

From: [b buck](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Zoning Change Jacaranda Blvd and Laurel Rd
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023 5:54:10 AM

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Another Publix ?? More fast food ?? Come on folks... this insanity has to stop !

**Brian Buckheit
611 Paget Drive,
Venice Fl 34293**

May 17, 2023

Venice City Council

401 W. Venice Avenue

Venice, FL 34285

Re: Ordinance No. 2023-11

Zoning Map Amendment Petition No. 22-38RZ

Milano Planned Unit Development

Via email: CityCouncil@Venicefl.gov

Honorable Mayor Pachota and City Council Members,

My name is Paul Connolly. My wife Rita and I reside at 228 Casalino Drive in Milano. I have been in practice as a civil engineer and land surveyor for the past 47 years.

I wish to make several points regarding the proposed commercial center.

Point #1:

The failure to designate the location of the commercial “node” at the outset of the PUD approval is poor and flawed planning at the very least. At its most, it is contrary to LDR 86-130 (b) (8) and amounts to “Ambush” development. All people purchasing homes in Milano, Aria

and Cielo should have been put on notice – when they bought in – that commercial development would be coming to the immediate area. This proposed 10+ acre commercial site – previously shown and appearing as “open space” – and now being proposed as a commercial node, appears to be nothing other than a “Bait and Switch” move.

Point #2:

The proposed commercial use will add night time light pollution where none exists now.

Point #3:

DURING the very recent HURRICANE IAN and its aftermath, people in Milano experienced flooded streets (which resembled Venetian canals) and water having risen to within just several feet of their garage doors. The existing stormwater management systems (wetlands and ponds) are now taxed to their maximum potential. PAVING OVER same for the sake of allowing a 10+ acre commercial development hardly sounds, nor seems, like responsible environmental planning and responsible government.

Point #4:

Noise pollution. Sources will include construction vehicles, delivery vehicles, and service vehicles, coming and going all day and all night.

Point #5:

C-STORES including gasoline and diesel fuel storage and dispensing. Why add this unnecessary potential point of pollution? There are already six (6) existing fuel filling stations within 2.5 miles of the Milano PUD.

Point #6:

THE PROPOSAL essentially “drops” a commercial node into what is presently a SEA OF RESIDENTIAL uses. AS SUCH, this proposal is ENTIRELY INCOMPATIBLE with the existing zoning, PUD approvals, and most importantly; EXISTING USES.

Point #7:

Contrary to Application Sect. 86-47 (f), (1), M., the proposed change DOES CONSTITUTE “grant of special privilege” to NEAL Communities by allowing OPEN SPACE to be designated and used as COMMERCIAL space and HARDLY “provides a benefit to the public welfare”.

Due to these and other overwhelming negative impacts which will accompany the proposed commercial center, and because the laws do not permit this commercial center, it would be appropriate to deny the approval for same.

The Venice Planning Commission, after listening to over 10 hours of testimony, has voted 4-3 (on March 23) to DENY their approval of the proposed commercial center. Testimony received by the Commission (other than provided by the Applicant) was entirely in opposition to the application. I trust the same will be the case for testimony presented to you. Please consider, listen and appreciate the carefully considered decision of the Commission and follow their lead in DENYING the application for zoning amendment by Neal Communities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul J. Connolly

228 Casalino Drive

Venice, FL 34275

pconnolly@civilworksne.com

From: [James Cieslak](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: NEAL DEVELOPMENT AT LAUREL AND JACARANDA
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 5:10:18 PM

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TO: Venice City Council Members

FROM: James & Virginia Cieslak
125 Tiziano Way - Venetian Golf & River Club
North Venice, FL 34275

As homeowners at the above address we will be directly impacted by the proposed Neal development. We are very much opposed to this construction project for the following reasons:

- Increased traffic, noise and delivery trucks accessing this development night and day!
-
- Traffic study reveals not only a shopping center, but a restaurant and fast food eatery, as well as other businesses. Increased traffic will result in congestion, noise and unsafe streets (Laurel Rd).
-
- The original plan for this parcel of land was to be a wildlife/bird sanctuary. We have already witnessed the decrease in avian population in Venetian with the construction of the two (2) current developments on the south side of Laurel Rd. Let it remain a natural area!
-
- There are four (4) shopping (grocery-Publix) centers within a few miles of Laurel and Jacaranda - - why on earth do we need another one?

