



SARASOTA ALLIANCE
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

September 2, 2021

Venice Planning Commission Board
401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
planningcommission@venicegov.com

Re: Gulf Beach Setback Waiver Request:
Walter Farley House, 1100 Sunset Dr., Venice

Dear Commissioners:

The Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation (SAHP) is endorsing the request by the new owners of the former Walter Farley house, Craig and Julie Hoensheid, for a waiver of the Gulf Beach Setback Line. This waiver is critically important to preserve the original Walter Farley family home and his writing studio. The loss of the Farley home and studio would be a tremendous blow to the City of Venice and to the numerous fans of this well-known 20th century Venice resident and renowned writer. The property is on the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation's Eleven-To-Save list.

The SAHP believes that the Hoensheids, with the expertise of Hall Darling Design Studios, have gone to great lengths to understand the historical significance of the Walter Farley home. They have conceptually designed a new home that will incorporate a restored the original Ralph Twitchell structure in a sensitive manner that will allow it to maintain visibility and its most significant historical integrity.

The SAHP is also aware that the more recent addition to the original Farley house is not salvageable due to its advanced state of decline. We regret that the entire structure cannot be saved and restored but believe the original home and studio, which was better constructed and is in much better shape, represent the most critical historical elements.

It is our understanding that without the waiver of the Gulf Beach setback, the entire Ralph Twitchell & Jack West structure will be lost to demolition. This must be avoided.

Walter Farley, as you know, is a Venice treasure whose work is memorialized at the Venice Library with the Walter Farley Literary Landmark, a museum-quality historical display.

In conclusion, the Hoensheids have made a large financial commitment to preserve this structure, one that is singularly unique in its architectural significance, contribution to our cultural heritage, the financial commitment of its owners to restore it and its importance to the City of Venice. The Commission Planning Board has the power to preserve the most significant aspects of Walter Farley's home and studio.

We ask that you exercise this power for the good of the community.

Yours Truly,

Dave Baber TMc

Dave Baber
Vice President and Chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee
Sarasota Alliance For Historic Preservation

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