

To: Cultural Resource Review Board, St. Johns County – draft of 6/10/25
Copy: Board of County Commissioners to show community sentiment
From: Keith Willard, 66 Ferrol RD, keithwillardsr@gmail.com, with the Save the Magic Group
Regarding: Demolition Application for the iconic Magic Beach Motel 2025

STATEMENTS BY THE DEMOLITION APPLICANTS

To and including the 4/14/25 CRRB Meeting

vs. ACTUAL FACTS DISCOVERED BY DUE DILLIGENCE

Including Contacts for Direct Sources of Facts

Below are Statements made by the Property Owner/Applicant and property owner's Representative who is also the proposed Developer, Colonia that are included in the required Management Mitigation Plan + as well as statements made by them in person at the Public Presentation of proposed replacement buildings on March 19, 2025 + and at the Cultural Resource Review Board meeting on April 14, 2025 -- as compared to Facts Discovered by Due Dilligence in response to those statements with facts sources.

Source Key

MP = Management/Mitigation plan submitted by Applicant before April 14.

3/19 = Public Presentation by the Developer on 3/19/25 to substantiate demolition

4/14 = CRRB review meeting on 4/14/25

ERJ = Earl & Remy Jensen, prior owners from 2010 to 2022. rjensen@msn.com, 609-412-4330

LT = Les Thomas, original renovation architect, 904-824-9508, lesthomasarchitect@gmail.com.

FHT = Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and past CRRB historian coordinator

Statements From Management/Mitigation Plan prior to 4/14 meeting review **Factors Driving Demolition**

- 1) **IT IS SEPARATED FROM OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS, SEVERAL OF WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEMOLISHED: Facts:** When originally built, the motel was on A1A, where it now = Vilano Road. When the new bridge was built in 1995, A1A north was re-routed. All of the 1950s motor court style motels on the East side of the old bridge were in the same row. Newt's and Lazy Sands were demolished under different regulations and lack of initiative for saving historic buildings at the time. Now, others have been or are being restored, saving architectural elements, like 180 Vilano Grill, Haley's Court, the new Snappers Restaurant, the new Irish pub. The entire area is eligible to become a national historic district, including Magic Beach. Reasonable measures can be taken to save a building. Melissa Wyllie, President of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, stated that Magic Beach is "in a geographically definable area united by architectural style with small scale commercial buildings, some of which are architecturally significant." (FHT)
- 2) **THERE ARE RISING INSURANCE AND FINANCING COSTS: Fact:** All buildings old and new are experiencing that. The cost of building new buildings most probably exceeds restoring old buildings. Exercise: Total up the costs of MB purchase, cost of demolition, consultants, equipment rental, utilities, interest for funding, etc. maybe for years until there is an income stream.
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- 4) **THE ELEVATION IS LOW, BUILT ON SLAB, IN A FLOOD ZONE AND PRONE TO FLOODING: Fact:** In 2006 – 2008, using a grant and CRA funding, the county built a very large underground stormwater collection management system, located one block away from Magic Beach between the OceanView Lodge and the ocean which serves the entire Vilano Beach Town Center (source: Greg Caldwell, County Engineer assigned to oversee the construction of the Town Center infrastructure and now Director of the County Public Works Dept, cell: 904-669-5221). Residents within a block of Magic Beach can testify that there has been no flooding in recent decades since they lived there. (source: Keith Willard, 66 Ferrol Road, there since 2001. Former neighbor across the street from him there much longer. Cell: 904-501-0540.) There is flood plain management for historic structures with subsidized insurance.
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- 8) **INTERIOR ROOM MURALS: CRMP STATES THEY ARE PAINTED ON PLASTER AND CANNOT BE SAVED THAT THEY ARE OF UNDETERMINED ORIGIN: Fact:** The murals were restored and added twice by two different owners, could be photographed and reproduced by new artists. (ERJ, 3/19, 4/14)
- 9) **IT IS NOT AN HISTORIC PROPERTY AS HAS BEEN ADDED ONTO & THE PROPERTY IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER: Fact:** The CRRB chair, who is a nationally recognized historic preservation professional and who was a consultant to get Snappers Restaurant on Vilano Road registered on the National Historic Register, said it is now eligible and also for Landmark status, but it is up to the owner to take that initiative. (source: CRRB board and SJC Growth Management staff, 4/14). An alternative is that the Vilano Beach Town Center area is eligible to be and should be designated as a National Historic area which would include the Magic Beach property. A number of historic inventories have listed Magic Beach as top of the list for sense of place. (source: HABS Historic American Buildings study). They say that today it is an "accurate interpretation of the classic streamline Art Deco Moderne style." The insistence and testimony that Magic Beach is not an historic property because of additions was refuted during the last attempt to demolish Magic Beach in 2021. The Bridge of Lions was changed and added onto. Does that make it NOT historic? According to the FHT, The HABS form submitted by the applicant should have been the long form vs. the short form.

- 10) KEEPING THE MAGIC BEACH AS IT IS, IS NOT AN OPTION. THE BUILDING IS NOT VIABLE, VARIOUS PROBLEMS WERE LISTED AND ASKED FOR DEMOLITION: Fact:** Those in attendance 3/19 said they didn't want to see the property with a dilapidated motel. On 4/14 Owner Tejah Patel said his staff are always chasing after problems. He said he did not know how bad things were when he bought it three years ago. Patel and Johnston said the building is at the end of its useful life. Question: Did the current owner not do his own engineering study before spending \$3.8 million for the property? The previous owners said when they turned over the property, it was in optimal operating condition. (ERJ). The motel continues to be open for business and the parking lot is full even midweek. (photo). Public comment on 4/14: In Charleston buildings that are hundreds of years old are salvageable.

Comments made at the 4/14/Cultural Resource Review Board Meeting

(Source: CRRB meeting webpage = <https://www.sjcfl.us/calendar?title=&dpt=crrb&month=4&yr=> under April 14 meeting), and the meeting was recorded.) This review meeting was required by the Land Development Codes to determine whether demolition of a county-designated Significant Cultural Resource, Magic Beach Motel, would be allowed. The review board determined on 4/14 there was insufficient information provided, and the applicant would have to return again with that information to say why they think the building is not salvageable, with evidence.

In addition to a room full of concerned citizens, the meeting was covered by reporters from three TV stations who broadcast follow-on stories, and other media such as Jacksonville Business Journal, Jax Today News, Flagler Broadcasting were present. The St. Augustine Record did an on-line news story before 4/14. In addition, First Coast News also did a second story on the proposed Colonia developer and representative for the Magic Beach Property owner applicant, revealing they had removed trees from the adjacent property without a permit and willingly paid a fine of \$31,800. An on-line survey done by North Beach Community Alliance showed 75% against demolition, 14% supporting the applicant and 11% neutral and therefore needing more information. Of the 59 letters received by the Review Board and County Commission, 2 supported the applicant to demolish and 57 or 97% requested preservation. In addition, a document was received itemizing 75 responses to posts to the NextDoor site which opposed demolition. (source: Ryan Mauch, SJC Growth Management Dept. 904-209-0621)

At this meeting on 4/14, the developer/representative accused the chair, Leslee Keys, of being prejudiced against the project. He was warned that comments cannot be made to one member of the board. The chair commented that in paperwork submitted by the applicant, they claimed the condition of the buildings were not relevant. She did not understand that if we are asked to approve a request for demolition, why is the building's condition not relevant?

- 1) THE BUILDING IS CRUMBLING INTO DISREPAIR AND WILL BECOME AN EYESORE. THE CEILING IN THE FORMER BREAKFAST ROOM COLLAPSED DURING HURRICANE HELENE IN FALL OF 2024: Fact:** The restoration of the motel from 2010 to 2014 addressed all issues to be repaired under the advice of the project engineer and historic restoration architect. (4/14, MP, ERJ LT)
- a. The restaurant which was leasing that space thought the collapse was caused by low atmospheric pressure and wind pressure from the hurricane and not a water leak. The ceiling already had cracks in it which had not been investigated. Repairs took months. The restaurant was already experiencing spotty electrical and water availability and restricted ability to cook, so they did not renew their lease. The restaurant owners also made public comment at the 3/19 meeting. (source: Jason and Dawn Watkins, Yamo Food Truck/Beachside Caffee, 904-761-1724.)
 - b. On a Saturday in April 2025 there were 18 cars and one motorcycle in the motel parking spaces (photo), and high occupancy even during the week. On May 6, 2025, there was filming going on at night. Magic Beach has been a sought-after filming venue since 1999. About a year ago a Netflix stream.
 - c. The eyesore will come if the buildings are demolished and the property sits unattended growing weeds, as is the case of the property at 155 Vilano Road (Breakwater Villas townhomes), where it was clearcut and only had infrastructure but zero building construction for several years. In May 2025, they were "still looking for a builder." But once Magic Beach is gone, it is gone forever.
 - d. We believe a photo of the collapsed restaurant ceiling was passed around to some attendees at the back of the room on 4/14 but it was not shown in the official powerpoint. Why? Was a copy given to staff? Refer to Land Development Code (LDC) 3.01.01.A.2. It recognizes that "Harm or reasonably

preventable deterioration of county cultural resources properties located within unincorporated St. Johns County contributes harm to the public welfare.”

- 2) **KEEPING THE MAGIC BEACH AS IT IS, IS NOT AN OPTION. THE BUILDING IS NOT VIABLE, VARIOUS PROBLEMS WERE LISTED AND ASKED FOR DEMOLITION. IF YOU IMPROVE A PROPERTY MORE THAN 50% YOU HAVE TO BRING IT UP TO CODE: Fact:** Those in attendance said they didn’t want to see the property with a dilapidated motel.
 - a) Owner Tejah Patel at the meeting said his staff are always chasing after problems. He said he did not know how bad things were when he bought it three years ago. He said there are electric and plumbing issues and roof leaks. Cannot make the bathrooms larger. When the Jensens did restoration they brought it up to code and it was in optimal operating condition when they turned the property over. Question: Did he not do his own engineering study before spending \$3.8 million for the property? (4/14, ERJ, LT)
 - b) Patel said he can’t make a significant profit. And that the building has a life span and now it's over. (ERJ). The motel continues to be open for business and the parking lot full even midweek. Patel said he has to keep it up to be compliant with the health Department. (4/14, photo)
 - c) The developer reminded everyone that the owner has Property Rights, but here the LDCs override that.
 - d) Request for current Independent Structural Engineering study – as an unbiased determination of the structural integrity of the Magic Beach for purposes of due diligence. Suggested by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and formally requested to the CRRB by the Florida Downtown Association.
 - e) The 50% rule would not come into play, especially not for an historic building.
- 3) **THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IS OBSOLETE AND FAILING: Fact:** The Electrical part of restoration in 2010-2014, was brought up to date, and continuously maintained. During major restoration by the Jensens in 2011-2014, Electrical was completely rewired with each room having its own control box. Air conditioning system continuously maintained. Turned over in 2022 in prime operating condition to new owner. (ERJ,LT) (source: air con repairman at that time – Casey Pitts, 904-534-1930) (also MP, ERJ).
- 4) **THE PLUMBING SYSTEM IS OBSOLETE AND FAILING.** Some original iron plumbing is deteriorating but could be brought up to date. All sinks, toilets, showers replaced. All new water lines with updated pressure, hot water heaters, five jacuzzis added, the sewer line was uncovered and lines replaced. The property was turned over in prime operating condition in 2022. (MP, ERJ). Last year, on 9/27/24 the county approved a request of the property next door, then owned by the Beach at Vilano LLC now called Colonia to allow their sewer connection to join that of the Magic Beach property to eliminate a lift station, so obviously the Magic Beach sewer line was in good condition. Modification to Construction Plans #MODCP 2024000119.
- 5) **THE NEON LIGHTING HAS FAILED AND CANNOT BE REPAIRED.** It is not being maintained. Should be converted to LED for better reliability, significant cost savings for electricity and c’s ost of repairs needed. Repair for neon lighting is difficult to find and expensive, with a long lead time for repair.(ERJ)
- 6) **THE SURVEY DONE BY THE NORTH BEACH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE (NBCA) IS NOT VALID. IT ONLY WENT OUT TO A FEW MEMBERS: Fact:** Response to that by a board member of NBCA: It went out to a communications email list of 600 and was posted to Facebook and NextDoor.
- 7) **CLEARLY NOT HISTORICAL. COMPLETELY MODIFIED AND STRUCTURES ADDED DURING RESTORATION IN 2012: Fact:** The applicant’s representative said it is more than 70 years old with inadequate systems which cannot be modified. He said the existing outstanding Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) bonds (to build the Town Center infrastructure). are still outstanding and must be paid. He said multiple renovations were hodgepodge, and the building is not salvageable for our use. This was proven false at the 2021 application for demolition and confirmed again 4/14. The Vilano Beach CRA funding is still available, irrespective of what has been used. Because of tax increment financing, there is a lag of a year before offsetting taxes of new construction come into effect to pay off a bond.
- 8) **MURALS: THEY DON’T BELIEVE THE RUMORED VALUE OF ONE OF THE MURALS IS A MILLION DOLLARS. Fact:.** They could be photographed and copied by new artists.
- 9) **POWERPOINT PRESENTED AT 4/14 MEETING BY THE COMMUNITY:** The community was allowed 5 minutes as a permitted designated speaker vs. usual 3 minute public comment.
 - (a) The Vilano Beach CRA with tax increment financing could possibly be used to help preserving Magic Beach Motel. And it would be eligible for grant funding and special tax incentives if designated as a

National Register. It focuses on historic preservation as well as revitalization. The Vilano CRA funded the 2022 A1A Historic Property Survey and inventory.

- (b) Magic Beach Motel owners received a Secretary of State Restoration Award in 2013. (photos)
- (c) Powerpoint showed photos of remarkable architectural elements of Magic Beach.
- (d) Powerpoint showed a photo of the proposed replacement buildings façade presented at the 3/19 meeting. No art deco architecture. No visible saved remarkable Magic Beach architectural elements.
- (e) Mentioned that the adjacent Colonia property was clear cut without permit and paid a fine of \$31,800.
- (f) Captured a current motel tourism review. “Great location. Beach, shops and restaurants, grocery store steps away.”