The residents of these communities expect you to not only understand the impact the Neal development will have on their lives, but demand that you side with your constituents and not with a developer.

James & Virginia Cieslak

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From: [Cathy Lazdowski](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Proposed Neal commercial center at Lauren and Jacaranda
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 4:25:36 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

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Dear City Council Members,

I am a resident of Nokomis and reside in the Aria Community, which is part of the Neal Milano PUD. I am writing to share my personal view on the proposal before you to build a commercial center at the corner of Jacaranda Blvd and Laurel Rd, which is less than a mile from our home. I strongly urge you to NOT approve the proposal for a number of reasons outlined below.

- We purchased our lot in Aria in fall 2021 and at the time were told that there would be no commercial development in the PUD. We chose this community because of its quiet location and the extensive wildlife and vegetation in the area. We currently have shore birds and other species in our community and would hate to see them pushed out by additional development. We purchased our home because of the location and now that we have moved into our new home, we feel like we were lied to by Neal just so they could sell homes.
- We are members of the Venetian Golf Club and can currently drive our golf cart over to the course to play. But our fear is that increased traffic and the addition of multiple lanes in front of the Venetian will make it very difficult to navigate there safely. Neal has indicated previously that traffic will actually improve with the addition of the commercial center. But that is just impossible given the 7 lanes of traffic he is proposing. A large Publix will mean more cars and traffic and is certain to make the area much more congested. In addition, many of the retirees living in the Venetian community will now find it difficult to walk and drive out of the entrance to their community.
- Mr. Neal indicates that a grocery store is needed to support all of the new homes going into the area. But there are already Publix stores less than 2 miles away on both Jacaranda and Laurel. That is not too far away to go for groceries. There is also a Winn Dixie on Jacaranda, so a third grocery store is just a quick drive away. We do not need another one.
- Mr. Neal also proposes a fast food restaurant with a drive-thru. This is not the kind of establishment that the communities in the area would frequent or that we feel is in line with the economic profile of the

area. A fast food restaurant will more likely attract people coming off of route 75 to grab a fast meal, which will certainly increase traffic and congestion in the area. This is not a fast food neighborhood (simply look at the prices being paid for the homes in the PUD!).

- According to Neal, the commercial center will serve at least 7,000 homes. It is one thing to build those homes, but to provide a magnet for them – clearly contrary to the land use regulations - means many more people drawn to the immediate area. And with that comes an increased risk of crime, including theft and vandalism. And what about the trash that a shopping center creates including food waste? Mice, rats and raccoons will inevitably be attracted to the dumpsters in back.

Our community opposes this development and I hope you agree that changing the zoning rules now, after the fact, is not acceptable. For those of us who purchased homes thinking that our community would stay the peaceful place that it is, we respectfully ask that you deny this proposal.

Sincerely,
Cathy Lazdowski
316 Corelli Drive (ARIA Community)



Cathy Lazdowski

VP, Marketing

e: clazdowski@vestmark.com

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From: [Joseph and Vanessa Areli](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: May 23 City Council (Vote no on Neal's proposed PUBLIX)
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 3:20:00 PM

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Dear Venice City Council,

We bought our home in Willow Chase in 2021, because we appreciated the beautiful quiet natural setting here. We are not in favor of the proposed commercial development in this area and the increased traffic, noise, and light pollution a large supermarket would bring to this area. We are also concerned about the impact to wildlife. We already have a supermarket nearby. In our view, Neal's proposed supermarket project would negatively change the character of this area. We urge all City Council members to vote NO on the proposed commercial development.

Thank you,

Areliis

From: [David Frazee](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: May 23 Council meeting - Jacaranda and Laurel commercial site
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 3:12:16 PM

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Dear Venice City Council,

As new residents in the Aria neighborhood, we are writing to let you know that we oppose this or any other commercial development plan at the corner of Jacaranda and Laurel. We believe there are sufficient nearby locations for Publix and other proposed retail establishments.

