

The Long Bar Pointe Big Development Proposition

WHAT IS IT AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Bay Life Preservers
Information and Planning Meeting
Bayshore Gardens Recreation Center
July 2, 2013
1:00pm
baylifepreservers@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/BayLifePreservers



Timeline

- ▶ Early 2000's: Developer Larry Lieberman begins buying up undeveloped tracts of lands collectively called "Long Bar Pointe"
- ▶ 2005: He convinces Manatee County Commissioners his intentions preservationist; commission approves small-scale plans that don't disturb the shoreline, mangroves, sea-grasses, fish havens
- ▶ 2005: Betsy Benac, then on Lieberman's payroll, gives presentations to the Commission about Long Bar property development
- ▶ 2011: Lieberman's local lending problems surface in local press
- ▶ 2012: Long Bar property forecloses, heads for auction on July 10
- ▶ July 4, 2012: Lieberman announces deal with Momentum Bank and SRQ developer Carlos Beruff
- ▶ Also in 2012: Beruff finances smear campaign against Joe McClash; Betsy Benac, formerly on Lieberman's payroll, takes McClash's seat
- ▶ May 2013: Manatee Commission revises wetlands rules to prevent "non-viable" wetlands from falling under higher impact protection
- ▶ June 2013: Manatee Commission ratifies "Urban Service Area" amendment that allows developers to make end-runs around higher impact laws

**"It wasn't just a wall of
condos on the bay."
--Commissioner Joe
McClash, 2005**



**About his deal with Beruff, Lieberman
states it's "one of the largest residential
and hotel projects to emerge in
Southwest Florida's post-recession
world"**

A Red Tide of New Rules



Wetlands rule, 4-3 vote

- ▶ Prohibit wetland impact, **except in cases where no other practical alternative exists** or where there is **an overriding public benefit**
- ▶ Allows wetlands of **less than one-half acre in size** as “non-viable”

Urban Service Area rule, 5-2 vote

- ▶ Said to prevent suburban sprawl, **exempts developers from higher impact review**
- ▶ Focus is therefore on “economic benefits” to the exclusion consideration to human and environmental impacts
- ▶ Long Bar Pointe area falls into the area of West Bradenton from Tallevast to the SRQ Bay coastline.



Commission Tables Vote on Long Bar Pointe Proposition until August 6

TROPICAL STORM ANDREA GIVES OPPOSITION 2 MONTHS TO
ORGANIZE COUNTER-CAMPAIGN

Popular Outcry and Outrage

“Without aquatic life being able to develop and continue into the gulf, the economic development from the resort would harm the fishing industry along Cortez and Sarasota Bay. The bay is either a vital treasure or it is not. The way you know it’s a treasure is how you treat it.” Randy Moore, UF-certified Florida Master Naturalist, qtd. in *The Bradenton Herald*, 6 June 2013

Immediately after the June 6 ratification of the Urban Service Area amendment to the County’s Comprehensive Plan, still being decided at state level, various opposition groups sprung into action

- **Manasota-88**
- **Sierra Club**
- **Stop the Skyway Resort Project**
- **Save Our Manatee Shoreline**
- **Bay Life Preservers**

The Math as We Know It

Bottom line: Almost 300,000 square feet of building construction plus the hotel, marina, and parking lots

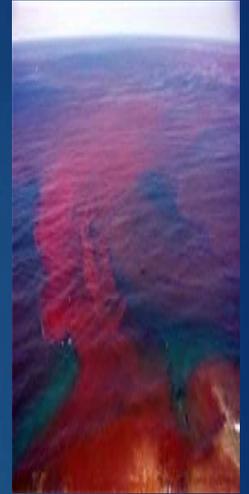
This is “High-Impact” Development

- 1,086 single-family residences
- 2,531 multi-family residences
- 300-room hotel
- 300-berth marina for 100' yachts
- 72,00 square feet of office uses
- 120,000 square feet of commercial uses
- 84,000 square-foot convention center



The Fine Print (or More Red Tide)