Comments at 3/19 Public Transparency Meeting by Colonia Developer and Applicant Rep

Showing Prospective Replacement Buildings After Demolition is Allowed

This meeting was held at the Oceanfront Park in view of the Magic Beach Motel. There was only one illustration, the façade of a proposed two, three story conjoined buildings with 8 retail units of 400 to 750 SF on the first level and 20 “residential units” on levels two and three. (zoning allows only 7 or at most 13 if development rights are purchased. Will have to be proven.) Even though requested, no site plan showing parking on the property was produced. But the developer did show in the illustration and said there were 7 additional parking spaces he was sure the county would allow in the public right of way. The parking lot in the front of the Magic Beach buildings had disappeared and parking was presumably at the rear of the building. Also not shown is site plan of adjoining property where they plan a 125 seat restaurant, parking unknown. Colonia was not successful in getting a 95 seat restaurant approved there with only 17 parking spaces shared with another commercial building on the Colonia property at a North Coastal Design Review Board meeting. The proposed buildings are not Art Deco architecture and there were no memorable remarkable Magic Beach architectural elements on the façade or elsewhere even though promised in the application’s Management Plan. Asked why there were no memorial elements shown, the answer was “you just can’t see them from the street. Zoning and Land Development codes would not allow what he was proposing.

DEVELOPER SAID THERE IS A CONTRACT TO OFFER \$4.7 MILLION FOR THE PROPERTY IF IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED: Fact: The current owner paid \$3.8 million in 2022, three years ago. This difference and market rationale value discrepancy could be questionable. At the 4/14 meeting, the owner, Patel, said he received other offers even higher but liked Colonia’s plans because they blend with the development next door.

Omissions from the Management/Mitigation Plan

That are Relevant to the End Result

These omissions would result in the demolished property unable to be developed how the developer has said he wants to and therefore result in the demolished property sitting without action for a long period of time.

1. **County Initiative to Preserve Culture --** (source: SJC Public Affairs Dept. Wayne Larson, Director, 904-209-0542, 426-2128 cell). “St. Johns County is reinforcing its commitment to preserving local culture supporting vibrant community life, celebrating our rich history and unique identity.” (source: Tara Meeks, Director, Tourist Promotion, Tourism and Cultural Development Department (904-962-4852). Expected to come on-stream in July 2025.
2. **Site Plans –** Developer of demolished property would not reveal site plan even though asked, nor reveal site plan of adjacent property, to see how they link together or to see if parking is sufficient. Plans a 125 seat restaurant on the adjacent corner property which will need 1 parking space for every 3 seats, which is 42 parking spaces. Speculation is that would share some spaces on the MBM property, which does not have enough for proposed replacement buildings shown on 3/19/25. Colonia was turned down by the North Coastal Design Review Board for approval of 95 seat restaurant with 17 parking spaces shared by another commercial building next to it.

3. **Parking** – Removes the 20 parking spaces from the front of MBM, so they must be in the rear of the replacement building. As it exists for Magic Beach now, there is real estate in the rear of the building which could be used for additional parking or additional construction. Now there is a storage building there. There would no longer be parking in front of the replacement buildings. The developer wants to add more public spaces to the Vilano Road right of way to total 16. Site plan not available for both properties taken together to show parking. Speculative.
4. **Zoning** – will not allow the proposed replacement buildings to be built. Only allows 7 residential units not 20, and if can possibly get more through transfer of development rights (TDRs), now called Economic Redevelopment Residential Units (ERRU) should prove ahead of time can get more. Maybe could get 13, but Speculative.
5. **Forecast for a Possible Recession** – Asking price for one of the waterfront Colonia townhomes is now \$2.7mm. “Consumer confidence plummeted in April. Higher income Americans are likely to reduce spending. Likelihood of a recession affects prime real estate market”. (USA today, 5/1/25)
6. **Profitability** – A story in the May/June 2025 *Saturday Evening Post* reports the popularity of old school roadside motels from the 1960s are now destinations. It cites the Seaspray Surf Lodge in Vero Beach (seaspraysurflodge.com), from the 1950s, 17 rooms, steps from the ocean, “Relax in nostalgic luxury.”; Amigo Motor Lodge in Salida, Colorado, 17 rooms, Renovated 2016. “A step back in time with modern comforts creates lasting memories.” “ Step into the charm of yesteryear.”; The Billy Motel in Davis, West Virginia, (thebillymotel.com), 10 rooms, restaurant. “We live in an enchanted area. We want to share it with you.” Profitable historic motels with 10 to 17 rooms. Magic Beach has 24 rooms.
7. **Traffic** – Attorney Kealey West said at the 4/14 meeting that we cannot address traffic, however there is definitely a relationship to consider. It will certainly come forward for any new planned building application.
8. **New Designation** – An application has been made by the Florida Downtown Association to designate Magic Beach Motel as one of 11 in the “11 to be Saved” Program under the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, which will give Magic Beach a special historic status and eligibility for grant funding and technical assistance from the Trust going forward in the future. The property owner did not have to be involved in this designation. The decision will be announced in July.
9. **Request for current Independent Structural Engineering study** – as an unbiased determination of the structural integrity of the Magic Beach for purposes of due diligence. Suggested by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and formally requested by the Florida Downtown Association.

ONCE IT IS GONE * IT IS GONE FOREVER

SAVE THE MAGIC IN VILANO BEACH


Due Diligence for Magic Beach Motel June 30, 2025 meeting

From Keith WillardSR <keithwillardsr@gmail.com>

Date Wed 6/11/2025 9:21 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; GM Development <GMDevelopment@sjcfl.us>; Mike Roberson <mroberson@sjcfl.us>; Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>; Kealey West <kwest@sjcfl.us>; Tera Meeks <tmeeks@sjctdc.com>; Dena Masters <dmasters@sjctdc.com>

Cc Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>

 1 attachment (39 KB)

APPLICANT STATEMENTS VS. DUE DILIGENCE FACTS.docx;

And to show community sentiment to the Board of County Commissioners

These are Statements made by the applicant or representative to approve Demolition permit either in the submitted Master Plan for the 4/14/25 CRRB review meeting, or statements made at that meeting, or at a presentation made to the public by the developer/applicant on 3/19/ 25 for purposes of showing that the replacement building presented at that meeting is why demolition should be supported because of a crumbling building that cannot be salvaged. And to reinforce the idea that it is better to have new economic vitality instead of historic preservation. These statements are compared to contrary factual discovery and include backup contacts to confirm the responses.

File is embedded and attached.

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- 7) **SAVING OF REMARKABLE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS: APPLICANT STATES FLAMINGO PLASTER WORK WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO FAÇADE OF NEW BUILDINGS. NEON SIGN AND OTHER FEATURES WILL BE RELOCATED TO A LANDSCAPED AREA: Fact:** There should be a detailed plan for this, right up front, and specific elements listed for mitigation. No mention of the large neon flamingos on rooftop or on side of building, the clock, the overall neon lighting. On 3/19 replacement building shown is not Art Deco. On 3/19 it was stated that the Rabbit sign is not salvageable, whereas during restoration, after there was an electric short in that sign causing a fire, it was removed to the owners' back yard to be restored and strengthened (ERJ;photo). On 3/19 Said "you just can't see the saved elements from the street". Even though asked for, no site plan was produced or to show where the "landscaped area" is where salvaged elements are to be placed is. Façade of new building showing elements is unknown. Also, what is the penalty for not following the salvage of elements plan? (3/19, 4/14, ERJ. Photo)
- 8) **INTERIOR ROOM MURALS: CRMP STATES THEY ARE PAINTED ON PLASTER AND CANNOT BE SAVED THAT THEY ARE OF UNDETERMINED ORIGIN: Fact:** The murals were restored and added twice by two different owners, could be photographed and reproduced by new artists. (ERJ, 3/19, 4/14)
- 9) **IT IS NOT AN HISTORIC PROPERTY AS HAS BEEN ADDED ONTO & THE PROPERTY IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER: Fact:** The CRRB chair, who is a nationally recognized historic preservation professional and who was a consultant to get Snappers Restaurant on Vilano Road registered on the National Historic Register, said it is now eligible and also for Landmark status , but it is up to the owner to take that initiative. (source: CRRB board and SJC Growth Management staff, 4/14). An alternative is that the Vilano Beach Town Center area is eligible to be and should be designated as a National Historic area which would include the Magic Beach property. A number of historic inventories have listed Magic Beach as top of the list for sense of place. (source: HABS Historic American Buildings study). They say that today it is an "accurate interpretation of the classic streamline Art Deco Moderne style." The insistence and testimony that Magic Beach is not an historic property because of additions was refuted during the last attempt to demolish Magic Beach in 2021. The Bridge of Lions was changed and added onto. Does that make it NOT historic? According to the FHT, The HABS form submitted by the applicant should have been the long form vs. the short form.
- 10) **KEEPING THE MAGIC BEACH AS IT IS, IS NOT AN OPTION. THE BUILDING IS NOT VIABLE, VARIOUS PROBLEMS WERE LISTED AND ASKED FOR DEMOLITION: Fact:** Those in attendance 3/19 said they didn't want to see the property with a dilapidated motel. On 4/14 Owner Tejah Patel said his staff are always chasing after problems. He said he did not know how bad things were when he bought it three years ago. Patel and Johnston said the building is at the end of its useful life. Question: Did the current owner not do his own engineering study before spending \$3.8 million for the property? The previous owners said when they turned over the property, it was in optimal operating condition. (ERJ). The motel continues to be open for business and the parking lot is full even midweek. (photo). Public comment on 4/14: In Charleston buildings that are hundreds of years old are salvageable.

Comments made at the 4/14/Cultural Resource Review Board Meeting

(Source: CRRB meeting webpage = <https://www.sjcfl.us/calendar?title=&dpt=crrb&month=4&yr=> under April 14 meeting), and the meeting was recorded.) This review meeting was required by the Land Development Codes to determine whether demolition of a county-designated Significant Cultural Resource, Magic Beach Motel, would be allowed. The review board determined on 4/14 there was insufficient information provided, and the applicant would have to return again with that information to say why they think the building is not salvageable, with evidence.

In addition to a room full of concerned citizens, the meeting was covered by reporters from three TV stations who broadcast follow-on stories, and other media such as Jacksonville Business Journal, Jax Today News, Flagler Broadcasting were present. The St. Augustine Record did an on-line news story before 4/14. In addition, First Coast News also did a second story on the proposed Colonia developer and representative for the Magic Beach Property owner applicant, revealing they had removed trees from the adjacent property without a permit and willingly paid a fine of \$31,800. An on-line survey done by North Beach Community Alliance showed 75% against demolition, 14% supporting the applicant and 11% neutral and therefore needing more information. Of the 59 letters received by the Review Board and County Commission, 2 supported the applicant to demolish and 57 or 97% requested preservation. In addition, a document was received itemizing 75 responses to posts to the NextDoor site which opposed demolition. (source: Ryan Mauch, SJC Growth Management Dept. 904-209-0621)

At this meeting on 4/14, the developer/representative accused the chair, Leslee Keys, of being prejudiced against the project. He was warned that comments cannot be made to one member of the board. The chair commented that in paperwork submitted by the applicant, they claimed the condition of the buildings were not relevant. She did not understand that if we are asked to approve a request for demolition, why is the building's condition not relevant?

- 1) THE BUILDING IS CRUMBLING INTO DISREPAIR AND WILL BECOME AN EYESORE. THE CEILING IN THE FORMER BREAKFAST ROOM COLLAPSED DURING HURRICANE HELENE IN FALL OF 2024: Fact:** The restoration of the motel from 2010 to 2014 addressed all issues to be repaired under the advice of the project engineer and historic restoration architect. (4/14, MP, ERJ LT)
 - a. The restaurant which was leasing that space thought the collapse was caused by low atmospheric pressure and wind pressure from the hurricane and not a water leak. The ceiling already had cracks in it which had not been investigated. Repairs took months. The restaurant was already experiencing spotty electrical and water availability and restricted ability to cook, so they did not renew their lease. The restaurant owners also made public comment at the 3/19 meeting. (source: Jason and Dawn Watkins, Yamo Food Truck/Beachside Caffee, 904-761-1724.)
 - b. On a Saturday in April 2025 there were 18 cars and one motorcycle in the motel parking spaces (photo), and high occupancy even during the week. On May 6, 2025, there was filming going on at night. Magic Beach has been a sought-after filming venue since 1999. About a year ago a Netflix stream.
 - c. The eyesore will come if the buildings are demolished and the property sits unattended growing weeds, as is the case of the property at 155 Vilano Road (Breakwater Villas townhomes), where it was clearcut and only had infrastructure but zero building construction for several years. In May 2025, they were “still looking for a builder.” But once Magic Beach is gone, it is gone forever.
 - d. We believe a photo of the collapsed restaurant ceiling was passed around to some attendees at the back of the room on 4/14 but it was not shown in the official powerpoint. Why? Was a copy given to staff? Refer to Land Development Code (LDC) 3.01.01.A.2. It recognizes that “Harm or reasonably preventable deterioration of county cultural resources properties located within unincorporated St. Johns County contributes harm to the public welfare.”
- 2) KEEPING THE MAGIC BEACH AS IT IS, IS NOT AN OPTION. THE BUILDING IS NOT VIABLE, VARIOUS PROBLEMS WERE LISTED AND ASKED FOR DEMOLITION. IF YOU IMPROVE A PROPERTY MORE THAN 50% YOU HAVE TO BRING IT UP TO CODE: Fact:** Those in attendance said they didn't want to see the property with a dilapidated motel.
 - a) Owner Tejah Patel at the meeting said his staff are always chasing after problems. He said he did not know how bad things were when he bought it three years ago. He said there are electric and plumbing issues and roof leaks. Cannot make the bathrooms larger. When the Jensens did restoration they brought it up to code and it was in optimal operating condition when they turned the property over. Question: Did he not do his own engineering study before spending \$3.8 million for the property? (4/14, ERJ, LT)
 - b) Patel said he can't make a significant profit. And that the building has a life span and now it's over. (ERJ). The motel continues to be open for business and the parking lot full even midweek. Patel said he has to keep it up to be compliant with the health Department. (4/14, photo)
 - c) The developer reminded everyone that the owner has Property Rights, but here the LDCs override that.
 - d) Request for current Independent Structural Engineering study – as an unbiased determination of the structural integrity of the Magic Beach for purposes of due diligence. Suggested by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and formally requested to the CRRB by the Florida Downtown Association.
 - e) The 50% rule would not come into play, especially not for an historic building.
- 3) THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM IS OBSOLETE AND FAILING: Fact:** The Electrical part of restoration in 2010-2014, was brought up to date, and continuously maintained. During major restoration by the Jensens in 2011-2014, Electrical was completely rewired with each room having its own control box. Air conditioning system continuously maintained. Turned over in 2022 in prime operating condition to new owner. (ERJ,LT) (source: air con repairman at that time – Casey Pitts, 904-534-1930) (also MP, ERJ).
- 4) THE PLUMBING SYSTEM IS OBSOLETE AND FAILING.** Some original iron plumbing is deteriorating but could be brought up to date. All sinks, toilets, showers replaced. All new water lines with updated pressure, hot water heaters, five jacuzzis added, the sewer line was uncovered and lines replaced. The property was turned over in prime operating condition in 2022. (MP, ERJ). Last year, on 9/27/24 the county approved a request of the property next door, then owned by the Beach at Vilano LLC now called Colonia to allow their sewer connection to join that of

the Magic Beach property to eliminate a lift station, so obviously the Magic Beach sewer line was in good condition. Modification to Construction Plans #MODCP 2024000119.

