

Date: July 12, 2007

To: Sarasota County Planning Commission

From: Bee Ridge Neighborhoods Committee

Re: Palmer Place DOCC and Rezone Petition No. 07-11

The Bee Ridge Neighborhoods Committee (BRNC) is a collation of representatives from most of the homeowners and neighborhood associations of the communities along Bee Ridge Road, Iona Road and Bee Ridge Extension. The committee supports the goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing stock in Sarasota County and applauds the county's efforts to provide incentives for private sector involvement in furthering this goal. We believe trading density for affordability is a much better approach to the problem than providing taxpayer subsidies.

We welcome the development of affordable housing in combination with market rate housing in the Affordable Housing Overlay at Palmer Blvd. and Iona Road. Our purpose is to make sure Palmer Place is in character with the surrounding area.

As many of you may recall, BRNC was heavily involved in crafting the Affordable Housing Overlay zoning ordinance. We worked with county staff, the development team, the Community Housing Trust, the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners to help produce the Affordable Housing Overlay zoning ordinance. We believe that experience gives the committee unique insights and a perspective that could prove valuable to you.

We expressed many site specific concerns while the ordinance was being developed. We were told our concerns would be addressed during DOCC and Rezone application process. We are sorry that the applicant chose not to do so. Our chief concerns about the proposed project are:

- **Intensity** – Palmer Place increases the area's density by 60 percent while occupying less than 10 percent of the land.
- **Timing** – Palmer Place gains a significant density increase without providing any affordable housing.
- **Integration** – Palmer Place violates best practices by segregating the affordable villages from the market rate ones.
- **Subsidies** – Palmer Place pricing scheme requires tens of millions of dollars in additional taxpayer subsidies.
- **Palmer Blvd.** –Palmer Blvd. must be improved to county standards between Iona Rd. and Webber Rd. before Palmer Place is built.

Palmer Place is the first DOCC and Rezone Petition using the County's unique and novel Affordable Housing Overlay ordinance. We urge the Planning Commission to carefully weigh our concerns and protect the public's interests in this density for affordability bargain.