- ▶ Building & Planning Department recommended “Approval” without seeing detail of overall site plan
- ▶ Focus is on residential spaces in “El Conquistador Tract” without attention to commercial aspect the developers’ proposition or other tracts
- ▶ Focus is on “an economic and aesthetic perspective” of an exclusionist “live-work-play community environment”



“The site contains 463.2 acres; 294.7 acres of which are within the Coastal High Hazard area. The MU FLU designation will permit a unified development plan, utilizing a mixture of unit types that will be supported by the commercial and professional uses. The details of the development have not yet been determined; however, it has been stated by the applicant that there will be unifying design elements and features, a coordinated system of signage and street lighting that will contribute to a sense of place. It could be determined that the site will be a public benefit, not only to the surrounding area, but to Manatee County, as a whole.” (PA-13-03 Map Amendment Recommendation to Approve, p.4)



“The Devil is in the Details”—or in this case not.

Building and Planning admits only one “negative aspect” (Only one???)

“It is anticipated that future development of the site will include a request for taller buildings, beyond those existing along the shoreline of Sarasota Bay today” (p.8)

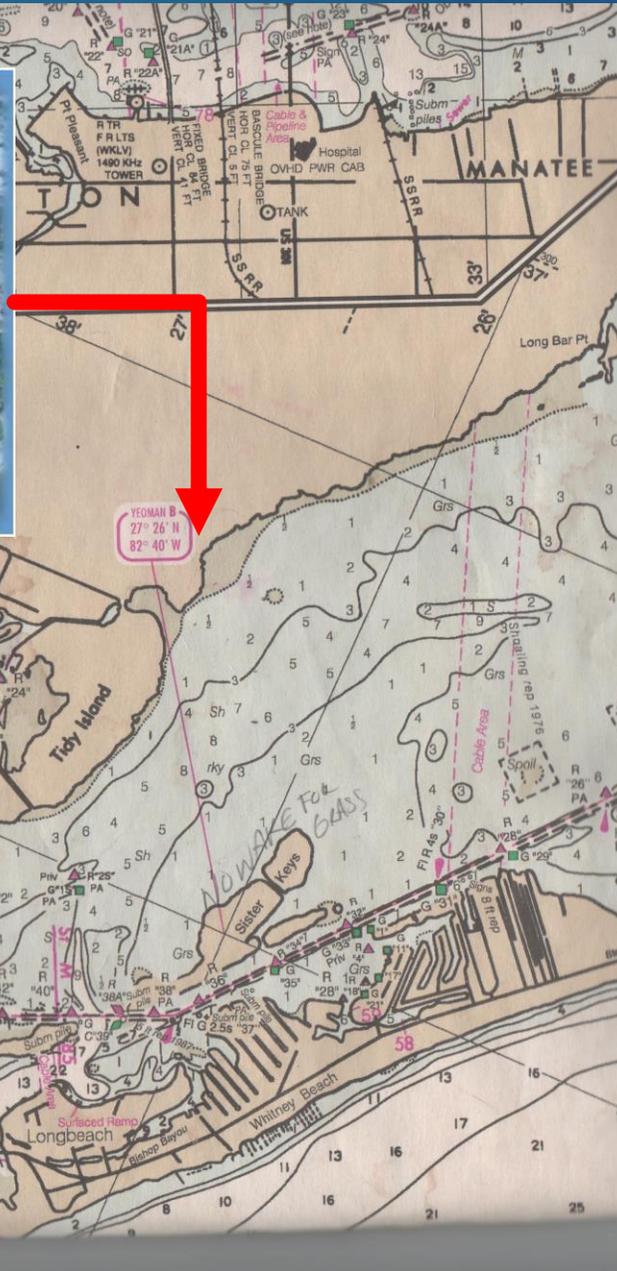
Then offers only one means to mitigate this problem

“An amendment to the Local Development Agreement, and subsequent site plans will be necessary to increase the number of units and allow more development on the property” (p.9)



Environmental-Economic-Public Safety Threats

MASSIVE STRESS TO THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY, THE SARASOTA BAY ESTUARY,
AND THE PEOPLE WHO ALREADY LIVE THERE



