

Subject: Petition No. 14-15 Lakepark Estates

Date: Sun, 07 Dec 2014 21:09:26 -0500

From: Eileen <emf@verizon.net>

To: commissioners@scgov.net

Dear Commissioners:

My name is Eileen Fitzgerald and I have lived at 1550 Bern Creek Loop, Sarasota, Florida, since 1988, having purchased my vacant 10-acre lot in 1986. I don't feel that a hamlet right next to our neighborhood is a compatible use, but I know that is a lost cause. I am writing in hopes that some sort of mitigation can be included in the plan to protect our nearly 30-year-old neighborhood. My property was a flat, nearly treeless cow pasture when I bought it, not all that different from the property to be developed to the east. Since 1986, I have planted 1,000 southern slash pines as well as citrus and various other fruiting and flowering trees. I maintain pasture for my horses and grow vegetables in my garden. I consider my property a farm. It is also a certified Florida Wildlife Habitat. Many neighbors in Bern Creek raise horses, beef cattle, hogs and chickens as well as bees and vegetables on a small scale. Their children participate in 4-H, FFA, school farm projects, the County Fair and any number of other educational and civic projects.

Sarasota County is unique in having so many attractions, from the world-class beaches to a beautiful downtown and many shopping centers. On the other hand, there are natural forest and scrub lands, agricultural and just plain vacant land which is valuable to wildlife, rain percolation and photosynthesis. So many people who drive out this way to visit are truly shocked at the beauty and diversity of lands in Sarasota County; they almost always say, "I had no idea all this was out here!" East county is a resource not to be squandered on development that mimics any number of subdivisions west of the Interstate. I have been here long enough (52+ years) that I understand what has already been lost. Please don't throw the rest of it away.

There is a county road proposed just to the east of Bern Creek Ranches, which is currently in the "wildlife corridor." Please consider vacating this roadway to spare the wildlife which might be impacted as well as mitigating the noise, pollution and light intrusion into our neighborhood. At the very least, consider planting a vegetative barrier between our neighborhood property line and Lakepark Estates.

According to the American Farmland Trust, in Florida alone, 175 acres per day are lost to development. There have been many studies of the intrusion of urban areas into rural acreage which results in lost farmland, lost wildlife habitats, lost solitude and lost dark sky. From our neighborhood, which is about 6 miles from the Interstate, you can see a glow from the west and from the northwest: The interstate lights and shopping centers as well as Lakewood Ranch. We do not want to see a glow from the east as well. The county has addressed how light affects turtles at the beach, please address how light pollution affects wildlife in rural areas, especially nocturnal animals. Many studies have been made regarding light pollution and I am sure that Sarasota County has guidelines regarding same. This hamlet will have public pool(s) and tennis courts, I would respectfully request that lighting be turned off when not in use and at a certain set time in the evening.

Many other areas of the country have addressed urban intrusion into rural areas and light pollution. Los Angeles County, California, is a good example. As people understand the drawbacks of 24/7 lighting, they begin to realize what they are losing. Urban planning requires you mitigate damages to existing neighborhoods; therefore, I urge you to research light pollution and add some restrictions on the hamlets which are being proposed. Lakepark Estates is the very first hamlet in Sarasota, please do it right by addressing the concerns of its neighbors and make it a fitting model for the rest of the county.

Most sincerely,

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