

SAVE Marlin Conservation Square

Keep Our Public Lands OUT of Private Hands!

February, 2023

Dear Neighbor -

We are writing to make you aware of a serious threat to the continued public use of Marlin Conservation Square (MCS), a small public space located in the Sapphire Shores neighborhood of Sarasota on Eastchester Drive where Marlin Drive dead ends.

The two neighbors adjoining MCS on the north and south have filed a Petition for Vacation, asking that the City abandon the land and split it evenly between them. We strongly oppose this request, as does the Indian Beach –Sapphire Shores Neighborhood Association (IBSSA). The attached Q&A provides information about the issue. After reading it, we hope you'll agree and add your voice to those demanding that the Sarasota Planning Board and City Council not give away this valuable public asset.

If you really don't have time to read the Q&A (they are a quick & easy read!) here are the highlights:

- MCS plays an important role in our neighborhood's admittedly inadequate stormwater runoff management system. The City is in no position to be giving away land that helps alleviate flooding on our neighborhood streets and yards.
- The City, State, and neighborhood have invested time and money in improving MCS as both a stormwater runoff management tool and as a public greenspace. Don't throw away these investments by giving the land to two private individuals for development.
- One argument made by the adjoining neighbors is that the land has not been properly cared for. As set forth in the Q&A's, that situation is largely as a result of their own actions (or inaction). Neighbors, supported by the IBSSA, stand ready to maintain the area; privacy and security concerns can easily be addressed through installation of a fence.

Bottom Line? Giving away MCS serves only the interests of those two neighbors who seek to take valuable public land for private use and development. It serves no conceivable public interest.

You are receiving this letter because you live near MCS – and your voice is especially important. Here's how you can help us save this public land:

- **Write a quick email** to members of the Planning Board and the City Commissioners (email addresses on opposite side). Doesn't have to be a Pulitzer Prize-winner - two or three sentences describing why you want them to oppose the Request for Vacation and keep MCS in public hands will do the trick!
- **Stay up-to-date** on our fight to keep MCS by sending your name & email to SAVEMarlin@gmail.com. We won't share your information with anyone else, but we will keep you informed about ways you can help and important timelines. You can also find information about Marlin Square on the IBSSA website - <https://www.ibssa.ws/ibssa-news/marlin/>
- **Get the word out** by displaying one of our bumper stickers or yard signs – or both! They've been ordered; send an email to SAVEMarlin@gmail.com to reserve yours today.
- **Sign the petition** at https://www.petitions.net/save_marlin_conservation_square to add your name to those determined to keep MCS as a public resource. Forward the petition to friends & neighbors who can help!

Please join in however you can. ***We have only a few weeks to save Marlin Conservation Square. Once it's gone, it's gone –this is our one chance to keep this public land OUT of private hands!*** Thank you.

Jack & Claudia Barnett, Alysia & Craig Emden, Debbie Keeton, David Morriss, Denise & Irwin Scheineson

Key Dates & Contact Information

MARCH 8, 2023

*The Sarasota Planning Board will discuss the Marlin Conservation Square on Wednesday, March 8 at 10:00 am and then make a recommendation to the City Commission. **Please take a few moments to let them know you OPPOSE the Request for Vacation of MCS!***

Planning Board members and their email addresses are listed below:

Terrill Salem (Chair)

terryl.salem@sarasotafl.gov

Damien Blumetti

damien.blumetti@sarasotafl.gov

Douglas Christy

douglas.christy@sarasotafl.gov

Daniel Clermont

dan.clermont@sarasotafl.gov

Michael Halfflants (*resident of Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores neighborhood*)

michael.halfflants@sarasotafl.gov

Kathy Kelley Ohlrich

kathy.kelleyohlrich@sarasotafl.gov

APRIL 2023

*This issue will likely be placed on the City Commission's April Meeting agenda. Once the Agenda has been posted, you'll be able to submit an ecomment, but in the meantime, you can send a short email. **Please let them know you OPPOSE the Request for Vacation of MCS.***

Sarasota City Commissioners and their email addresses are listed below:

Mayor Kyle Battie

Kyle.Battie@sarasotafl.gov

Vice Mayor Liz Alpert

Liz.Alpert@sarasotafl.gov

Commissioner Erik Arroyo

Eric.Arroyo@sarasotafl.gov

Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

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Commissioner Debbie Trice

Debbie.Trice@sarasotafl.gov