
SCCF, CCA issue statements on building heights & density changes

From: Captiva Community Panel <captivacommunitypanel@gmail.com>
To: kengooderham@gmail.com

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CCA, SCCF issue statements on proposed building height, density changes

A number of island organizations have issued statements in opposition to the proposed changes to the rules governing building heights and density on Captiva.

The Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) issued a statement Friday on behalf of a coalition of conservation partners that include the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, and CROW. That statement is available [HERE](#) (click on the link to download the PDF).

Additionally, the Captiva Civic Association sent out to its members a rebuttal to information being distributed by some Lee County Commissioners as prepared by the County Attorney’s office. The specific rebuttal is [HERE](#), and the full CCA statement sent on Friday is [HERE](#).

The Captiva Community Panel is preparing a position paper and other materials pertaining to these proposals, which will be reviewed by the panel at its meeting Tuesday morning.

These proposed changes to island building heights and density (among other issues) will be the focus of two meetings next week.

The first will be a Captiva Civic Association informational meeting set for Monday, June 12, beginning at 6 p.m. (on Zoom, details below), where representatives from island organizations will review the proposed changes and their potential impact on the island, with Q&A to follow.

Then, the Captiva Community Panel will hold a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, June 13, beginning at 9 a.m., where a discussion of the county proposals and possible responses will be discussed. Items and updates regularly covered at these monthly meetings will also be on the agenda.

As a reminder: Last Tuesday, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved to set a public hearing on these proposed changes, the final step to adoption as new language in the county Land Development Code. That hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 20, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the courthouse in downtown Fort Myers.

The proposed changes would:

- Eliminate the three-units-per-acre density restrictions inside South Seas, with no restrictions cited to replace them.
- Eliminate the current height restrictions on Captiva (and language in the Lee Plan that references those restrictions). It is replaced in general with restrictions of 35 feet above a distance 12 inches above the average elevation of the adjacent roadways. In areas where development is governed by base flood elevations, height is measured from “the lowest minimum habitable floor elevation for which a building permit may be issued.”
- In the Captiva-specific section, South Seas would be exempted from building heights language, with no replacement restrictions stated.
- Structures in a coastal high hazard area V-zone could increase both the “lowest minimum habitable floor” and the overall structure by four feet without deviation or variance approval.
- South Seas may be seeking a de facto rezoning to Outlying Suburban, which with this new language would allow building heights up to 75 feet “when the applicant demonstrates through a zoning action that the additional height is required to preserve environmentally sensitive land,

secure areas of native vegetation and wildlife habitat, or preserve historical, archaeological or scenic resources.”

- Remove any reference to the 2002 Administrative Interpretation governing South Seas density and development, and exempts development inside South Seas from LDC Section 33 regulations.
- Eliminate the 75% requirement for condominiums to initiate rezoning, special exceptions or variance, replacing it with initiation allowed by the association’s president or manager when authorized by the association board.

The county is also seeking a change in the Lee Plan language affecting Captiva that would eliminate references to building height language in the Land Development Code that was intended to encourage building heights compatible with the “one- and two-story” existing structures. We believe that plan revision will be heard by the county commissioners for potential transmittal to the state at a hearing on Wednesday, June 21, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

CCA Zoom information:

When: Jun 12, 2023 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81458571312?>

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Panel Zoom information:

When: Jun 13, 2023 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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