- 5) **THE NEON LIGHTING HAS FAILED AND CANNOT BE REPAIRED.** It is not being maintained. Should be converted to LED for better reliability, significant cost savings for electricity and c's ost of repairs needed. Repair for neon lighting is difficult to find and expensive, with a long lead time for repair.(ERJ)
- 6) **THE SURVEY DONE BY THE NORTH BEACH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE (NBCA) IS NOT VALID. IT ONLY WENT OUT TO A FEW MEMBERS: Fact:** Response to that by a board member of NBCA: It went out to a communications email list of 600 and was posted to Facebook and NextDoor.
- 7) **CLEARLY NOT HISTORICAL. COMPLETELY MODIFIED AND STRUCTURES ADDED DURING RESTORATION IN 2012: Fact:** The applicant's representative said it is more than 70 years old with inadequate systems which cannot be modified. He said the existing outstanding Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) bonds (to build the Town Center infrastructure). are still outstanding and must be paid. He said multiple renovations were hodgepodge, and the building is not salvageable for our use. This was proven false at the 2021 application for demolition and confirmed again 4/14. The Vilano Beach CRA funding is still available, irrespective of what has been used. Because of tax increment financing, there is a lag of a year before offsetting taxes of new construction come into effect to pay off a bond.
- 8) **MURALS: THEY DON'T BELIEVE THE RUMORED VALUE OF ONE OF THE MURALS IS A MILLION DOLLARS. Fact:.** They could be photographed and copied by new artists.
- 9) **POWERPOINT PRESENTED AT 4/14 MEETING BY THE COMMUNITY:** The community was allowed 5 minutes as a permitted designated speaker vs. usual 3 minute public comment.
 - (a) The Vilano Beach CRA with tax increment financing could possibly be used to help preserving Magic Beach Motel. And it would be eligible for grant funding and special tax incentives if designated as a National Register. It focuses on historic preservation as well as revitalization. The Vilano CRA funded the 2022 A1A Historic Property Survey and inventory.
 - (b) Magic Beach Motel owners received a Secretary of State Restoration Award in 2013. (photos)
 - (c) Powerpoint showed photos of remarkable architectural elements of Magic Beach.
 - (d) Powerpoint showed a photo of the proposed replacement buildings façade presented at the 3/19 meeting. No art deco architecture. No visible saved remarkable Magic Beach architectural elements.
 - (e) Mentioned that the adjacent Colonia property was clear cut without permit and paid a fine of \$31,800.
 - (f) Captured a current motel tourism review. "Great location. Beach, shops and restaurants, grocery store steps away."

Comments at 3/19 Public Transparency Meeting by Colonia Developer and Applicant Rep **Showing Prospective Replacement Buildings After Demolition is Allowed**

This meeting was held at the Oceanfront Park in view of the Magic Beach Motel. There was only one illustration, the façade of a proposed two, three story conjoined buildings with 8 retail units of 400 to 750 SF on the first level and 20 "residential units" on levels two and three. (zoning allows only 7 or at most 13 if development rights are purchased. Will have to be proven.) Even though requested, no site plan showing parking on the property was produced. But the developer did show in the illustration and said there were 7 additional parking spaces he was sure the county would allow in the public right of way. The parking lot in the front of the Magic Beach buildings had disappeared and parking was presumably at the rear of the building. Also not shown is site plan of adjoining property where they plan a 125 seat restaurant, parking unknown. Colonia was not successful in getting a 95 seat restaurant approved there with only 17 parking spaces shared with another commercial building on the Colonia property at a North Coastal Design Review Board meeting. The proposed buildings are not Art Deco architecture and there were no memorable remarkable Magic Beach architectural elements on the façade or elsewhere even though promised in the application's Management Plan. Asked why there were no memorial elements shown, the answer was "you just can't see them from the street. Zoning and Land Development codes would not allow what he was proposing.

DEVELOPER SAID THERE IS A CONTRACT TO OFFER \$4.7 MILLION FOR THE PROPERTY IF IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED: Fact: The current owner paid \$3.8 million in 2022, three years ago. This difference and market rationale value discrepancy could be questionable. At the 4/14 meeting, the owner, Patel, said he received other offers even higher but liked Colonia's plans because they blend with the development next door.

Omissions from the Management/Mitigation Plan
That are Relevant to the End Result

These omissions would result in the demolished property unable to be developed how the developer has said he wants to and therefore result in the demolished property sitting without action for a long period of time.

1. **County Initiative to Preserve Culture** -- (source: SJC Public Affairs Dept. Wayne Larson, Director, 904-209-0542, 426-2128 cell). "St. Johns County is reinforcing its commitment to preserving local culture supporting vibrant community life, celebrating our rich history and unique identity." (source: Tara Meeks, Director, Tourist Promotion, Tourism and Cultural Development Department (904-962-4852). Expected to come on-stream in July 2025.
2. **Site Plans** – Developer of demolished property would not reveal site plan even though asked, nor reveal site plan of adjacent property, to see how they link together or to see if parking is sufficient. Plans a 125 seat restaurant on the adjacent corner property which will need 1 parking space for every 3 seats, which is 42 parking spaces. Speculation is that would share some spaces on the MBM property, which does not have enough for proposed replacement buildings shown on 3/19/25. Colonia was turned down by the North Coastal Design Review Board for approval of 95 seat restaurant with 17 parking spaces shared by another commercial building next to it.
3. **Parking** – Removes the 20 parking spaces from the front of MBM, so they must be in the rear of the replacement building. As it exists for Magic Beach now, there is real estate in the rear of the building which could be used for additional parking or additional construction. Now there is a storage building there. There would no longer be parking in front of the replacement buildings. The developer wants to add more public spaces to the Vilano Road right of way to total 16. Site plan not available for both properties taken together to show parking. Speculative.
4. **Zoning** – will not allow the proposed replacement buildings to be built. Only allows 7 residential units not 20, and if can possibly get more through transfer of development rights (TDRs), now called Economic Redevelopment Residential Units (ERRU) should prove ahead of time can get more. Maybe could get 13, but Speculative.
5. **Forecast for a Possible Recession** – Asking price for one of the waterfront Colonia townhomes is now \$2.7mm. "Consumer confidence plummeted in April. Higher income Americans are likely to reduce spending. Likelihood of a recession affects prime real estate market". (USA today, 5/1/25)
6. **Profitability** – A story in the May/June 2025 *Saturday Evening Post* reports the popularity of old school roadside motels from the 1960s are now destinations. It cites the Seaspray Surf Lodge in Vero Beach (seaspraysurflodge.com), from the 1950s, 17 rooms, steps from the ocean, "Relax in nostalgic luxury."; Amigo Motor Lodge in Salida, Colorado, 17 rooms, Renovated 2016. "A step back in time with modern comforts creates lasting memories." "Step into the charm of yesteryear."; The Billy Motel in Davis, West Virginia, (thebillymotel.com), 10 rooms, restaurant. "We live in an enchanted area. We want to share it with you." Profitable historic motels with 10 to 17 rooms. Magic Beach has 24 rooms.
7. **Traffic** – Attorney Kealey West said at the 4/14 meeting that we cannot address traffic, however there is definitely a relationship to consider. It will certainly come forward for any new planned building application.
8. **New Designation** – An application has been made by the Florida Downtown Association to designate Magic Beach Motel as one of 11 in the "11 to be Saved" Program under the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, which will give Magic Beach a special historic status and eligibility for grant funding and technical assistance from the Trust going forward in the future. The property owner did not have to be involved in this designation. The decision will be announced in July.
9. **Request for current Independent Structural Engineering study** – as an unbiased determination of the structural integrity of the Magic Beach for purposes of due diligence. Suggested by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and formally requested by the Florida Downtown Association.

ONCE IT IS GONE * IT IS GONE FOREVER
SAVE THE MAGIC IN VILANO BEACH

Florida Trust Regional Council Monthly Email (Region 3 - June 2025)

From Mercedes Harrold <merci.elena@gmail.com>

Date Sun 6/1/2025 9:09 PM

To dred32080@yahoo.com <dred32080@yahoo.com>; Friends of A1A <danielle_anderson@scenica1a.org>; Hastings Main Street <TheTeam@hastingsfl.org>; Chris Newman <guppy9876@att.net>; Adrienne Burke <adrienne@planningcollab.com>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; Ennis Davis <ennis@planningcollab.com>; Janet Jordan <janetjor@att.net>; Alan Bliss <alan.bliss@jaxhistory.org>; Blair Knighting <Blair.Knighting@kimley-horn.com>; Orange Park Historical Society <info@ophistory.org>; Barry Underwood <barry@avant-build.com>; Chuck Meide <cmeide@staugustinelighthouse.com>; Caleb Arsenault <calebkarsenault@icloud.com>; Sallie O'Hara <tarahillspecialties@gmail.com>; Candice Seymour <cseymour@citystaug.com>; Travis <travis@liftjax.org>; Emily Jane Murray <emurray@flagler.edu>; Suzanne Pickett <eastside@hecdjax.org>; Patricia Davenport-Jacobs <patriciadavenport76@gmail.com>

Hello!

I cannot believe how fast May went flew!

May was a busy month in the historic preservation world. As mentioned last month, there were several communities celebrating with proclamations and preservation awards. I was remiss to mention May 20th last month, which is Emancipation Day in Florida. Emancipation was proclaimed in Tallahassee on May 20, 1865, and as such, Emancipation Day, is celebrated on that day in Florida. Additional info here: [Emancipation Day in Florida - Division of Library and Information Services - Florida Department of State](#)). June 19th, or Juneteenth is the Federal holiday, which commemorates the date in 1865, when Union troops enforced the Emancipation Proclamation in the last remaining Confederate state, Texas. So, in Florida, we celebrate on May 20 and June 19.

Next month is the Preservation on Main Street (POMS) conference in Fernandina Beach, Florida. The POMS conference is an annual conference co-organized by Florida Main Street and the Florida Trust for Preservation. Registration is open, and early bird registration is available through June 10. Several of the folks in our Regional Council will be attending and presenting. Florida's 11 to Save list and preservation awards will be announced, and we'll find out if our Region won the GOAT award! I hope to see you there. If there is interest, we could even have a meetup at the event.

Regional Roundup

- Controversial proposed state land swap of lands in the Guana Preserve for acreage elsewhere in the state. The community, including several local, state, and federal politicians opposed the swap, and was able to successfully get it shut down (for now). This is a reminder that Historic Preservation regularly has bi-partisan support, which is important because historic preservation is for EVERYONE.
- CRRB Meeting June 30 (Magic Beach): The main (maybe only item on the agenda) is the Magic Beach motel demolition. At the April meeting, the St. Johns County Cultural Resource Review Board (CRRB) voted unanimously to request more information from the applicant. Presumably, the applicant will be providing the additional information at the June meeting; however,

documents are not posted on the website yet, so keep an eye out if you're following along here: <https://www.sjcfl.us/calendar/?title=&month=&yr=&dpt=crrb> Because of the interest in the item, the meeting will be held in the County Auditorium, where it can be recorded, rather than the usual location in the permit center.

- CRRB Meeting June 30 (St. Johns County Jail): It also sounds like several people will be attending the meeting to discuss the preservation of the historic St. Johns County jail. This was another proposed demolition that was set to go before the CRRB in February, but was pulled. This is a county-owned building, which was set to be demolished. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend Ralph Abernathy were detained at the jail during the Civil Rights Era. King sent a telegram to Rabbi Israel Dresner, asking him to gather as many rabbis as possible to come to St. Augustine, and 16 rabbis arrived. The rabbis were arrested on June 18th, and also detained at the jail. On June 19, 1964, while in jail, the rabbis wrote a letter, "Why We Went." The St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society reads the letter every year, and will be doing so on June 18 at noon at the St. Johns County Jail. At this time, the county does not plan to demolish the building, and the former County Cultural Resource Coordinator plans to submit an application to the CRRB to designate the jail as a County Landmark.

February news story: [St. Johns considers demolishing Old Jail where MLK was once jailed](#)

May news story: [St. Johns County to renovate historic jail linked to Martin Luther King Jr. and 16 rabbis](#)

Upcoming Events

- June 5: Haunted Histories: Ghosts of Riverside & Avondale, Happy Medium Book Cafe from 6:30 PM–8 PM, <https://riversideavondale.org/event/haunted-histories-ghosts-of-riverside-avondale-june-5/>
- June 7: Jumbo Shrimp Salute to the Negro Leagues Game and Exhibit, <https://www.jaxhistory.org/events/>
 - Exhibit: Old St. Andrew's Church, 317 A Philip Randolph Blvd, 5-6:30 PM
 - Game: 6:35 PM
- June 14: Jacksonville History Fair, 10 AM - 3 PM at the Jacksonville History Center, 314 Palmetto Street, <https://www.jaxhistory.org/events/>
- June 18: St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society to read, "Why We Went," at Old St. Johns County Jail at noon
- June 19: Shaping Our Streets: Celebrating Black Architects of Riverside & Avondale, Hammy Medium Book Cafe from 6:30 PM–8 PM, <https://riversideavondale.org/event/shaping-our-streets-celebrating-black-architects-of-riversideavondale-june-19/>
- June 25: SPAR presents, "Researching Your Historic Home," https://www.sparcouncil.org/historic_preservation_6_2025
- June 30: CRRB Meeting, St. Johns County, County Auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View
- July 10: Historic Homes & Red Tape, Riverside Avondale event at Happy Medium Book Cafe, <https://riversideavondale.org/event/historic-homes-and-red-tape/>
- July 14–18: Preservation on Main Street (POMS), Fernandina Beach, Florida, <https://www.preservationonmainstreet.com/>

Any other news and events to share?

Hope you all have a Happy June!

Sincerely,

Mercedes

FW: New submission from Contact Us

From Shelby Romero <sromero@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/14/2025 12:56 PM

To BCC Commissioners <BCCCommissioners@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Please do not reply all

Good afternoon,

Please see below.