Considerations for Impact to ICW Beyond the Long Property Itself

- Dredging problem is less about boat draft and more about width and length
- Narrow bends on ICW near Long Bar Pointe
- Massive assault to virgin grass-flats and sandbars
- Noise pollution for Tidy Island area
- Alters low-key character of SRQ Bay



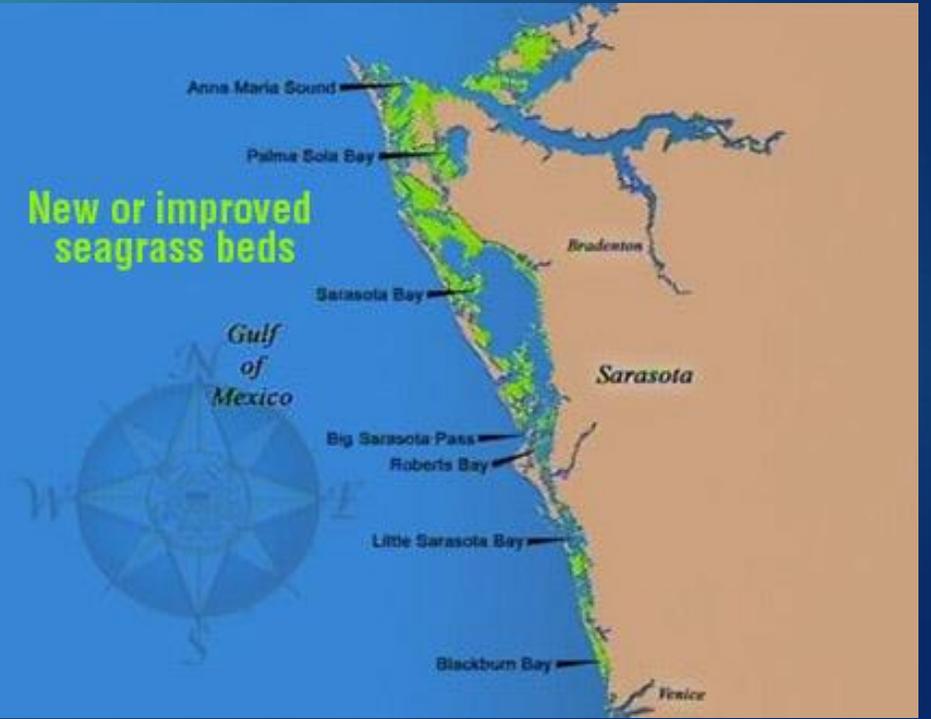
Dredging and Re-Configuration of ICW Required for Yachts