Thank you,
David Frazee
Shelley Frazee

333 Aria Drive
Nokomis, FL 34275

From: [William and Darlene Cieslak](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Darlene Cieslak](#); [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: NEAL PUD COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 2:58:51 PM

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Mayor and City Council Members,

This letter is regarding your final decision on Neal's request to pave over and commercially develop the corner of Laurel Road and Jacaranda that is designated to be preserve and open space. As Venetian Golf and River residents, we are opposed for so many reasons beginning with the importance of conserving and preserving natural areas with so much development taking these spaces away from wildlife. Our proximity to the Myakka River should be of great concern considering the negative impacts of runoff from commercial property with parking lot. Also after Hurricane Ian and the flooding that occurred in this area we need every bit of ground to help absorb high amounts of rainfall and surge of River. We have lived here for 14 years and understood we would eventually have more homes in area but understood it would be similar residential not commercial. We are not part of Neal's PUD so legally we should not be included in its boundaries. The issues that would come from this at our doorstep and at our expense would most definitely be a negative impact on our lives...traffic, noise, lights,crime,rodents, accidents trying to get out of our community. I can only believe the wildlife we have now would want no part of this either. The other issue is the lack of need for any such commercial development at this location when we have plenty of access within a 3 mile radius. If the Rustic Road development has proposed commercial development in their master plan there definitely would not be any need for another east of I75.

VG&RC did a survey since Planning and Zoning decision to clarify our stance. 70% were against this commercial development. So please keep this in mind when you make your vote/final decision. Why would you approve something that surrounding communities don't want? Remember too that we are the voters that put you in the position to represent us not Neal. Please help to keep our neighborhood residential and environmentally friendly.

Bill & Darlene Cieslak
262 Portofino Drive
N Venice, FL
Sent from my iPad

From: [Kenneth Baron](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Joan Harder](#); [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Opposition to Milano PUD Zoning Map Amendment 22-38RZ.
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 2:29:50 PM

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Dear Mr. Mayor and City Council members,

I am writing you today to express my opposition to Milano PUD Zoning Map Amendment 22-38RZ. I reside in the Milano PUD. Approval of this amendment will bring an unnecessary, unwanted, and incompatible shopping center to a residential community. Further, it will increase traffic, increase noise, compromise personal safety, and obliterate a protected wetland.

I have spent my entire adult life in the United States Air Force and in 2020 retired after 35 years of service to this nation. The following year, we moved from Tampa to Venice after our new home was built. During my military career, I moved a total of 14 times. This does not count deployments, which placed me in harm's way countless times and totaled about four years away from family. During these deployments, the living conditions were often far less than desirable. Imagine having to put on body armor just to go to the shower.

The sacrifices my family and I have made for this country are innumerable. We have no regrets and would do it all over again if given the opportunity. I am telling you this for no other reason but to illustrate one point: After the last three decades, I think we have earned the right to enjoy a stable, tranquil life in a nice quiet neighborhood. That's what I thought we were buying three years ago. Now, we are faced with the prospect that the preserve shown in the applicant's marketing material may be replaced with 10.4 acres of concrete and asphalt. This will be within eyesight and earshot of our back patio and was not the vision we had when we decided to build here. In 2020, it wasn't even in the applicant's master plan. We were told by Mr. Neal that "Where we live matters!" and then paid several hundred thousand dollars for our home. This is a bait and switch on the part of the applicant. If this amendment is approved, the city will only be endorsing the bait and switch. Nothing says "Thank you for your service" more than this.

You may recognize that I quoted the slogan from Neal Communities marketing material. That marketing material coupled with Neal Communities reputation at the time was one of the reasons we considered building our final home in Aria. Other factual considerations that played a part in our decision were as follows:

1. Neal Signature Homes marketing material promised attention to detail, environmental protection, and plenty of open space in the development. In 2020, his advertising material showed the subject area as PRESERVE. Additionally, he touted that plenty of shopping was just a short distance away. As it turns out, this was the only true statement. We are currently very happy with our short drive to the grocery store.

--[if !supportLists]--> 2. <!--[endif]-->After moving so many times in my career, we are very attuned to the possibility of future development in the area. I have owned several homes in Florida and I have seen communities such as Valrico and Crestview decimated by development. We scrutinized the approved BINDING master plan prior to proceeding with construction. The BINDING Master Plan stated, “No Commercial” and is the primary reason we bought this property. If we had known about this, we would have NEVER bought in this PUD.

--[if !supportLists]--> 3. <!--[endif]-->I reviewed the existing laws governing land development in the city of Venice. By itself, regulation 86-130 should prohibit this re-zoning. Further, considering the layout of the Milano PUD and its proximity to the Myakka River, construction of a large commercial entity was not feasible. Given the above information, I was comfortable that this would be a residential only community. On paper, I envisioned a slower paced community which offered safe and abundant recreational activities. My wife and I are currently not afraid to drive or ride a bicycle on the streets of Venice. Doing this in Tampa, especially near commercial entities, is a death wish. Based on our research, we chose to live in Northeast Venice and felt Aria was the perfect community for us.

