

Full Name	Phone Number	Check In	What is your address?	If not a Public Hearing Item or an Ordinance, what topic are you speaking on?	Resident/ Property Owner, Business Owner, or Non-	Public Comment or presenting as an Applicant or Agent?	What topic are you speaking on?
William Huber	6308535393	03/27/2024 at 8:42am	845 the esplanade apt 408, venice, fl	illegal private use of higel park	City Resident / Property Owner	Public Comment	Topic Not on Agenda/ General Audience
Kristin Hoffschmidt	6085770471	03/27/2024 at 8:54am	232 Gulf dr	n\	City Resident / Property Owner	Public Comment	2025 Proposed Capital Improvement Program
Nancy DeForge	3525867038	03/27/2024 at 8:59am	laurel hollow drive		Non- Resident/ Not a Property Owner	Public Comment	2025 Proposed Capital Improvement Program

From: [Kristin Hoffschmidt](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Board and Council Messages](#)
Subject: CIP Workshop - Venice Thrives Environmental Committee comments
Date: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 1:05:20 PM

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To the Venice City Council,

Thank you for hearing my comments today at the CIP Workshop. A written version of my comments are below for your reference and I would like to ask that they be entered into the record.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for further information.

Sincerely,
Kristin Hoffschmidt
608-577-0471

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Kristin Hoffschmidt and I am a resident of the City of Venice. I am a member of the Environmental Committee of Venice Thrives, which is a citizen group dedicated to protecting and preserving Venice as a great place to live. I'd like to highlight some specific suggestions related to the proposed projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and encourage you to incorporate environmental considerations globally as part of each of these requests.

The first is **Street Lamp Upgrades** (p. 45 of the CIP Memo) and **Sports Lighting** at Chuck Reiter Park (p.48). Some simple changes can make this lighting less harmful to nocturnal wildlife. We encourage Venice to adhere to the recommendations of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, such as incorporating shields so that the bulbs are not visible from above and using LED lights with long wavelengths (<https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-protect/lighting/pollution/>; also see <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nightskies/sustainable-outdoor-lighting.htm> and <https://darksky.org/what-we-do/darksky-approved/outdoor-sports-lighting/> for products). Just as we use different lights along the beach to protect hatchlings during sea turtle nesting season, we should be mindful of the devastating impact that bright LED lights have on migratory birds, owls, bats, and the insects they depend on.

We would also like the City to consider including **solar panels** to power new buildings, such as the new fire station (p. 57), fleet maintenance facility (p. 73) and public works building (p. 58). Solar panels have both economic and environmental benefits, and we encourage Venice to incorporate them into the initial design of these buildings. The cost of solar infrastructure has been dropping for the past decade and is expected to continue, while the cost of traditional electricity generation in Florida has gone up.

We encourage Venice to purchase **electrically powered vehicles and equipment**. The long-term fuel savings is significant, and costs are going down, in addition to the benefit of dramatic reductions in harmful emission. New vehicles should use more electrical power and have better gas mileage. The worksheet on p. 142 proposes replacing a Prius with a Ford Maverick truck. It is unclear if the truck will be a hybrid, but even if it was, that would still be a significant reduction in fuel economy.

We encourage the City of Venice to use **native plants** for landscaping. Native plants make good economic sense because they use less water and are hardier and more adaptable than exotic plants, in addition to providing great ecological benefits to animals, insects, and the ecosystem. The Venice Museum Landscaping project (p.68) mentions Florida Friendly Landscaping and we encourage planners to take that a step further and focus specifically on beneficial native plants.

We urge the City of Venice to prioritize environmental considerations in projects related to **stormwater management**. I live on Deertown Gully, an outfall that crosses under Harbor Drive on the south end of the island. It is owned and maintained by the County and the City maintains the outfall and has projects related to water quality including those on pp. 126 and 128. Protecting water quality involves much more than unimpeded water flow and should include planting native vegetative buffer zones around waterways to filter runoff.

The Environmental Committee of Venice Thrives appreciates your consideration of these specific suggestions and encourages you to incorporate environmental criteria as part of all capital improvement projects.

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To: The Venice City Council

March 27, 2024

Higel Park has been Hijacked for Private Use

As you are no doubt aware, Higel Marine Park, "City owned and County Operated", occupies a finger of land that begins at Tarpon Bay Drive next to the Venice Yacht Club and juts out about 400 feet east into Robert's Bay. It has a boat launch, parking lots for cars and boat trailers, a pavilion with restrooms, a BBQ grill and several picnic tables.

