

Subject: KEEP THE COUNTRY ...COUNTRY AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE ACT NOW
From: Becky Ayech <miakka1945@gmail.com>
Date: 2/19/2021, 5:37 PM
To: Becky Ayech <miakka1945@gmail.com>
BCC: mph_04@verizon.net

This is the third in the series of emails we need to send to the BOCC. Because this application is so voluminous, our comments will be directed to different subject matters. The signs are ordered and on their way. We will have several pick up locations. We did an awesome job reaching out to others and asking them to join in with their voices. Let's do it again. As before, I will put the comments in this email and also attach it.

It is better to email each Commissioner individually. Copy the Planning Department; Mike Moran, mmoran@scgov.net; Al Maio, amaio@scgov.net; Nancy Detert, [nc](#) Policy RMA1.1 Resource Management Ideals (RMA Ideals)

The Resource Management Areas are designed to, among other things, preserve rural character, including opportunities for agriculture.¹

Agriculture is an allowable use in the required 60% open space within a Hamlet. Part of the application states:

Hi Hat Ranch is an undeveloped 9,942.95 acre± site, predominately used for cattle ranching and other agriculture activities. Characteristic of Southwest Florida, the site is comprised of mixed rangeland, improved pasture.

Until such time as the individual neighborhoods on Hi Hat Ranch are developed, it is essential that existing agriculture operations continue to ensure the financial viability of this multi-generational ranch.

So, it is obvious that agricultural operations will be discontinued, even in the allowable open space.

At the Sarasota Planning Commission meeting, Jim Turner (Hi Hat) said “the land was environmentally benign”. Yet, the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service in the Soil Survey of Sarasota County, Florida says “*Habitat for openland wildlife* consists of cropland, pasture... Wildlife attracted to these areas include bobwhite quail, dove, meadowlark, field sparrow, cottontail, red fox, armadillo, and sand hill crane.”²

Jim Turner also said all that is there is row crops and who wants to look at that, just tomatoes and wooden sticks.

VOS Policy 5.2

PROTECTED ROADWAY CHARACTER

All development within the Village/Open Space RMA shall be designed to maintain open vistas **and protect the integrity of the rural character of Fruitville Road/SR 780 east of Dog Kennel Road, Verna/Myakka Road and Clark Road/SR 72 east of the Countryside Line.** The County shall amend the Zoning Regulations and Land Development Regulations of the County to include Design Standards for Village and Hamlet Development that regulate building type, setbacks, landscaping, utility design, signs, and land disturbance for these roadway frontages. At a minimum, the required 500' Greenbelt setback (Policy VOS5.1) shall be extended to 1400 feet for Village development east of Cow Pen Slough visible from Clark Road/SR 72 east of the Countryside Line. (emphasis added).

Rural character includes row crops, hay fields, sod farms, and grazing livestock as examples.

Add examples of what you consider rural character. Mr. Turner implies the only thing that constitutes rural character is open space that is either empty or has cows.

Of the 7,200+ acres located in eastern Sarasota along Fruitville Road, this request to change the overlay from Hamlet to Village represents a 16% reduction in agricultural/rural lands.

In 1983, 206,000 acres was classified as rangeland or woodland. In 1991, almost all the land east of Interstate 75 was unimproved rangeland or woodland that is either idle or is grazed by cattle.³

Sarasota County recognizes the importance of agricultural lands through

GS Policy 1.3 LAND ACQUISITION

By ...pursuing programs ...for the purchase of Conservation easements for agricultural lands...

GS Policy 2.1 INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVATION OF THE GREENWAY RMA

...the protection of agricultural uses...

GS Policy 2.5 COMPATIBLE USES

...Low intensity agriculture...may also be allowed within some areas of the Greenway RMA...

GS Policy 3.2 INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVATION OF BUFFER LANDS

...and protection of agricultural uses...

DR Policy 1.8 PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

...• Scenic Resource. The purpose of this criterion is to protect the scenic resources of the rural area, which shall include corridors along Fruitville Road, Verna/Myakka Road, and SR 72 east of Cow Pen Slough and a continuous conservation connection between the Myakka River and the Peace River.

...• Agricultural Improvements. The purpose of this criterion is to evaluate the owner's long-term commitment to agriculture. Such purchases shall be in perpetuity.

TDR OBJ 3To CREATE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR AGRICULTURE.

TDR Policy 3.1 ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR AGRICULTURE

The County will identify and evaluate additional alternative actions to provide economic incentives that **support continued and expanded agricultural business**, and will consider amending the Economy Element of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the most promising actions. (emphasis added).

In response to Mr. Turner's assertion that 'no one wants to look at sticks and tomatoes in must be pointed out that Hunsaders' Farm has been doing agricultural tours for over 30 years. They bring in buses of school child and adults to see how vegetable grow. They also provide for "UPICK' fruits and vegetables depending on the season. In this instance, people are walking among the vegetables and fruits.

Dakin Dairy installed a vegetable garden as part of their farm tour.

Share your experiences at either or both.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies these 1,200 acres as rural. The adjacent land is also identified as rural. The adjacent land does have a voluntary overlay of Hamlet.

HOU Policy 1.1.14

Strive for residential development built at the maximum allowable density that effectively balances the community need for housing of various types, sizes and tenure with the **neighborhood compatibility** and environmental sustainability requirements of the comprehensive plan. (emphasis added).

There are NO Comprehensive Plan Goals, Policies or Objectives which support the change of the 1,200 acres from Hamlet to Village.

The QUALITY OF LIFE ELEMENT states... Every community has a unique development history, and historic structures reflect this character. Communities that respect and retain their historic buildings also preserve their unique sense of place. In so doing, these communities truly stand out, especially when new development is required to embrace characteristics of the existing community Every community has a unique development history, and historic structures reflect this character. Communities that respect and retain their

historic buildings also preserve their unique sense of place. In so doing, these communities truly stand out, especially when new development is required to embrace characteristics of the existing community.

This property has a unique sense of place and should so remain. New development should embrace the characteristics of the existing community which is rural and agricultural.

¹ Chapter 9 RMA Sarasota 2050 pgs. 9-6 and 9-7.

² United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, SOIL SURVEY of SARASOTA COUNTY, FL. Pg. 57.

³ Ibid pg. 5

detret@scgov.net, Christian Ziegler@scgov.net, Ron Cutsinger, rcutsinger@scgov.net; planner@scgov.net, Todd Dary, tdary@scgov.net; Jacob Hunt, jhunt@scgov.net.

— Attachments: —

3rd BOCC comments.docx

15.6 KB