*Many Thanks,
Shelby Romero*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0307 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: St. Johns County, Florida <noreply@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 12:37 PM

To: INFO <INFO@sjcfl.us>

Subject: New submission from Contact Us

Name

John Benton

Email

jbenton2009@comcast.net

Phone

(904) 718-6687

Message

I would like to direct this message to the St Johns County County Commissioners who are considering the merits of Clearance Sheet N2025-000256. The Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach is a fun relic of back when St Augustine was

a sleepy Southern town and should be preserved as a reminder of those days. Thank you for your consideration.



Friends of A1A

Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Inc.



Fleet Admiral

In Memory of Joseph W Bradley, Sr.

Admiral 🏴‍☠️

Jane Culpepper
Hammock Beach Resort
Town of Beverly Beach
In Memory of Doris Westervelt
Helm Financial Services
Tara Hill Specialties, LLC
St. Johns Cultural Council

Captain 🏴‍☠️

St Augustine Lighthouse & Museum
Marineland Dolphin Adventure
FL Representative Paul Renner
FL Senator Travis Hutson
AlertToday Florida
National Travel Center
Kenneth Belshe

Ensign ⭐

Barbara Jenness
St Augustine Beach Civic Association
Carole McCleery
Anne Wilson
St Augustine Alligator Farm
Zoological Park
Celena Chalkley
Rotary Club of Coastal St Johns County
In Memory of E M O'Hara
St Augustine Art Association
James Netherton III
Mr. & Mrs. William McClure
Ken & Linda Hirsh
Gail Wadsworth
TravelStorys GPS
Flagler County Commissioner Greg Hansen &
Linda Hansen
Marge Rooyakkers & Bruce Aiello

www.ScenicA1A.org

Friends of A1A
2175 Mizell Rd

St Augustine, FL 32080

Phone: 904.425.8055

Danielle.Anderson@scenica1a.org



Mission: To promote, protect, preserve and enhance the
A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway



April 14, 2025

Leslee Keyes, Chair
Cultural Review Resource Board
St. Augustine, Florida 32085

Re: Magic Beach Demolition

Dear Ms. Keyes,

The Board of the Friends of A1A would like to express their concern for the planned demolition of Magic Beach in the Vilano Town Center. This community is a designated Florida Main Street, a Waterfronts Florida Community, a Florida Trail Town, a Community Redevelopment area and has gained multiple accolades for its redevelopment efforts with the latest historic inventory recommending several contributing properties as eligible to become an NRHP district. Excerpts from the GAI Historic Survey are below.

GAI architectural historians documented a total of 321 resources. Of these resources, 168 were newly recorded and 153 were previously recorded. Of the surveyed resources, five are recommended individually eligible under Criterion A, Criterion B, or Criterion C (SJ03092, SJ03811, SJ03901, SJ03939, and SJ04962).

Additionally, 43 resources are recommended as contributing to a potential NRHP-eligible historic district located in Vilano Beach. SJ03939 is both recommended contributing to the historic district and individually NRHP eligible. Of the previously-recorded surveyed resources, 57 are demolished. The remaining 217 resources are recommended not eligible for the NRHP due to a lack of significance or integrity.

We strongly urge you to consider the historical value of Vilano Beach as a whole comprised of the sum of its parts, which includes the Magic Beach Motel. As we watch history demolished across the state of Florida, St. Johns County has an opportunity to remain a national leader for historic preservation.

Best regards,

Danielle Anderson

Danielle Anderson
Byway Program Administrator, Friends of A1A

Friends of A1A Board of Directors

President – Flagler Beach City Commissioner Rick Belhumeur; Vice President – Micheal Cumpton;
Treasurer – Robert Samuels; Secretary – Elayne Byrd; St. Johns County Commissioner Sarah Arnold; Dennis Clark;
Flagler County Commissioner Greg Hansen; Richard Hamilton; Flagler Beach Mayor Patti King; Maureen Long; Anne Streater;
Byway Administrator- Danielle Anderson; A1A Consultant: Sallie O'Hara

Fw: New submission from Contact Us

From Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Date Tue 4/15/2025 10:22 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

From: Beverly Frazier <bfrazier@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:21 AM

To: Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Please add this correspondence to the public record for Magic Beach. I have already responded to Ms. Scalingi. Thank you!

From: Olivia Willis <owillis@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 8:52 AM

To: Beverly Frazier <bfrazier@sjcfl.us>

Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Good day,

County Administration is in receipt of the email below. In a review of the email, it appears your department was the intended recipient. Please respond directly to the requestor.

If I can do anything to assist, please let me know.

Thank you,



Olivia Willis

Executive Assistant to the County Administrator

Office of the County Administrator

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0583 | www.sjcfl.us



-

From: St. Johns County, Florida <noreply@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 8:19 PM
To: INFO <INFO@sjcfl.us>
Subject: New submission from Contact Us

Name

Katherine F. Scalingi

Email

kscalingi@gmail.com

Phone

(603) 315-8353

Message

I just saw a report on First Coast News about the possible demolition of the Magic Beach Motel. I don't live there, but why would you tear down such an iconic and historic structure. History sells and that's a unique piece of local history. Please, please try to save it, they aren't making them like that anymore.

From: [Megan Wright](#)
To: [Ryan Mauch](#)
Subject: Fw: New submission from Contact Us
Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:22:26 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)

From: Beverly Frazier <bffrazier@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:21 AM
To: Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Please add this correspondence to the public record for Magic Beach. I have already responded to Ms. Scalingi. Thank you!

From: Olivia Willis <owillis@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 8:52 AM
To: Beverly Frazier <bffrazier@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Good day,

County Administration is in receipt of the email below. In a review of the email, it appears your department was the intended recipient. Please respond directly to the requestor.

If I can do anything to assist, please let me know.

Thank you,



Olivia Willis

Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Office of the County Administrator
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0583 | www.sjcfl.us



From: St. Johns County, Florida <noreply@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 8:19 PM

To: INFO <INFO@sjcfl.us>

Subject: New submission from Contact Us

Name

Katherine F. Scalingi

Email

kscalingi@gmail.com

Phone

(603) 315-8353

Message

I just saw a report on First Coast News about the possible demolition of the Magic Beach Motel. I don't live there, but why would you tear down such an iconic and historic structure. History sells and that's a unique piece of local history. Please, please try to save it, they aren't making them like that anymore.

FW: New submission from Contact Us

From Shelby Romero <sromero@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/14/2025 12:56 PM

To BCC Commissioners <BCCCommissioners@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Please do not reply all

Good afternoon,

Please see below.



*Many Thanks,
Shelby Romero*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0307 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: St. Johns County, Florida <noreply@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 12:37 PM

To: INFO <INFO@sjcfl.us>

Subject: New submission from Contact Us

Name

John Benton

Email

jbenton2009@comcast.net

Phone

(904) 718-6687

Message

I would like to direct this message to the St Johns County County Commissioners who are considering the merits of Clearance Sheet N2025-000256. The Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach is a fun relic of back when St Augustine was

a sleepy Southern town and should be preserved as a reminder of those days. Thank you for your consideration.

The Magic Beach Hotel

From Claudia Howat <chcurly@aol.com>

Date Mon 4/14/2025 11:23 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Hi:

Just spoke to you on the phone and following up with an email.

A few years ago, my friend and I stayed at the Magic Beach hotel, and we loved it there. It was so retro and we really enjoyed the quiet of the beach as well as the decor and the history of the hotel. The retro is quietly being destroyed by huge, look alike, tall condos.

I'm aghast that yet, another developer, is after this hotel to build, what we all just can't get enough of.....tall look alike condos with no personality, but make the developer more rich.

I lived on the gulf side of Florida for well over 55 years. I lived in Bradenton and Sarasota first, before I-75 was built, and then lived for over 45 years in Tallahassee. I was selling art in the early 2000's, and drove from Tallahassee down to the St Pete, Clearwater areas, putting art in touristy art galleries, talking to the folks who ran the businesses. Even back then, I was told that the Mom and Pop businesses were being taken over by who else: developers. How the developers did it, was to get the politicians to determine taxes based on potential land use, not the actual use of the land and business that occupied that space. So, the mom and pop stores and hotels were put out of business because they could not pay taxes on the potential use, they only had actual earnings. All that history and all those visuals are gone, replaced by those very profitable tall buildings with no heart and no soul.

St Augustine is feeling that squeeze by developers. It's losing the personality and charm that makes people want to come and see our unique sights. Bit by bit, developers are going to replace the personality with look alike modern buildings with no soul. People could stay anywhere and look alike, where's the place with the personality? Not in St Augustine.

We just had an incident out here in the country.... A developer bought up thousands of acres of active farmland, and is proposing a housing development near the River, off CR 214 or 208?

He wants to put up a few thousand houses for over 55 community in an area that is not meant for city traffic. The traffic on those back roads are used by farmers with their machinery, and their trucks of produce. It's for farming, for growing food to feed the people American grown produce. Yet, the developer sneaked in, bought it up and then thought to tell the commissioners and ask to change the zoning. That property comes with special needs.....drinking water, sewage, trash disposal, and of course more back roads being used for city type traffic. No, no, no. Preserve Florida and let these people go live elsewhere. We don't have the infrastructure to accomodate all the building. Nor do we want to become a major city. We chose here because of the atmosphere of laid back, easy going, the view of nature, not a bunch of tall condos that look like the city.

Why are developers desire to make profit more important than the people's rights to enjoy a way of life that is not compacted into look alike condensed housing? Florida is not only losing it's soul, and it's appeal....we're becoming very much cookie cutter, squeeze in more people.

Our infrastructure here is popping at the seams. I-95 is backed up in traffic. People who work lower paying jobs that hold up the functions in St Augustine cannot afford to live here. They have to drive in from Jax or Palm Coast, because we do not have affordable housing for them. That means more road traffic that I-95 is not able to handle efficiently. I've tried the back roads, and they get jammed up as well. Before we add even more expensive housing, shouldn't we be adding more roads to ease the traffic burdens?

PLEASE DO NOT APPROVE THIS REQUEST TO TEAR DOWN THE Magic Beach Hotel. Let it be a single reminder of the good old days of how life in Florida used to be relaxed and laid back.

Claudia Howat

FLORIDA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION



April 10, 2025

Dr. Leslee Keys (Chair)
Susan Schjelderup (Vice Chair)
Blair Knighting
Robert E. Olson
Nick Jonihakis
Christine Newman
Janet Jordan
4040 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Sent via email

RE: Call to protect the Vilano Beach Main Street and the Magic Beach Motel

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the important work you do to protect the historic places in your care, which is vital in St. Johns County where there is such a wealth of history to protect, and where it is so easy to translate protection of these resources into economic vitality for your community.

It is our understanding that an application for the demolition of one of those resources, the Magic Beach Motel, has been submitted to the city, along with a cultural resource management plan, and a mitigation report. Opened in 1951 as the Blue Ocean Motel, the longstanding motel is a key component in the Vilano Beach Town Center. Since 1999, the County has established specific goals and objectives for the Vilano Beach Town Center in the Comprehensive Plan, and Vilano Beach was designated as a Main Street community in 2003.

As the statewide nonprofit dedicated to protecting our state's history and heritage we respectfully seek the following:

- We ask that the Magic Beach Motel be granted Local Landmark status.
- We ask to slow down the demolition process so the Cultural Resources Review Board has adequate time to review documentation and request additional information. We hope that this review will prove the demolition of this historic building is not in the best interest of the community
- We ask the CRRB and Board of County Commissioners to uphold the goals and objectives of the Land Development Code by not approving the demolition of the Magic Beach Motel





- That new development in the Main Street area incorporate the economically successful and rehabilitated, award-winning Magic Beach Motel
- We ask for a historic structure assessment by a historic preservation-trained professional to determine the structural integrity of the building so CRRB and the Board of County Commissioners are able to make informed decision on the future of this significant historic building

Over the past decade, St. Johns County Cultural Resources staff has recommended the Magic Beach Motel be qualified as a local landmark and recommended it is a Significant Cultural Resource under the Land Development Code. The CRRB confirmed its status as a Significant Cultural Resource in 2021. Your staff and entities throughout Florida recognize the historic and architectural significance of this property. The County's public documents related to Vilano Beach and Vilano Beach Main Street identify the Magic Beach Motel as a primary character-defining element of the area. Taking the next step and formally recognizing this significant building as a Local Landmark should be the next step.

The Florida Main Street program has a goal of revitalizing historic downtowns and encouraging economic development within the context of historic preservation. Main Street programs thrive only in areas where there is a balance of economic and historic preservation activity because historic resources can drive economic development. Allowing demolition of the Magic Beach Motel, one of the widely recognized icons of the area, will signal a lack of concern for historic authenticity or regard for the county's goals within the Vilano Beach Town Center zoning district as well as the misuse of more than \$10 million in local, state and federal public funds that have been used to promote and preserve the historic community.

Furthermore, the Florida Department of State previously recognized the Magic Beach Motel with the Outstanding Florida Main Street Rehabilitation award. The property is actively and economically used, contributes to the vitality of the mix of uses in the Vilano Beach area, and is a recognized landmark as citizens, taxpayers, and visitors are familiar with the building.

As stated in the County's Land Development Code for the Vilano Beach Town Center Overlay, "These regulations are intended to support the creation of a downtown area that has buildings designed to reflect the unique local flavor and character of this small beach town generally reflected in the existing historic and public buildings."

Under the County's Land Development Code, Section 3.01.01.B, the County has noted the intent for the regulations to:





- Protect against unwarranted destruction of Cultural Resources in the County
- Encourage Uses of Cultural Resources that lead to their continuance
- Discourage destruction of Cultural Resources that qualify as Significant Cultural Resources
- Encourage the continued use and adaptive re-use of Significant Cultural Resources

While the Magic Beach Motel has changed over time, much of the significant original materials have been restored. These changes to the property do not detract from its importance. The Magic Beach Motel illustrates a time and place through authentic architectural and interior design reflective of the national trend in highway motels and locally for the use of a mid-century modern design reminiscent of the art deco period. The additional story to the detached structure does not detract from the one-story Magic Beach Motel and even after a devastating fire, careful attention was paid to restore the motel's authenticity. Demolition of this important building would be contrary to the land development code.

