



WINDWOOD

February 2, 2021

To: Planning Commission, City of Venice
Cc: Mayor Feinsod, City of Venice
City Council, City of Venice
Roger Clark, Planning and Zoning Department
Jeff Shrum, Planning and Zoning Department
Nicole Tremblay, Planning and Zoning Department
Lori Stelzer, City Clerk

Good Afternoon. My name is Steve Carr. I am the president of the Windwood Neighborhood Association. I'm here today on behalf of the Windwood Community regarding three items on today's Planning Commission meeting agenda. They are agenda items 20-45AN: Watermark at Venice Annexation, 20-46CP: Watermark at Venice Comprehensive Plan Amendment and 20-47RZ Watermark at Venice Zoning Map Amendment.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Jeffrey Boone and representatives from Thompson Thrift Development for meeting with the Windwood Neighborhood Homeowners last night to discuss the Watermark at Venice project. We were all extremely pleased to learn the originally proposed multi-story apartment building has been eliminated and the new revised plan calls for the building of all one and two story paired villas throughout the property. Although there are many positive aspects of the plan, we still have concerns and at this time request the Planning Commission postpone making the decision regarding the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and the Zoning Map Amendment until the concerns are addressed or clarified.

First, the proposed plan is still in the conceptual phase. There are many unanswered questions regarding the actual number, placement and orientation of the twin villas and other structures on the property. The overall impact on traffic and infrastructure is also unknown. Decisions regarding land use and zoning designations should be based on facts not proposals. At this time, we request a list of firm project details be provided by Thompson Thrift Development prior to making any land use or density decisions.

Second, as proposed, Watermark at Venice will be incompatible with surrounding residential communities. Although the proposed plan includes attractive, well-appointed one and two story paired villas, the result will still be a huge, multi-family, high density complex. Estimates provided by the applicant indicate between 260 - 280 units will be packed into 25-30 acres.

As per the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Pinebrook Neighborhood, which includes the Watermark at Venice property, has a Mixed Use Residential (MUR) designation with a density not to exceed five(5) dwellings units per acre. The applicant's request is for a Medium Density Residential (MEDR) designation with a density not to exceed thirteen (13) dwelling units per acre. If approved, this could result in a sprawling complex being almost two and one-half (2 1/2) times larger than any community adjacent to or around the subject area. The construction of multi-family units will also be unique to surrounding areas.

Although the applicant's revised proposal indicates an estimated 260 - 280 units will be built on 25 - 30 acres, that computes out to a density of between 9 - 11 dwelling units per acre. Still two (2) times greater than the stated Comprehensive Plan designation of five (5) dwelling units per acre. Again, at this time, no confirmed number of paired villas planned for construction has been provided by the applicant. Since this number is a critical factor in determining the level of incompatibility with surrounding residential communities, we request a postponement of the land use and zoning decision until a firm number of paired villas planned for construction is available.

Third, the proposed plan indicates the complex will be built on 25 - 30 acres of land. The original proposal indicated a complex built on 19+ acres. Representatives from Thompson Thrift Development have stated that plans have been made to secure an additional parcel of land, immediately adjacent to the original parcels. With this acquisition added to the original parcels, a total of 25 - 30 acres will be available for the project.

At this time, the land use designation and density limits of the newly acquired parcel are unknown. Also unknown is whether the land is included in JPA Area 6, is already part of the City of Venice or is Unincorporated Sarasota County. Although not included in any of the requests before the Planning Commission today, it is critical the status of this additional parcel be identified in order to have all details related to the project before decisions are made.

In conclusion, we support the annexation of the subject property into the City of Venice. The Joint Planning Agreement in place since 2007 clearly identifies the property as eligible for annexation into the City. At this time, we are not in support of the requested Comprehensive Plan Amendment or the Zoning Map Amendment due to the reasons described above. We request the Planning Commission postpone the land use designation and density decisions until additional, firm details of the project are provided by the applicant. This, in turn, will ensure decisions are based on a commitment from the applicant and not simply a non-committal proposal.

If the Planning Commission is required or feels a decision must be made today regarding land use and density designations, the Windwood Neighborhood Association requests the Planning Commission deny the applicant's current requests and support a Mixed Use Residential (MUR) designation with a density of a maximum of 5 dwelling units per acre as per the stipulations listed in the City of Venice Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this statement. Please feel free to contact me at 315-679-0177 or presidentwindwood@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Steve Carr
President, Windwood Neighborhood Association