As a military officer, I took an oath of office to support and defend the Constitution...essentially to protect our democracy. One of the pillars of a democracy is that citizens vote for leaders to represent them and their ideas, and the leaders support the citizens' interests. Another pillar is that we are a nation that

follows the rule of law. As Mayor and City Council members, you also took an oath. While I am unsure of the exact verbiage, I can assume that your charge is to represent and respond to the needs of the citizens you represent within the realm of local decision-making powers.

70% or more of the citizens in the surrounding communities have gone on record stating their opposition to this rezoning application. I am sure you have heard or will hear from many of them in the coming weeks. I am equally as certain that you are familiar with the laws governing land development in the city of Venice. As someone who has spent his lifetime protecting our way of life, I am not asking for any special favors for myself. I am simply asking that you to listen to the citizens you represent and follow the law. That's all.

Rezoning this area for commercial use would be unprecedented. The Planning Commission has recommended denial of this amendment based on legal aspects and its incompatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. It will be a detriment to our community and will forever spoil the natural beauty that remains. After everything that I have done for this country over the last 35 years, "Where I Live (SHOULD)Matter(s)". My wife and I made a lifetime investment based on those words and the research which supported the decision. My wife and I do not deserve to be deceived or have our quality of life adversely impacted by this applicant or by a misinterpretation of the laws of this city.

Finally, I wish to thank you all for your service to this city. The task before you is an arduous one. I have also been faced with many difficult decisions in my career, several of which meant life or death. I always did what was fundamentally right and based my decisions on fact, law, and my moral compass. Those values never steered me wrong.

Warmest regards,

Kenneth Baron, Lieutenant Colonel (ret), USAF

209 Corelli Drive, North Venice

From: [Steve Wright](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Shopping Plaza - Laurel Road / Jacaranda Blvd
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 2:13:06 PM

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Steve Wright. My wife Ann and I have been residents of the Venetian Golf and River Club since 2004. We have built two homes in the Venetian during our nearly 19 years in North Venice, Florida.

I am certain that you all have been inundated with correspondence and other communications regarding the subject above.

Respecting your time, I will not herewith repeat the myriad of concerns and objections you have heard regarding the proposed shopping plaza.

Simply, I would ask that each of you consider three guiding life principles that have always served me well. I first heard these principles beautifully articulated by former Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz while attending a National Food industry convention in Chicago many years ago.

These principles are: Always do your best. Do the right thing and treat others as you would like to be treated.

I urge you to think about these three life guide posts as you make your decision about the North Venice shopping plaza. It quite simply has no place in this quiet residential area.

Thank you for your public service and for reading this document.

Regards,

Steve Wright
109 Valenza Loop
North Venice, FL

Sent from my iPhone

From: [James Fullerton](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Neal's Commercial development
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 9:47:05 AM

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Please, 10 acres of wet land is a precious commodity at corner of Laurel and Jacaranda. Do NOT endorse his ill conceived commercial project.

Jim Fullerton
117 Tiziano Way
North Venice, FL 34275
(203) 610-5506

From: [Joe Browne](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Kelly Michaels](#); [Mercedes Barcia](#); [Toni Cone](#); [Amanda Hawkins-Brown](#)
Subject: Vote No Please!
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 11:20:17 AM

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To the Venice City Council,

My wife and I live full time in the Venetian Golf and River Club, on Montelluna Drive, since 2016.

We are painfully aware of the effort by Neal Communities to build a shopping center anchored by a Publix grocery store near us with an entrance directly in front of the main entrance to the VGRC. Thank goodness the Venice Planning Commission has denied Neal. Now it's your turn.

We are no longer young and we are very worried on competing with a major intersection directly across from our entrance which will have cars and large trucks entering the shopping center at all hours of the day and night. We have adequate grocery shopping in both directions, less than 3 miles from our community.

When we moved here, it was mainly for the nature surrounding us and the sunshine. Paving over the open space, wetlands and depriving the wildlife and fish from a natural area is ludicrous and will damage the permanently communities near Jacaranda and Laurel Road.

Please so not allow Neal to build that shopping center!!

Please, please.

With Respect,
Joe and Maria Browne