The State of Florida's Florida Master Site File, the statewide repository for archaeological and historic resource documentation, includes a written record from two evaluations of the Magic Beach Motel's historic character and significance, one in 2001 and one in 2010. In the latter survey, the architectural historian noted the alterations included replacement of the original doors and windows. That same reviewer stated the Magic Beach Motel retained important characteristics, known in the historic preservation field as integrity of setting, location, association and feeling.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners established landmark criteria unique to its jurisdiction. Of the nine criteria, the Florida Trust contends that the Magic Beach Motel qualifies for at least four of the nine criteria.

- Exemplifies a historic, cultural, political, economic, or social trend of St. Johns County, the State of Florida, or the nation
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction
- Has value as a Building that is recognized for the quality of its architecture and that retains sufficient features showing its architectural significance
- Is a geographically definable area or neighborhood united by culture, architectural styles, or physical development, which has historic or cultural significance in the community





The CRRB used these same criteria to designate it as a Significant Cultural Resource. We support the evaluations and determinations undertaken by St. Johns County staff and the CRRB that have come to this conclusion.

A study performed by a nationally distinguished economic firm found that St. Augustine's heritage assets contribute \$2.9 billion toward the economy. Further, the study noted there is a correlation between the loss of historic resources and a reduction in tourism dollars.

Vilano Beach is an attractive and unique place to visit and to live, and the principles the County set forth in the Vilano Beach Town Center guidelines recognize this and provide measures to protect existing historic resources and inspire new development. The guidelines also provide incentives like local and national tax credits that can be leveraged to help rehabilitate and preserve these character-defining resources. The county has recognizes that new development at a larger scale would pressure the demolition of the one-story character of historic Vilano in order to preserve those historic resources.

The Florida Trust supports sensitive new development that integrates historic resources and sound planning and infrastructure for a cohesive whole. Vilano Beach is economically healthier thanks to the efforts of St. Johns County to use the area's historic authenticity to drive new development and provide incentives for the rehabilitation of its older properties that are the original character givers of the area.

On behalf of the Florida Trust's Board of Directors and our membership, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comment regarding the historical significance of the Magic Beach Motel as an individual property that anchors the historic main street area. Thank you for your time, consideration and all you do to protect Florida's history and heritage. If you have any questions, please contact me at (850) 224-8128.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Wyllie'.

Melissa Wyllie
CEO & President
Florida Trust for Historic Preservation





Outlook

CRRB Meeting, April 14, 2025 (Magic Beach)

From Mercedes Harrold <merci.elena@gmail.com>

Date Thu 4/10/2025 10:54 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Cc Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

 1 attachment (4 MB)

Keep the Magic in Magic Beach(1).pdf;

Good evening,

Attached is a letter with my concerns about the Magic Beach demolition. Please forward to the CRRB for review.

Thank you in advance,
Mercedes

Re: CRRB Meeting, April 14, 2025 (Magic Beach)

From Mercedes Harrold <merci.elena@gmail.com>

Date Fri 4/11/2025 7:18 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Cc Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Hello,

Wanted to follow up with this.

I wanted to make sure I prepared a response before the meeting, but after sending the email, I rechecked the additional documents online and I am "retracting" two comments about the author of the HABS report and photos. Paul Weaver's name is listed after the references and there are updated photos. My apologies for missing these details.

I still think this documentation should not be completed as a HABS short form, unless there is justification. I also still do not see updated measured drawings, but they may be in the attachments.

If the applicant and author can point out deficiencies that they would like to draw attention to in the photos, I think that would be helpful. Otherwise, the photos appear to show a clean, older retro motel with lovely features, some of which are original.

Thanks for uploading all the documents online!

Sincerely,
Mercedes

> On Apr 10, 2025, at 10:51 PM, Mercedes Harrold <merci.elena@gmail.com> wrote:

>
> Good evening,
>
> Attached is a letter with my concerns about the Magic Beach demolition. Please forward to the CRRB for review.
>
> Thank you in advance,
> Mercedes
>
> <Keep the Magic in Magic Beach(1).pdf>
>
>

April 10, 2025
Sent via email

Dr. Leslee Keys (Chair)
Susan Schjelderup (Vice Chair)
Robert Olson
Blair Knighting
Christine Newman
Janet Jordan
Nick Jonihakis

Dear CRRB:

I am a professional archaeologist/historic preservationist, and previously served as the St Johns County Cultural Resources Coordinator from 2018-2021, which was one of the highlights of my career. I wish I could be with you all at the meeting, but want to thank you for your time and thank the County for posting documentation on their website that will go before you all. I am providing a brief summary of the history of the Magic Beach, its surroundings, and my involvement. I also have some questions and comments that I would respectfully request you consider.

Questions/Comments:

- The staff report mentions the documentation was prepared by Paul Weaver, who is a someone I am familiar with, but the provided reports do not list an author.
- There is a provided HABS short form, which according to NPS guidelines does not seem appropriate for this particular project, as those forms are intended for projects with limited time for documentation or where limited information is available for research. According to the staff report, the staff has been helping the developer move forward through the demolition process for approximately 6 months.
- This is not a true HABS report following National Park Service (NPS) guidelines. While the County has accepted similar style reports for demolitions, has this style of report been accepted for demolition of other Significant Cultural Resources?
 - A full HABS report should be completed, or information why the applicant feels the short form is appropriate.
 - The HABS report should have the historian clearly listed.
- The HABS report also requires measured drawings and photographs, and the provided plans and photographs appear to be from the rehabilitation, making them over a decade old.
 - Although the past documentation could be useful as supplemental information, current information should be provided that documents current conditions.
- Where are the supporting materials for the claims that other mitigation options were pursued?
 - No advertisement that the structure was offered for sale to be moved.
 - No quotes for costs to move structure.

- No structural engineer report providing information about current conditions.
- Are staff members qualified professionals in architectural history and/or history?
 - To ensure defensible work, if not, the CRRB, as the Board of County Commissioner's advisory board in historic preservation matters, should be leading efforts pertaining to historic properties.

The Magic Beach Motel, formerly known as the Blue Ocean, and the cluster of historic structures in Vilano Beach represent an important reminder of Florida's historic tourism industry. During World War II, Florida was the home of many military training centers, and after the war, former military personnel returned with their families. As a result of the influx of residents and visitors, and increased travel along roads like Scenic A1A, construction of one-story, roadside motels like the Blue Ocean began to appear along these roadways, and Vilano Beach experienced increased growth as evidenced in the mid-century residences and commercial properties that still exist in the community.

Rerouting A1A, carried traffic away from the core of the Vilano Beach community, yet the historic Vilano Beach community perseveres. In the early 2000s, a group proposed forming the Vilano Beach Main Street program to help spur economic development while also promoting historic preservation, and the Magic Beach was a main component in these efforts. The community was successful, and a Main Street program was formed. The County supported these efforts through land development codes that outlined incentives for historic preservation and supplemental funding to the program. The County and the Main Street program have also applied for numerous grants over the years that have funded various studies, historic resource surveys, and improvements.

In 2010, the Magic Beach motel suffered a fire, but within two years, rehabilitation had been completed under the direction of a historic preservation architect. In 2013, the Secretary of State awarded the motel, and its partners including the County and the Main Street program for their efforts. Since the Main Street program's inception, the Magic Beach Motel has played a pivotal role in marketing materials, including in State media, like the State's Florida Main Street page as recently as November 2024, and on Vilano Beach Main Street's own website to this day.

In 2021, I was still employed by the County when a development application that included demolition of the Magic Beach was submitted. At that time, members of the public who were opposed to the demolition attended the October Cultural Resource Review Board (CRRB) meeting, and requested the CRRB consider designating the property a Significant Cultural Resource and a County Landmark. This was my last CRRB meeting, as I resigned from the County that day. At the December meeting, the CRRB designated the Magic Beach Motel as a Significant Cultural Resource, and ultimately, the BCC denied approval of the application before them, and the Magic Beach Motel was saved from demolition.

In 2022, new owners purchased the motel and stated in a newspaper article that they had no plans to change it beyond general repairs and renovations. Since then, several investments have been made in preserving the existing historic structures in Vilano, like adaptive reuse and

County Landmark Designation of the former Barrancotto's restaurant, now Snappers, and renovation of Haley's Court as a boutique hotel. Yet now in 2025, proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel is back on the table.

Summary of select dates associated with the motel:

- 1951: Blue Ocean Built
- 1999: featured in the tv show Safe Harbor, renamed "Magic Beach"
- 2001: a county-wide survey recommended the building was not individually eligible for listing in the National Register; however, at that time, the building was at or almost 50 years old, the general threshold for a "historic" building.
- 2002-2003: Vilano Beach promoted the Magic Beach as a significant feature while applying to become a designated Main Street program, and has been consistently highlighted as a feature of the Main Street area since its designation, including in promotional materials, like their own website (still on there right now), and as recently as November 2024 via their own social media pages, and the state's Main Street social media pages.
- 2010-2012: the structure underwent extensive rehabilitation under the supervision of a professional architect with historic preservation experience
- 2013: Secretary of State awarded the Magic Beach Motel, Vilano Beach Main Street, St Johns County, North Shores Improvement Board, North Shores Corridor Design Review Board, Harry Scherwinski, and Les Thomas Outstanding Florida Main Street Private-Public Partnership Honor Award.
- 2021: A staff report indicated the Magic Beach Motel is a Significant Cultural Resource, and qualifies as a County Landmark under the Land Development Code (LDC). CRRB designated it as Significant Cultural Resource under the LDC.
- 2022: a local historic properties survey contracted by the county, using state grant funds, identified the Magic Beach as a contributing resource to a potential National Register Historic District.
- 2025: the LDC guidelines for Historic Preservation (Special Districts) and the Vilano Beach Town Center both include historic preservation as a goal.
- April 9, 2025: rooms are still being advertised with rates ranging from \$94.99-\$159.99.

I believe that property rights are important, but I also believe in the County's LDC, which provides guidelines for preserving St Johns County's historic resources. In the County's own words:

"The Cultural Resources of St. Johns County are important community assets that enrich the lives of citizens and visitors alike. Certain Structures, Buildings, objects and sites within St. Johns County possess a special public interest and are important resources to understanding the heritage and historical development of the area. As such, these Cultural Resources, and in some cases their environs, should be designated as Significant Cultural Resources. Such Significant Cultural Resources should, to the extent possible, be maintained and protected in order to benefit the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public. It is also recognized that harm or reasonably preventable deterioration of Cultural Resources on any property located within unincorporated St. Johns County constitutes harm to the public welfare."

Please consider the following:

- Embracing the LDC and preserving this Significant Cultural Resource.
- Encouraging the TDC to work with the property owner and local stakeholders like the Friends of the Scenic Highway and the Main Street, to focus on the retro theme, which can be promoted along Scenic A1A with Vilano's other retro offers, like Haley's Court, Snapper's, and Vilano 180.
- Encouraging the adaptive reuse of the building and its incorporation into the design of any new development. For example, using the lobby for the development, but convert the rooms to restaurant and retail space and building around the existing structure.
- Ensuring pertinent and appropriate documentation is prepared and reviewed by qualified professionals.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Mercedes Harrold
Jacksonville, Florida



Photo Courtesy of Mark Krancer, Kram Kran Photo



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, October 1,
2013

Contact: Brittany
Lesser
[850.245.6522](tel:850.245.6522)

Winners of the Secretary of State's 2013 Florida Main Street Awards Announced

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Secretary of State Ken Detzner announced the recipients of the Secretary of State's 2013 Florida Main Street Awards. These awards were presented on September 19, 2013, at the Florida Main Street 2013 Annual Conference held in Vilano Beach.

"I am proud to recognize the activities and accomplishments of this year's honorees," said Secretary Detzner. "Their sincere focus on preservation and contributions to Main Street programs across the state are essential to the revitalization of Florida's traditional commercial districts."

The awards program encourages and acknowledges local Main Street program accomplishments that advance the goals of the Florida Main Street Program. Florida Main Street is a technical assistance program of the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation. The Bureau conducts statewide programs aimed at identifying, evaluating, and preserving Florida's historic resources. Main Street, with its emphasis on preservation, is an effective strategy for achieving these goals in Florida's historic retail districts. Since 1985, the Bureau has offered manager training, consultant team visits, design and other technical assistance, as well as the benefit of experience gained by other Florida Main Street programs.

Outstanding Local Florida Main Street

Supporter: *Honor Award*— Sandy Chavez, (MainStreet DeLand Association); *Merit Awards*— Vivian Browning (Vilano Beach Main Street) and Scott Locke (St. Cloud Main Street)

Outstanding Florida Main Street Private-Public

Partnership: *Honor Award*— Magic Beach Motel (Vilano Beach Main Street, St. Johns County, North Shores Improvement Board, North Shores Corridor Design Review Board, Harry Scherwinski, Les Thomas)

Excerpts from the Press Release for the 2013 award.

New owners will turn iconic Magic Beach Motel in Vilano into a boutique hotel



Colleen Michele Jones

St. Augustine Record

Published 10:12 p.m. ET May 18, 2022



[Show image info](#) ▼

After [the sale of the property to another developer fell through](#) following a very public battle with neighbors, the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach has been sold.

"At the moment, we're just focused on operating the property," said Sonny Bhikha, a principal with Shivam Properties.

Magic Beach as boutique motel, May 2022.



LOCAL NEWS

Netflix series filmed in Vilano Beach fills hundreds of hotel rooms

Very secretive crew members filled 500 hotel rooms this week while working on the show.

Author: Jessica Clark

Published: 7:58 PM EDT August 30, 2022

Updated: 7:58 PM EDT August 30, 2022

Magic Beach in film, again, August 2022.

St. Johns County Approves \$58,000 for Continued Support of Vilano Beach Main Street Programs

During the Oct. 17 regular meeting, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners convened as the St. Johns County Community Redevelopment Agency to approve an agreement with Vilano Beach Main Street, Inc. (VBMS) for \$58,000 to continue support of the non-profit organization's dedication to enhancing, promoting, and preserving the historic character of the Vilano Beach Town Center and surrounding areas.

SJC provides financial support to preserve the historic character, October 2023.



Florida Main Street

Jul 18, 2024 ·



So happy to see [Vilano Beach Main Street](#) and Magic Beach Motel mentioned as a destination point when visiting the St. Augustine area! Do you have a "Magic Beach Motel" in your Main Street? Tell us about it in the comments below!



msn.com

America's Oldest City Is A Family-Friendly Coastal Gem Full Of Beaches And Historic Charm

Florida Main Street celebrates the Magic Beach Motel, July 2024.



Vilano Beach Main Street



Nov 15, 2024 · 🌐

Thank you [Florida Main Street](#)! The Magic Beach Hotel is very special and adds so much charm to [Vilano Beach Main Street](#)!