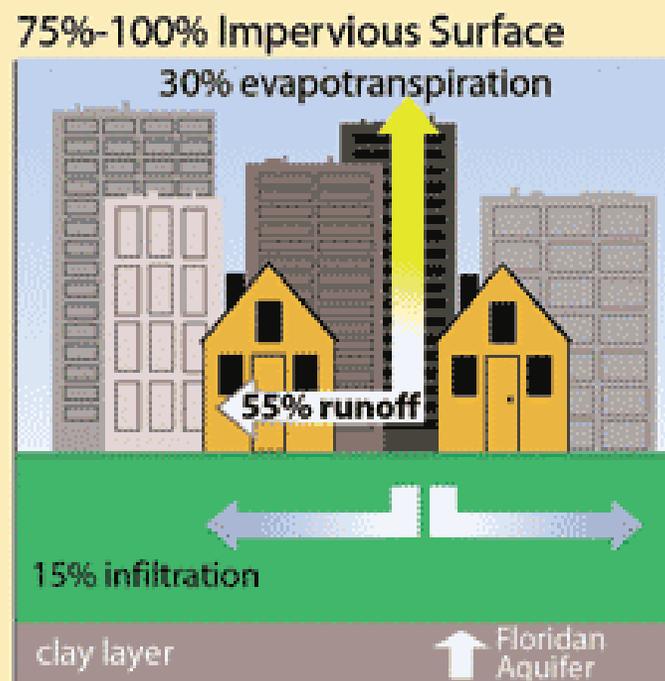
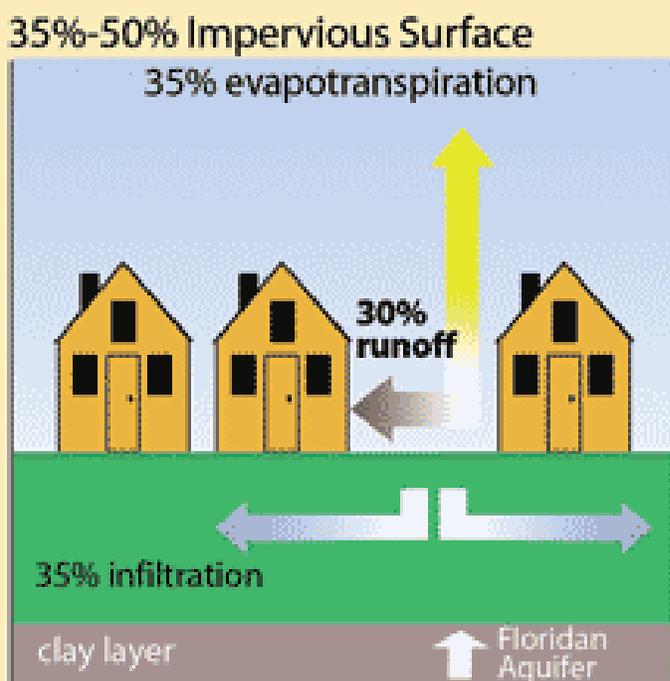
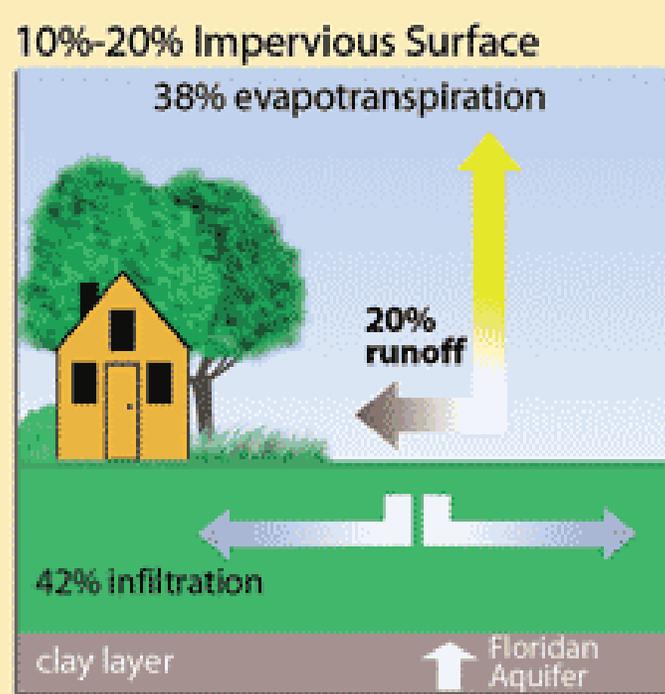
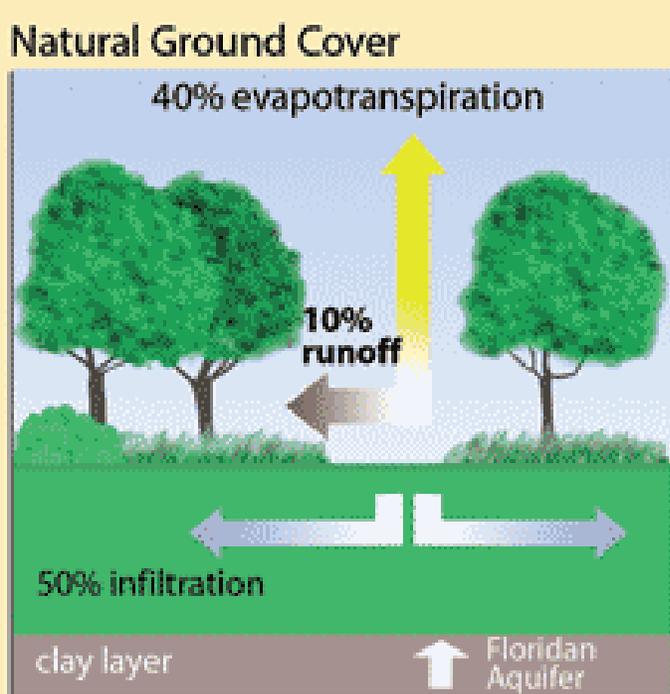
- Impact to habitats SW and SE of contested Long Bar Point property
- Reversal of SRQ Bay Estuary Program's sea-grass restoration program

