority of VGRC homeowners. 705 homes (over 1400 residents) in the VGRC voted "NO" in a recent survey.

The Planning Commission outlined seven reasons why this proposal is non-compliant with the LDR when they rejected this petition on 3/21/23. The issue most affecting the VGRC is LDR Code 86-47(f)(1)(h) "Congestion may be increased excessively by this proposal."

Neal Community's own traffic engineer testified at the Planning Commission that the proposed commercial development (including a major supermarket and fast-food restaurant) would draw thousands of residents from the surrounding communities to this site. Residents would come from existing communities, Willow Chase, Aria, VGRC, Toscana Isles, Treviso Grand, Vicenza, Venice Woodlands and new communities now being built, Wisteria, Fiore, Palencia. This goes against LDR Code 86-130(r) which clearly states that commercial activity should be limited only to the PUD (Milano). Reason enough for the City Council to reject this proposal.

Now imagine those thousands of residents converging on the entrance, along with the multitudes of huge delivery trucks and you can see the absolute traffic and noise nightmare that will ensue. With the Laurel Road expansion, there will be four lanes of traffic. But with this shopping center, there will be 3 additional lanes. The unnecessary congestion caused by 7 lanes of traffic, in what is now a quiet residential area, clearly goes against the LDR code mentioned above. This increased congestion will also hamper the ability of the fire trucks (at Fire Station 53 just east of this site) to respond to calls.

There is no compelling reason to put a commercial shopping center in an area that is now quiet wetlands and protects wildlife. There are 2 Publix available within 2 miles of this location. A third commercial center belongs on Knights Trail. Mr. Boone himself, has made this exact statement.

On July 11, 2017 when the Milano PUD proposal was before this Council, Councilwoman Gates said that the city was looking for park land and asked if Mr. Neal could set aside a couple of acres within the PUD. Mr. Boone replied that "Active recreation parks with lights, loudspeakers, traffic, parking, noise, kids screaming, and all those great sounds. That's probably better, if someone could give me a pen to design where to put a park, I would put it up on Knights Trail where hardly anyone lives around it and it's not going to cause a problem for anybody."

In Mr. Boone's own words, a recreation park would be incompatible with the Milano neighborhood. A shopping center will have magnitudes more traffic, lights, and noise and congestion. So let's follow the advice of Mr. Boone and put this shopping center where it belongs on Knights Trail. I respectfully ask the City Council to reject this Zoning Amendment Petition by Neal Communities.

Barbara Puccia
179 Valenza Loop, North Venice

From: [Roger Quinn](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Kelly Michaels](#)
Cc: [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: The Proposed Laurel Road Shopping Center
Date: Sunday, May 14, 2023 9:59:49 AM

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The decision you are about to make is not about what is needed today. It is about what will best serve the needs of this community in the future.

Visualize eight thousand new homes and apartments in the immediate vicinity of the Laurel Road and Jacaranda intersection. That means that approximately sixteen to twenty thousand new residents will be added to the present population and convenient shopping for daily necessities will be essential.

Having a convenient shopping center at that location will reduce traffic in both directions. The present Publix locations are experiencing extensive housing and apartment construction in close proximity to their locations, Access to these locations will become very stressed without the new location at Laurel and Jacaranda.

Please make your decision based upon what the community needs as it grows and becomes very densely populated. A new local shopping facility will be most welcome to all the new residents and the current ones.

Thank you for your service to the Venice Community.

Roger Quinn
101 Mestre Court
Venetian Golf and River Club

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From: [Barbara Smith](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Edward Lavallee](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Neal Commercial Project on East Laurel Road, Petition No. 22-38RZ
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 3:38:44 PM

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Although I don't live in Venice, I was asked to share a bit of information about our neighborhood Publix.

Bee Ridge Road had some much needed improvements years ago and added four roundabouts east of the Interstate. There was grumbling and protests initially but when the project was finally completed, we realized the roundabouts work well.

At the fourth roundabout, there was huge opposition to the proposed shopping center—noise, increased traffic, delivery trucks, and we already have a large, busy Publix just a couple miles away west of the Interstate, etc.

It's a smaller footprint but they still have a pharmacy, bakery and deli. It's easy to get to (because of the roundabout), small enough that it carries everything we need. For those with limited mobility, the smaller size makes it much easier to shop. In that small strip shopping center, there are two restaurants, Italian and Chinese, a pet food/grooming store, nail salon, dental office, UPS office, pool supply store and a bank on an outparcel. The surrounding neighborhoods are mostly golf course communities and a lot of people use their golf carts to run to Publix.

The Bee Ridge Neighborhood Committee (an ad hoc group comprising 11 HOAs representing 3,200 homeowners) expressed the main concerns of the large Publix delivery trucks. Publix listened; their trucks do not create any traffic nor noise issues and use a less busy road for deliveries. Ingress and egress for private vehicles is easy.

It is impossible to convince residents that they will be happy with the addition of a small shopping center near their homes. Most of us in the area can leave our house, go to Publix, pick up a few things and be back home in about 20 minutes—we love that convenience.

Barbara Smith
Laurel Oak resident in Sarasota

From: [Kevin Brown](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: We are in favor of the Milano PUD BMP amendment.
Date: Sunday, May 14, 2023 4:39:30 PM

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We are in favor of the amendment because it will keep us from having to travel dangerous areas to get our shopping done. Those areas would be the Jacaranda Circle @ E. Venice Ave and the other area is I -75 / Laurel Rd. interchange. We live in this area of concern and are Venice citizens, we are not part time citizens. We would love to have options closer to home, which would also be a safer drive. We have also lived in the Venice area and have seen a lot of change these 40+ yrs., to have this Publix is one of the smarter decisions, we believe. Thank you,
Hopeful Venice residents