Florida Main Street

Nov 15, 2024 · 🌐

Our Business Spotlight today for our November Program of the Month [Vilano Beach Main Street](#) is possibly the most infamous land... [See more](#)





Florida Main Street

Nov 15, 2024 · 

Our Business Spotlight today for our November Program of the Month [Vilano Beach Main Street](#) is possibly the most infamous landmark in Vilano Beach: the Magic Beach Motel.

"The Magic Beach Motel was restored to its 1950s former glory in 2012 by owners and innkeepers Earl and Remy Jensen. Both are currently board members of Vilano Beach Main Street and own the Ocean View Lodge in Vilano Beach. This iconic Art Deco Motel was built in 1958 and is admired for its neon signs and pink flamingos. The WB show 'Safe Harbor' was filmed here in the 1990's. More recently, film crews were here filming the Netflix show '3 Body Count.'"



Florida Main Street and Vilano Main Street celebrate the Magic Beach Motel, November 2024.


Originally built in 1951 and operating as the Vilano Beach Motel, this vibrant and charming motel got its name from its use as a set location for the 1999 Warner Brothers TV series titled *Safe Harbor* starring Emmy winner, Golden Globe nominee, and Golden Girl **Rue McClanahan**.

Set in fictional Magic Beach, Florida, this series follows a widowed sheriff and his three sons living with Grandma Loring (McClanahan) who owns the motel.

The neon sign with bunnies jumping from a hat pay homage to her husband's career as a magician.

Locals recall being curious about the sheriff's patrol car sitting in the driveway during the 8 months of filming.

The Magic Beach Motel has since been renovated and modernized for today's tourists but maintains its retro-kitsch aesthetic with flamingos, bright colors, art deco details, and the unmistakable neon sign.





Magic Beach Motel is featured on several of the Vilano Beach Main Street Pages, April 2025.

Historic American Buildings Survey

Guidelines for Historical Reports

Introduction

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) was established in 1933 to create a public archive of America's architectural heritage, consisting of measured drawings, historical reports, and large-format black & white photographs. The idea of "securing records of structures of historic interest" was first endorsed by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1918. However, it took the onset of the Great Depression to provide the opportunity in the form of a federal program initiated during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" administration. Anticipating the 1935 Historic Sites Act by well over a year, HABS was the first significant boon to historic preservation at the national level. The program field tested many of the preservation strategies still in use today such as the surveying, listing, and compiling of documentation on historic properties; the development of comprehensive, contextual information; and the establishment of national standards for documentation.

HABS was part of a ground-swell of interest in collecting and preserving information, artifacts, and buildings related to our early history, recognized as the Colonial Revival movement. Like HABS, the movement was motivated in part by the perceived need to mitigate the effects of rapidly vanishing historic resources upon America's history and culture. Path-breaking organizations such as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and Colonial Williamsburg presented models for the collection of historical artifacts and the interpretation of our architectural heritage. And architects trained in the Ecole des Beaux Arts prepared drawings of colonial-era buildings in folio volumes as a means of promoting and understanding historic architecture. While important, these activities occurred only on a limited, local or regional basis. The HABS surveys implemented for the first time the comprehensive examination of historic architecture on a national scale and to uniform standards.

Just prior to the establishment of HABS, Executive Order 6133 transferred stewardship of historic battlefields and other associated sites from the War Department to the National Park Service. At the same time, Director Horace Albright broadened the traditional NPS focus on preserving naturalistic western landscapes to include the cultural heritage of the east. Chief landscape architect Thomas C. Vint was moved from the San Francisco regional office to Washington, D.C. to oversee the development of new historical parks such as Colonial Parkway in Virginia, Salem Maritime in Massachusetts, and Hopewell Village in Pennsylvania; he also provided general management of the new HABS program. HABS recording, and its rich archive of period-specific architectural details, aided in the restoration and interpretation of these and many other historic properties, while also creating a lasting record for future generations.

The significance of the HABS program then as today resides in the scope of the collection and its public accessibility, as well as in the establishment of national standards for recording historic architecture. As was intended, the HABS collection represents "a complete resume of the builder's art," ranging "from the smallest utilitarian structures to the largest and most monumental." The materials are available to the public copyright-free and on-line through the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. As a resource for architectural historians, restoration architects, preservationists, scholars, and those of all ages interested in American history and architecture, HABS is one of the most widely used of the Library's collections.

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HABS is also responsible for the development of standards for the production of drawings, histories, and photographs, as well as the criteria for preparing the documentation for inclusion in the Collection currently recognized as the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation*. The resulting documentation comes from three sources today. The HABS Washington Office produces documentation in-house and fields teams (made up primarily of students) all over the country. HABS also receives documentation from the mitigation program satisfying Sections 106/110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Historians preparing mitigation documentation should contact the appropriate regional National Park Service office or HABS Washington staff with any questions and for a review of the reports. HABS also accepts donated documentation from interested members of the public, such as student-work in university programs or consultants in the cultural resources field.

Formats

HABS has developed a short format and an outline format to guide historians in researching and writing reports. Determining whether to use the short form or longer outline format depends on the complexity of the building or site, the amount of information available, and the allocated time to work on the project. **At a minimum, each building or site should have a short format report accompanying the graphical (measured drawings, photographs) documentation.**

The **short form** report is several pages in length and has prescribed entries. It should be used in cases wherein research time is limited or research yields little information on the building.

The short form can also be the basis for a **field survey** form, wherein large numbers of historic buildings need a concise and consistent assessment, either as part of documentation for a complex of buildings such as military base, college campus, or farmstead, for an historic district or region, or as part of an initial study of a category of buildings wherein one or two representative examples will be extensively recorded. The short form categories would then be adapted to include not only the name of building, surveyor (historian), and sponsoring organization, and the location, but also prevailing structural types, repetitive features or the unusual ones, materials, condition, plan and site layout, buildings uses and so on, making for a field survey form that anticipates shared characteristics and notes the material evidence that will later influence a determination of historical, architectural, and technological importance. Recent examples of field surveys include the Quaker Meeting House study (1997-99) and the Philadelphia Carnegie Library study (2007-08). A sample survey form from the Quaker Meeting House survey and one from the Philadelphia Carnegie Library project are in Appendix E.

The **outline format** prescribes the historical information and physical aspects of the building, complex of buildings, or site to be discussed, *although topics within the sections can be expanded or omitted as appropriate*. The first section of the outline addresses the physical history of the building, including significant dates in the initial planning and construction as well as in later alterations, plus names of the designers and suppliers. The historical context of the building is also addressed here. The second section concerns the architectural information, with categories intended to produce an analysis and description of the building form as it exists at the time of the site visit. Also in this section is a component for some discussion of the landscape including designed elements and plan, as well as reference to outbuildings and supporting structures on site. The final section of the outline is

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bibliographic in nature, including all sources of information as well as other potential resources not investigated, as appropriate.

For groups of buildings, such as those in a complex or those surveyed for a historic district or as representative types from a particular region, different questions must be asked than for an individual structure. Try to include the following information: 1) Physical context, that is how it relates to the surrounding environment; 2) Historical context, primarily concerning the buildings' relationship to the historical development of the surrounding area and to trends in local and national histories; 3) Specific historical data, including the dates of initial planning and development, any changes in plan and evolution, individuals such as architects, city planners, and developers, associated with the site studied, and associated historical events; 4) Physical description of the site according to the original plan, as it has changed over time, and as it is at the present. For individual buildings or structures identified as part of a complex, these broader questions frame the overall narrative but information on the specific buildings within the complex must also be included in the supporting reports submitted for those individual buildings and structures. The HABS Washington Office or the NPS regional offices can offer guidance on a case-by-case basis.

Regardless of the format selected, the historical report should be written in simple language, without excessively specialized terminology. HABS follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines, which are simplified in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. For architectural terms, Cyril L. Harris, *Historic Architecture Sourcebook*, or the *Getty Art History Information Program's Art & Architecture Thesaurus* can serve as guides. Grammar and punctuation conventions observed by HABS are found within these guidelines. Indicate sources for all information in footnotes following the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and cross-reference relevant measured drawings, photographs and other historical reports in the HABS/HAER/HALS collection. All historical reports are to be prepared on a computer using Microsoft Word software and submitted in hard copy and electronic forms. The reports are single-spaced. Keep formatting simple, adding images, tables or charts as appendices at the end of the report. If historic images are used, a copyright release form must be obtained from the repository or owner of the image in advance of submission. The copy right release form is included as an appendix to this document and pdf versions of the form can be obtained from the HABS Washington Office.

Short Format

The short form HABS report uses the following headings and is generally only a few pages in length. Page length varies from one to two pages up to around ten pages, depending on the resource, access to materials, and time available for research.

- Name:** The name section is essentially a heading, centered at the top of the page. It includes the full name of the program, HABS, the name of the structure, and the HABS number. See the Appendices for information on the HABS number and assigning the historic name.
- Location:** This includes the address, city or town, county, and state. In the second paragraph a coordinate should be provided that locates the building or site. See the Appendices for information on assigning coordinates.

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- Significance:** This succinct statement presents the rationale for recording the building or site, emphasizing its significance in the local, regional, or national context. It should highlight both historical and architectural aspects of the building and its relationship to its environment.
- Description:** The description should cover the physical characteristics of the building, past and present.
- History:** Include in this section the date of construction, the name(s) of the architect(s) or builder(s), ownership information, and various uses of the building or site over time.
- Sources:** Citations of sources used.
- Historian(s):** In addition to the name(s) of the author(s), include the author affiliation(s) and the general completion date of the report.
- Project Information:** This is a summary of those involved in preparing the documentation, including the measured drawings, photographs, and historical report. Sponsor and cooperating organizations should also be named here.

Examples of the short form historical report are available at the HABS website,
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritagedocumentation/samples.htm>

HABS guidelines:

https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritagedocumentation/upload/HABS-Guidelines-Historical-Reports_508.pdf

ARTICLE III SPECIAL DISTRICTS

PART 3.00.00 GENERALLY

The following Special District standards are to be applied to the mapped zoning districts as overlay regulations in the manner prescribed in each Special District below. The purpose of each special district is to regulate Development within each district in a manner that is in keeping with the special circumstances of the district.

PART 3.01.00 CULTURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION

Sec. 3.01.01 Generally

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of these Cultural Resources regulations is to establish procedures, consistent with the Florida Historical Resources Act (Chapter 267, F.S., as amended), related to the identification and protection of Cultural Resources within unincorporated St. Johns County. These regulations are to be read in harmony and consistently with the intent and powers established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*), and Chapter 267, F.S. as it is the express intent that these regulations locally implement the Florida Statutes. These procedures shall provide for the establishment of a Cultural Resource Review Board in accordance with Federal Regulations 36 CFR 61.5 (c) (2), as amended, and for the identification and documentation of Cultural Resources within the County; the subsequent designation of certain Cultural Resources as Significant Cultural Resources or as St. Johns County Landmarks; the review of plans and Development projects for effects to Cultural Resources, and the protection to the maximum extent practicable of Cultural Resources in St. Johns County.
2. The Cultural Resources of St. Johns County are important community assets that enrich the lives of citizens and visitors alike. Certain Structures, Buildings, objects and sites within St. Johns County possess a special public interest and are important resources to understanding the heritage and historical development of the area. As such, these Cultural Resources, and in some cases their environs, should be designated as **Significant Cultural Resources**. Such Significant Cultural Resources should, to the extent possible, be maintained and protected in order to benefit the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public. It is also recognized that harm or reasonably preventable deterioration of Cultural Resources on any property located within unincorporated St. Johns County constitutes harm to the public welfare.

LDC Part 3.01.01

Magic Beach Motel

From Victoria Lauren Gural <victorialaurengural@yahoo.com>

Date Sat 4/12/2025 2:29 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Megan Wright,

Hi there!

You don't know me, but I implore you not to demolish magic beach motel. It's an amazing art deco motel with architectural greatness we truly do not build anymore, and it should be protected. It is an amazing landmark, not only in design but honestly culturally, and needs to be treated as such.

In 2025 we have already lost too many amazing hotels and motels around the US to getting overhauled into boxes or knocked down altogether, please do not let this one be next. Please.

Have a magical day,

Victoria Lauren, LMT

Siren Studios

April 13, 2025

Dr. Leslee Keys
Chair
St. Johns County Cultural Resources Review Board

Dear Dr. Keys and member of the committee,

The Magic Beach Motel a key building in the Vilano Beach Town Center coming before the Review Board April, 14, 2025. *The developers request is a vote in favor of tearing down the Magic Beach Hotel in Vilano Beach*

As the architect for the original renovation of this iconic property I have looked at this property and it does not warrant demolition in its current condition.

The Vilano Beach Town Center Committee has spearheaded the movement to bring back the *original experience of a Florida beach community*. As recipients of grants and funding since 2007 the area has been brought back to life with a grocery store, restaurants, bars and businesses all of which addressed the Art Deco and beach style theme.

Many days and evenings residents and visitors alike marvel at the experience the town center provides. Enjoying the sea breeze while taking pictures with the signature decorative flamingos at the Magic Beach Motel and walking down to The Bluebird of Happiness restored statue which anchors the pier at the west end is much appreciated *experience of days gone by*.

There are only a few buildings which anchor the original street scape of the town center. Destroying one of the key buildings which most closely represents the original Florida beach theme through its architectural style, decorative features, signage, colors and interiors represents a severe threat to one of the few historic properties in St. Johns County. It threatens the entire concept of the Vilano Beach Town Center restoration which draws locals residents and visitors alike to enjoy its old *Florida beach town ambience*.

I'm sorry I can't attend the meeting today, but hope many others do to voice their opposition to the requested demolition of this important architectural and cultural icon in Vilano Beach.

Sincerely,



Les Thomas

Architect

St. Augustine, Florida

April 11, 2025

Sent via email: Megan Wright at emailmwright@sjcfl.us

Dr. Leslee Keys (Chair)

Susan Schjelderup (Vice Chair)

Robert Olson

Blair Knighting

Christine Newman

Janet Jordan

Nick Jonihakis

Dear Cultural Resource Review Board:

I am writing to you as a professional Architectural Historian/Historic Preservationist with family ties in St. John's County (SJC) for more than a century. We continue to maintain a second home in SJC due to this connection and the environmental and cultural resources unique to the area. This is why I am concerned about the proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel.