Gulf of Mexico



New or improved seagrass beds





LOW IMPACT Development v. High Impact Development

Larry Lieberman's original plans in 2004-5 contained far less impervious surface than his and Carlos Beruff's 2013 proposition to the Manatee County Commission

- High-rise condos, shopping malls, convention centers, marinas, and parking lots means less surface area for storm water to drain
- More floodwater means higher insurance premiums for all homeowners in the watershed



Floods cause an average of \$8 billion in damage every year in the United States



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Watersheds
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Economic Benefits to Residents of Sarasota Bay

- Lowers drinking water costs
- Avoids expensive restoration activities
- Sustains revenue-generating recreational and tourism opportunities
- Minimizes vulnerability and damage from natural disasters
- Provides critical ecosystem services at fraction of cost for engineered services
- Increases property value premiums
- Supports jobs locally, state-wide, nationally
- Ensures a vibrant economy for future generations

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Maps Waypoints(54) Routes Tracks

Sarasota Bay Fishing Spots

Trout, Snook, Redfish

Over 50 Pro Fishing Spots

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Bay Island Flat	shallow,
bay point chan...	Snook, Re
bay point chan...	trout and
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dump ground flat	grass, sai
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GPS NAVIGATION

MiniMap

Raym...
HUMM...

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Notable Notes about the Politics of Big Development

- ▶ According to the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, Medallion Homes, part of the Long Bar project, installed contaminated dry-wall imported from China and then claimed it could not pay for repairs
- ▶ Meanwhile, owner Carlos Beruff was using other companies, including a family trust, to buy up other properties
- ▶ He also began serving on many public boards in the last decade, including one for Florida Water Management and the State College of Florida
- ▶ For his not-so transparent service as Chairman of SCF, the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* gave Beruff a vote of no confidence
- ▶ Specifically, Beruff accused SCF's President, Lars Hafner, of forgery, which the FDLE later disproved
- ▶ In 2012, he also financed the *Take Back Our Government* smear campaign against incumbent Commissioner Joe McClash



Beruff's Contradictory Public Image: Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast

- ▶ Formerly Sarasota Conservation Foundation, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast strives to protect the environment, character, and biodiversity of bays, beaches and barrier islands for future generations by
- ▶ Holding conservation easements and owning nature preserves
- ▶ Educating for responsible land stewardship
- ▶ Collaborating with individuals, organizations and communities



**"protecting our bays,
beaches and barrier
islands"**

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As of June 29, 2013: “County Commissioner Robin DiSabatino said **she has not seen any new information from the developers** since the commission last discussed the matter June 6.” (Source: *The Bradenton Herald*)

Say what?

- For a project this massive, why have not the developers offered up any details?
- Are the County Commissioners or anyone in the County asking the developers for details?
- Under these circumstances, how can the public expect due diligence given the vote is a little more than a month away?
- Is this really enough time to provide independent, comprehensive analysis?



Upcoming Events

- July 13-14, Sat. & Sun.: DeSoto Fishing Tournament
- Canvassing opportunity for petitioning and advertising the July 20th Boat Brigade
 - Operational/Logistical Planning in the works

- July 15, 1pm, Mon.: Sierra Club Conservation Committee
- Bradenton Central Library

- July 20, 2-4pm: Boat Brigade off Marker 17 in deep water
- Mass raft-up/Stand-making with media present
 - Operational/Logistical Planning in the works

August 6: Manatee Commission hears Long Bar Proposition