Until a year or so ago, the east end of the park provided a beautiful picnic area with a striking view of Robert's Bay (Fig. 1). That ended when the Vence Youth Boating Association erected a 6-foot high, 60-foot-long, white plastic fence extending the full width of the park completely blocking off all public entry to the east end and destroying the view. (Figs. 2 and 3). Signs now posted by the VVBA on the wall announce: "Warning, Private Property, No Trespassing, Video Surveillance." (Fig. 4).

However well intended, private use of a public park is illegal, as it violates two Venice Statutes, Sec. 46-182 and Sec. 46-186:

- Sec. 46-182: "Marine parks as designated by the city, including ALL FACILITIES located thereon, shall be OPEN to the general public and shall be governed by the rules and regulations in this division."
- Sec. 46-186: "For purposes of this chapter, no person entering upon and using an area designated as a marine park, including Higel Marine Park and Venice Marina Park and boat ramp, situated within the corporate limits of the city, including ALL FACILITIES located thereon, shall: Perform any activity which, at the time, is not compatible with the public's utilization of the park."

It is abundantly clear that erecting 6-foot high, 60-foot-long fence, stretching from water line to water line, blocking all public access flagrantly violates both the letter and spirit of both laws. On the off chance that the Venice City Council or any authority could have mistakenly seen this end of the park as "wasted space," they should realize natural beauty that provides a quiet setting, and a view of water is never wasted. The VYBA was evidently quick to realize this as they moved a picnic table to their side of the fence to better relax and enjoy the view. (Fig.5)

Those who want to sail on the water are not entitled to exclude those who simply want to enjoy the view. Undo the mistake, find a better place for the VYBA to store their boats. Take down the wall.

Sincerely,


William Huber
845 The Esplanade N. Apt 408
Venice FL, 34285

Fig. 1 Roberts Bay (Before the Wall)



Fig. 2 White Wall



Fig. 3 White Wall



Fig 4. Warning Signs

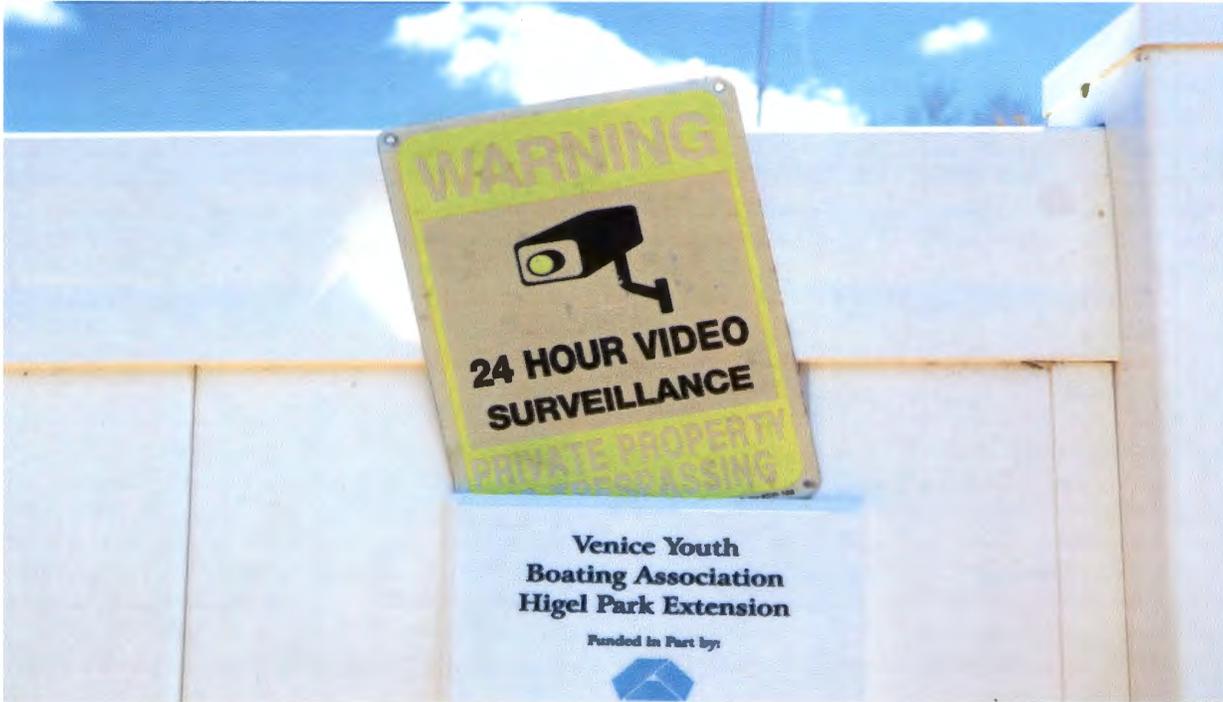


Fig. 5 VYBA Picnic Table in the shade with a lovely view