As the former Florida Main Street Coordinator, I was deeply involved in the designation of Vilano Beach as a Florida Main Street program in 2003. At that time, Vilano Beach's mid-20th century historic resources were recent compared to other program areas in the state. The Magic Beach Motel, built as the Blue Ocean in 1951, was a major component in designating the cluster of historic structures in Vilano Beach as a Florida Main Street community. SJC subsequently supported these efforts through land development codes that outlined incentives for historic preservation and additional funding to the program.

I'm also concerned about the preemptive mitigation plan and Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) submitted as part of the demolition request. I have completed HABS surveys and the March 13, 2025 short form report does not meet HABS standards in several key areas:

- The short form is used in cases wherein research time is limited, or research yields little information on the building. This is not the case with the Magic Beach Motel.
- The report addenda do not satisfy the required graphical (measured drawings, large-format photography) documentation. Regardless of level (I, II or III) or format (short or outline), large-format photographs are required. The 2012 renovation plans do not suffice as measured drawings of today's extant structure. Lidar recordation would be ideal too.
- The report does not name a Secretary of the Interior qualified professional which is typical, along with methods used and the general reason for generating the report.

Once demolished, none of this physical documentation can produced retroactively. Additionally, no structural engineer report provides information about current conditions.

Vilano Beach's remaining mid-century residences and commercial properties represent Florida's historic tourism industry, which is becoming increasingly endangered due to development and natural disasters. I encourage the adaptive reuse of the motel and its incorporation into the design of any new development. I also encourage appropriate documentation prepared and reviewed by qualified cultural resource professionals.

Thank you for your volunteer service to SJC and your consideration.

Laura Lee Corbett



Outlook

4/14/2025 CRRB Meeting - Magic Beach Motel

From Laura Lee Corbett <corbettlauralee@gmail.com>

Date Fri 4/11/2025 10:20 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

 1 attachment (78 KB)

Save the Magic Beach.pdf;

Ms. Wright,

Attached is a letter with my concerns regarding the proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel. Please forward to the CRRB for review ahead of Monday's meeting.

Thank you.

--

Laura Lee Corbett
Historic Preservation Consultant
1422 Devils Dip
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850.264.4611



Outlook

Magic Beach Motel

From Laura Lee Corbett <corbettlauralee@gmail.com>

Date Fri 4/11/2025 10:25 AM

To BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Cc Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

 1 attachment (78 KB)

Save the Magic Beach.pdf;

Dear St. Johns County Commissioners,

Attached is a letter to the Cultural Resource Review Board with my concerns regarding the proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel.

Thank you for your service to the community.

--

Laura Lee Corbett
Historic Preservation Consultant
1422 Devils Dip
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850.264.4611

FW: 75 Responses to NextDoor AGAINST Demolition of Magic Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Thu 4/10/2025 2:14 PM

To Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

 1 attachment (30 KB)

Demolition- NEXT DOOR POSTS- Feb 2025.docx;

Good afternoon,

Do not reply all

Please see email below that was sent to our general inbox.

Thank you!



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Carol Ann Sacha Martin <sachamartin@msn.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2025 12:53 PM

To: Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: 75 Responses to NextDoor AGAINST Demolition of Magic Beach

Owners of Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach, a Significant Cultural Resource, have made application to approve demolition of this property. The decision meeting is scheduled for Monday * April 14 at 1:390pm. County Permit Center, 4040 Lewis Speedway off of Sebastian View.

Responses to message : “Demolition because it’s a neglected, structurally crumbling motel “ to NextDoor on April 2, 2025

****4/4 SALLIE O'HARA, O.G.C. –** Grants are available at National, State, and Local levels to save historic properties if the owner is so inclined. Tax credits are even available through the county process. The objective of retaining historic areas rest with the passion of the community. Do you want South Beach Miami commercial development or eclectic small-town ambiance reminiscent of old Florida? Historic properties are often converted to adaptive re-use facilities all over the country. Make an artist enclave of incubator studios of the existing 24 units. Generate income for property owners for regular rental income and benefit small businesses striving to become known.

****4/3 CARLOS CONDE, Old Sebastian Point –** Growth and Change are good, but ruining a landmark that has defined the Vilano area for decades shows a lack of awareness from our County Board. I understand people have the right to buy and sell the things they own. Just a bit let down that things that once defined St. Augustine and Vilano are slowly disappearing by people for the most part do not live here. Don't worry. I'm sure they will be tearing down the Castillo soon to build more condos. Growth and change are good, but ruining a landmark that has defined the Vilano area for decades shows a lack of awareness from our County Board. right to buy and sell the things that they own. Just a bit let down things that once defined St. Augustine and Vilano are slowly disappearing

****4/3 THOM LUCARELLI, Porpoise Point –** Of course this property is viable. I have family stay there often. It's about putting a higher occupancy building on the same small footprint and making even more money. Current owners vowed to maintain it but were only looking for turning it over for more money after the first round of protest quieted down. It's about losing the quaint character of a town going from residential to commercial with already not enough beach parking and infrastructure to support the new plan.

4/3 PATTI MERRILL, The Shores -- The Magic Beach Motel should be preserved. It's the only part of the historic Vilano Beach that's left.

4/3 DAVID CASH, Old Sebastian Point – It's too bad. Our history and culture being demolished for apartment buildings and strip malls.

4/3 JERI W, Araquay -- I hope there is something that can be done. The sign at the very least must be preserved. I hope there is something to be done,

4/4 ATHENA R, World Golf Village – Wow. Being a historical town, you would think they would wanna keep it. Why don't they just sell the hotel to someone who plans on keeping it?

4/3 SUZANNE S, World Golf Village – I understand progress, but I find the sign so enchanting. Wonder if somehow the sign could somehow be preserved.

4/2 RICHARD SCHNELL, Porpoise Point – If the motel is no longer viable financially, then ([aving the sign and other art deco elements] is a good option. It would be great to save it, but how? Do you think the hotel is viable? I stayed there once and the room was very small and outdated. Hard to find someone who wants to operate something that loses money. I know people will want to save it but how? Forcing the owner to operate at a loss isn't sustainable unless the county or someone with deep pockets is willing to buy it, and likely lose money, it will eventually be demolished.

4/3 ROBIN S, South Ponte Vedra Beach – It is understandable that the current owners wish to sell because they cannot afford the upkeep with the property. The issue is that Vilano's Coastal Charm and "Vibe" is being replaced with stale looking condominiums and hotels. I agree it needs to be sold. That is the owner's right and the upkeep or renovation is too expensive for them. I just do not like the new Vilano look like the other hotels and condominiums that have inundated the area.

4/3 JAMIE WARSKI, South Ponte Vedra Beach – A suggestion: the SJC Historical Society buys property. Keep the office maybe as a room as a museum/historical site. Turn the rest of the property into additional beach parking.

4/3 LINDA BUDAI, North City – This is such a cute motel. I always wanted to stay there, but never had the opportunity. I live in St. Augustine. It's a shame it could not remain open. Vilano Beach was such a small and quaint area.

4/2 NANCY FLAVIN, Hidden Lakes -- So very sad, but the agenda in this town is ALWAYS more development and nothing seems to get stopped...

4/2 LOUISE STARMANN, Palencia – Please save this landmark. It sets the tone of the area as beach fun.

4/2 SUZANNE H, Marsh Creek – Need to slap a Preservation Order on this iconic structure.

4/2 LINDA ARNOLD, Vilano Beach – Magic Beach Motel signage should become bar signage somewhere it can get approval.

4/4 POLLY P, Willow Cove – I doubt anything built in the same spot will be “affordable” housing, just by virtue of where it is located. As most things today, this is about money. I hope whoever buys it will realize it may be more valuable some day if it is left where it is.

4/4 PAMELA PENN, Magnolia – I love seeing that sign daily. Such a unique spot in Vilano Beach. If it is demolished, it will look like a hundred other beach towns.

Posts to NextDoor February 19 Following story by First Coast News on February 18, 2025

TREY ASNER, Lighthouse Park – The Magic Beach Hotel is a very significant cultural resource and I wish this was a long time coming and county staff have been anticipating a demolition permit for the last few years. At the very least, I hope that significant features on the structure such as the flamingo reliefs and interior hand painted murals will be saved as well as unique sign. I know the sign is only about 35 years old, but it has become a well loved feature of Vilano Beach and is now part of that community’s sense of place.

JAMES BAIRD, Island Villas, 1-10 Oak Rd – Please save the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. It’s a unique piece of architecture that preserves the old Florida charm along highway A1A. Anybody who has visited the site knows it’s a special place . Old Vilano and greater St. Augustine structures are disappearing at an alarming rate. Please protect the Magic Beach Hotel before it is gone forever.

ROBERT BAILEY, Menendez Park – I grew up in Wildwood, New Jersey where the Doo Wop hotel/motel was everything. Now a lot of these have been torn down only to be replaced by condos and hotels with zero character and obviously no historic value. Giving up on the value of our history is not going to work out well. My wife and I have a company where we make mid-century modern lighting. We moved here permanently last August . We’re hoping to chat with the owners of the hotel to work with them for lighting on their property, since we are a perfect fit. Wanting to invest in our community at the same time. It’s just sad that unless it’s a designated national landmark anything goes.

CINDY THOMPSON, Old Pagoda – This hotel is not only special for Vilano but for all of Florida. This architectural style has all but disappeared. It is the coolest thing about Vilano.

PATTI MERRILL, the Shores – Save the Magic Beach Motel. The only site remaining of the original Vilano Beach.

KATE STOREY, Las Palmas – Soon every piece of history outside of a historic district will be gone. The things that make St. Augustine special will be destroyed by developers.

JEFFREY PEPPER, uptown – We certainly would not want to have any shred of Florida Culture or History left behind. So let’s tear down everything and build tacky row houses and more hideous hotels instead. Stop this nonsense. Preserve3 what is a perfect piece of Florida Culture before none is left. Somehow St. Augustine managed not to tear down many of its historic buildings and the benefit is obvious. Sadly surrounding towns have failed to preserve and Vilano is down to its last significant period piece. It will be just another town on the coast that floods.

JERI WOODWARD, Araquey – Very sad, the area is losing all the architecture from the era that gives it such an interesting vibe. It’s going to be a Florida “anywhere” soon – nothing significant or original about it.

DENISE STAMPS, Wildwood Pines – So sad that St. Augustine, the oldest city, will be left without a shred of history if the developers have anything to do with it.

JAMES BAIRD, Island Villas, 1-10 Oak Rd – Please save the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. It’s a unique piece of architecture that preserves the old Florida charm along highway A1A. Anybody who has visited the site knows it’s a special place . Old Vilano and greater St. Augustine structures are disappearing at an alarming rate. Please protect the Magic Beach Hotel before it is gone forever.

JOANNE C., North Beach – Please email the Board of County Commissioners listed in Mattie's post. The culture and history of Magic Beach needs to be preserved.

Comments Under Separate post with photo of Magic Beach by Trey Asner, Lighthouse Park, 2/19+

****TREY ASNER, Lighthouse Park [new post]**– I am very saddened to see that a demolition permit has been filed for the Magic Beach Hotel on Vilano Beach. This motel is a wonderful example of the small motor lodges that popped up all over Florida in the postwar era. The county has ordered a Cultural Resource Management Plan to mitigate the loss of the structure. This will likely entail the removal of significant features such as the flamingo reliefs along the front elevation and of course the neon sign. Though the sign is only about 26 years old and was constructed for the movie Safe Harbor which starred Rue McLennahan, it has become a recognized feature of Vilano and deserves to be preserved.

****VICTORIA S., Stonegate** – That old motel has been there a long time. Why are we destroying all our uniqueness? The flamingos, the painted scenes on the walls, the colors. Destroying this is wiping away our history, our culture. Not everything has to be big, gaudy and packed with people. You would think we could save one jewel in the middle of a sea of “like everywhere else”. It is what makes us special, unique and stand out from the rest. Maybe keep it as it is and incorporate it in the future as small shops? Oceanfront land is disappearing. Anything on or near the ocean is uber valuable. I'm sure that is the impetus to sell. The owners could retire nicely on the sale of that property. It goes by the way of farmland, forests, orange groves, wildlife, all for the sake of the almighty \$\$\$\$. No thought for culture, history, uniqueness. We are becoming not special anymore but just like everywhere else. Too bad we don't have a funded historical society that could save it and still give the owner a reasonable price.

**** ALLISON B., Surfside** – I wonder how this affects what the owners will get for the property. They put all this time and work into a place and would like to sell it and cannot because of historical restrictions? As someone who loves Vilano Beach I don't want to see another huge structure coming in without any parking or regard to flooding of neighboring properties, but I also want the neighbors who I believe are locals to be able to comfortably retire after selling. The travesty is the huge dirt pit next to the Hyatt. [Contract to purchase if demolition permit OK will be for \$4.7 million Purchased hotel at \$3.8 million in 2022.]

JOE WINTERS, Holmes Blvd -- We stayed at the Magic Beach a year ago and felt it was very dirty and run down and full of roaches. So much so we packed up and checked out as quickly as we could first thing in the morning. Obviously the owners had been doing little to maintain the iconic design of the place. Interesting that the same owners are the ones who submitted for a demolition permit. Interesting also that the construction manager listed for the demolition is the same construction manager for the for the Colonia Condos next door to the Magic Beach .

DEWITT, Cypress Lakes – I thought they just had an extensive renovation done not too long ago. This was featured in a few documentaries of interesting places to vacation.

GEORGE DE LA FLOR, US Hwy 1 South – Oh no ! I love that place.

CINDY CAMPBELL-TAYLOR, Vilano Beach – It's not too late. Please email your commissioners.

PATTI MERRILL, the Shores – Oh NO !!!! This was the best landmark place left of the Old Vilano Beach. I always enjoyed staying there. What? Just like all the forests. Rip them down!!!!. The Magic Beach Motel has so much history.

SHARON DELERUYELLE, North Beach – Killing the Vilano Vibe. Killing this who county.

MICHAEL MANN, Fullerwood – the Magic Beach should be incorporated into the redevelopment of the property. The Hyatt Place has an art deco vibe. Keep that historical architecture.

MARY MICKLER, PDH SR 16th-17th – Don't people care about these places anymore? Not everyone wants these huge hotels. All I can say is that St. Augustine is going to crap. Oo much new stuff being developed. They don't care about the old mom and pop places.

LINDA URETA, Araquey – I agree Mary. There will be nothing left.

DANA CLARK, Porpoise Point – This makes me so sad. Vilano needs this landmark.

RITA OLI, St. Augustine South – [Reposted the First Coast News transcript]

LARRY DIAZ, Lincolnvillle – [used a G-r-r-r emoji.]

KATHY SHEDDAN, Royal St. Augustine – I love that place. I worked on the show Safe Harbor. It was renovated after that. It should be saved! Why a demolition? I bet a corporation came with a large amount of \$\$\$\$. Sad.

GEORGE DE LA FLOR, US Hwy1 south – “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot”

TAYLOR BURT, Osceola Heights – Anyone know what it was before? Was it old Newt’s hotel?

MARY MICKLER, PDH – No, Newt’s was down the road. That was where people went to get married by a Justice of the Peace, and where the “Bluebird of Happiness” now on the pier was located for a time. “Go over the bridge. We are the first bird on the right!”

DENNIS MILLER, North Beach – So sad to see this historic structure go.

DAVID & ELAINE HOPKINS – How can we stop it? Wasn’t it just saved in the last two years?

MICHAEL PARRISH , North Beach -- I thought it had historical status put on it even though the couple that owned it did not apply for it that would delayed or stop a sale. With historical landmark status, I thought that protected it. That was part of the problem for the couple selling the property.

DEBBIT BURTON, Watson Wood – Keep it !!!

NANETTE NGUYEN, St. Aug Shores – Progress is not only a good thing. There goes another piece of history.

WENDEY PEELE, South Ponte Vedra Beach – Absolutely just save.

DENNIS HOPPER, North Davis Shores – So did the owners not sell, or what’s the reason for wanting to bulldoze?

LINDA URIETA, Araquey – This is getting ridiculous. What else is going to be taken down. It’s such a cute place. Perfect on the beach. Leave Vilano and St. Augustine alone.

VICTORIA S., Stonegate – The original nam4e was the Vilano Beach Motel, prior to the TV series Safe Harbor.

KITTY PARLIN, North Beach – You are right! This is going to the dumps! What is wrong with the Commissioners?! Where is the old ambiance? This city is fast losing its charm!

ANN FEIN, Lincolnvillle – This is so sad. What a fantastic place.

KAY ENGLE, Grand Cay – Just sad.

Comments under Separate post and Facebook with photos 2/19/25

**** CINDY CAMPBELL-TAYLOR, Vilano Beach – St. Augustine/North Shores/Vilano Residents:** It’s time yet again to take a stand and protect the vibe of Vilano Beach! And not let Rick Johnston with Colonia add onto his “high rise” condo plan and the 5,000 SF, three story building he wants to build in this space. For sure, the hotel is in disrepair – not because it was built in the 1950s but because the owners have not invested in renovation. Haley’s Court is a perfect example of how investment and renovation can clean up our community while supporting and sustaining our beautiful Vilano Beach. Get involved and reach out to the Commissioners! Ask for a compromise and ask them to help protect the culturally significant landmark that represents Vilano Beach.

****CARLOS C., Old Sebastian Point** – As much as change and progress are a part of life this one is different. Magic Beach Hotel is iconic. For decades the neon lights have illuminated Vilano in the most inviting and unique way. As kids we loved going there at night. It is the heart and soul of Vilano. Would love to see it saved as a local landmark. If there is anything we can do to save it, please share.

**** RICHARD SCHNELL, Porpoise Point –** What is the 5,000 SF replacement building supposed to be? Retail? [two buildings: 8 retail units of 400 to 750 on first floor and 20 “residences “ on second & third floors above, which probably will not be allowed by zoning was presented by the developer on March 19]. Anyone stay there recently or refer out of town guests to stay there? Does anyone know what the plan is for the additional land? Assume it expands on the Colonia project behind Magic Beach but I wonder what exactly. [Developer would not show site plan at presentation.]

JEFF KLAPATCH, Entrada – It was also in the Netflix series 3 Body Problem just last year.

BRIAN ROACH, Deerfield Preserve -- Since the dawn of man it's always been out with the old and in with the new. So to narrow it down, the Magic Beach is now deemed a relic decayed and absolute: no big fat American tourist likes a squinchy bathroom where you can't open or close the door when you're seated on the throne or a desktop TV when the one at home is pushing six feet, and well you've got this developer who will turn this pigsty into a Picasso that anyone who can meet the absurdly stiffer price will enjoy “build it and they will come.” Said about right?

JENNIFER ZINN, the Shores – I'm sure Patel is in bed with the Commissioners. Ya get what you voted for. Some Commissioners are only in it for their personal interests and that's it.

NIKKI BRUBAKER, Porpoise Point – Thank you for the info, Cindy. I had not heard about this.

JOHN MITCHELL, North Beach – I support fighting this.

ANGELA BOWYER, Vilano Beach – Everything that made Vilano such a cool place to live is disappearing. I guess the locals will be next.

PATTI MERRILL, the Shores – Magic Beach Motel is the only building left of the old historic Vilano. Save the motel!

NANCY WILSON, St. Aug South – Having grown up in South Florida and spending 26 years here, I hate seeing “old Florida” being torn down.

BETH WILSON, Pelican Reef – So sad to see an iconic structure destroyed. Florida is known for destroying woods, wildlife and for the old structures for progress and modernization. I have lived in Florida for over 50 years and NO matter what “Progress can't stop”.

JOANNE C, North Beach – It is sad. This landmark is much like the Blue Bird that was saved.

SANDRA BATES, Lofts at Sebastian Cove – It's the circle of life – out with the old and in with the new to make room for the new.

TREY ASNER, Lighthouse Park, 02-25-25 – I had the wonderful opportunity to talk about our local historic resources with Liz Ryan on Flagler Radio, including Magic Beach and the St. Johns County jail which are both threatened by demolition. If people know about the important historic sites here in St. Johns County the more likely they will be preserved and protected. [with a link to Flagler Podcasts/Radio.]

FW: Magic Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Thu 4/10/2025 2:13 PM

To Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Good afternoon,

Do not reply all

Please see email below that was sent to our general inbox.

Thank you!



Thank you,

Shayna Keller

Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us

Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative



From: Kai Long <klong824@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2025 1:08 PM

To: Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Cc: Kai Long <klong824@gmail.com>

Subject: Magic Beach

Vilano Beach was platted during the 1920s Florida Land Boom. A1A in Vilano Beach, also known as Coastal Highway, was constructed in 1928. The majority of the land remained vacant until after World War II. Beginning in the late 1940s and continuing in the 1950s, small motels and "motor courts" emerged along Vilano Road identifying Vilano as quaint and beautiful old Florida.

Vilano Beach lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Tolomato River. When Henry Flagler attracted northern tourists to his hotels in St. Augustine, the seaside community of Vilano Beach was their

oceanfront playground. Ferries and horse drawn trolleys brought visitors to the beaches. Locals in the 50's and until now have beach front cottages where they spend summers.

Magic Beach Motel was originally built in 1951 as Vilano Beach Motel. It's a classic. Our Mission: Preserve, maintain and improve the Historic Vilano Beach community while protecting the small-town beach vibe, which the town of St. Augustine seems to be losing.

Don't let this happen here by allowing this little gem to be destroyed...

Kai Long

Go Gators!

Hotty Toddy, Go Ole Miss!

April 10, 2025

Dr. Leslee Keys(Chair)
Susan Schjelderup (Vice Chair)
Blair Knighting
Robert E. Olson
Nick Jonihakis
Christine Newman
Janet Jordan
4040 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Dear Cultural Resources Review Chair, Vice Chair, and Board Members:

This letter is in support of the preservation of the Magic Beach Hotel.

I was the County land planner and first Main Street Executive Director, that worked with “the community” to establish the Town Center for about 10 years from around 2000 – 2010. As a first-generation Floridian, I have fond memories of being with my father doctor going on night house calls at the beach, sitting in the back seat and seeing mom and pop motels nestled in the palms with the neon lights glowing... magical... and still areand an integral part of Florida’s history. The Magic Beach and other related historic buildings in Vilano are our character our place.

I was there from the beginning through:

- Creation of Main Street which was done to preserve the historic buildings and maintain the funky character of Vilano Beach
- The award-winning Vision Plan and Town Center Master Plan,
- Establishment of the Community Redevelopment Area(CRA),
- Creation of the Comp Plan and Architectural Design Code And a lot of other major accomplishments in between....

All of this and much more accomplished through a successful partnership between the Community and Federal, State, Regional and Local governments.

The multi-agency efforts resulted in receipt of \$ 7 or more in tax funded grants for projects, from planning studies, CRA Finding of Necessity, brochures, pavilions, nature boardwalk, beach front recreation area and on and on not to mention the volunteer hours that added a small fortune in labor. Also, the additional \$12.5 million through the CRA tied to historic preservation plan. The Master Plan is a New Urbanist traditional downtown, like Winter Park, Naples, Fernandina Beach, all of which are incredibly economically successful .

This unique authentic art deco buildings in the Town Center are the core of the overall Master Plan and are the key to a successful downtown. Further it establishes the “character” of the area which in Vilano is tied to Vilano’s uniquely funky historic Art Deco Mimo buildings. Unique enough to be

designated a National and Florida Main Street and for Hollywood icon Aaron Spelling to set a pilot TV show at the Magic Beach and most recently a 2025 six-time Golden Globe nominated TV show Three Body Problem by the creators of The Game of Thrones, a world-renowned TV show. The Magic Beach is an iconic structure and is the gem of the art deco buildings in Vilano. Successful downtowns maintain their historic core and build off of them. Further it is well established that affluent customer desire authenticity. The Economic Plan determined this is key component to becoming an economically viable downtown.

These are my comments, as follows:

First, as planner I take community input very seriously. I would be remiss if I did not mention (much to my dismay) the Main Street meetings and Board decision making process was not a transparent process or did not include meaningful community input.

At the Main Street February meeting the Main Street representative made it clear that “no” discussion of the Magic Beach was allowed. It was announced the March meeting would be a presentation by the Developer. Also, the Board mentioned they were meeting with the Developer on a plan. I believe many community members, including myself, based on past dealing with Snapper’s project and brief interactions with Board member that they were working on a similar adaptive reuse of the Magic Beach. Also, traditionally the Board does not support a project without community support so many thought the worst that could happen is they would remain neutral. Prior to the Developer meeting on March 19th I was told by several Board members that the Board decided to demolish. The Board should have sent the rendering and provided the Board decision with documentation to support their decision in the emailed developer meeting community notice. They did not. At the March 19th meeting the Main Street Reps did the majority of the presentation for the developer starting with making it clear to demolish was way to go ..reasons ..this project better than last and Magic Beach not structurally sound... developer presented a rendering Comments were taken.

However NO vote was taken of the community nor was the survey done as one of the speakers pointed out that they requested. The meeting closed with Board Rep announcing their decision was to demolish. The meeting was a formality. The board should have remained neutral. This was not a transparent process nor did it include meaningful community input. This decision is totally contradictory to the intent of the Master Plan and the Main Street principle to preserve the historic structures, specifically the most significant one in the Town Center.

Next the concern is the double standard to have adaptive reuse on the Snapper Restaurant and not the Magic Beach, this Main Street designated iconic building is probably in much better structural shape. There is no preservation structural engineer report or recent photos to support the statement the Magic Beach is a structurally unsound building. In 2011 major renovations were made to the Magic Beach with the support of the County. There may be some maintenance issues however that does not deem a building structurally unsound. This building is a functioning motel which appears to be busy on a consistent basis. This building was not up for sale until the owner was approached by the developer to address his parking needs for his commercial project.

The underlying planning issues must be acknowledged as they are directly related to the reason the applicant is making this request to demolish. That is the applicant could not meet the parking requirements for the commercial structure proposed originally with the residential. Unfortunately the Land Development Code was written to give incentives to bring the development including \$12.5 million infrastructure, stormwater management system, TDR's and in the Code allow the waiver of a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The PUD requires an overall project development plan for the residential and commercial project. In the original project plan the developer presented the residential and commercial together however he needed more parking for commercial so he opted out the commercial. The developers answer to meet parking requirements was to demolish Magic Beach. Classic case of Pink paradise put up parking lot and don't know what you've lost until its gone,,, in our case the Town center's treasure and core the Magic Beach. If the project had gone through a PUD the residential could of been reduced to accommodate the parking. In hindsight it was short sighted, to not require a PUD now seems quite sad that our benevolence is being used to allow one development to compromise all the community and federal state regional and local financial investment effort and dedication.

Traffic and parking were issues raised in the last go around on this which was a major undertaking. The county has not addressed these issues. These planning issues must be addressed as these are at heart of this demolition request. This should not be considered a permit issue but a planning issue. The county needs to consider having a traffic and parking study done as soon as possible to rectify these major concerns as it affects every existing and future project in Vilano not to mention the everyday use by locals. it is recommended the County do a moratorium to allow for time to revisit these issues and come up with proactive planning solutions instead of forcing a demolition permit - find a way to protect and not demolish the Magic Beach. Simultaneously a mechanism or mechanisms and funding sources to purchase the structure through the CRA and or with a nonprofit. required and also policies that encourage the preservation of historic. Of note there are Policies in the Comprehensive Plan that allow reduced or eliminated parking in exchange for Historic Preservation.

However, if the County does not proceed with addressing these critical planning issues, The biggest concern is the need to have adaptive reuse of the Magic Beach structure. The "conceptual" building does not reflect the "character" or essence of the Magic Beach because it can't it is a ONE of a kind and you can't replace "authenticity". This would be a compromise between the developer and the Community to meet both needs. The Community and federal state regional and local agencies for 25 years have been invested financially and in blood sweat and tears to the plan to preserve the Magic Beach. Therefore, if there is justice and with mutual respect, somehow all this blood sweat and tears and \$\$\$\$\$ would be acknowledged and accommodated through a project plan to use adaptive reuse similar to the Snappers Restaurant project to achieve mutual goals. We will all live in Vilano and it would be better to live together as good neighbors. This is a reasonable compromise between the developer's property rights and very long-term Community and governmental agency efforts and investment.

A note that there is nothing guaranteed that this project would be approved. There are Comprehensive Plan issues that need to be addressed. Please see attached Vilano Beach Town Center Comprehensive Plan Objective A.3.2 highlighted Policies and related LDC Building Type Map. That will need to be met. Also, there are Land and the land development architectural standards. The conceptual building does have challenges. The point is if demolished before development approval is given and construction is imminent... there will be another vacant lot sitting there for years and more importantly the loss of our

gem the Magic Beach. Further if the development does not occur and the building is still there then measures to try and save it could be pursued. Therefore, a condition to ensure that it cannot be touched until the development approval and proof of construction will occur needs to be required. To live with the destruction of the Magic Beach for no reason would be unthinkable .

The Community has made it clear they want to Save the Magic Beach. Presently an application to the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation application is being looked at to list this property as one of the most endangered historic properties in the State of Florida. This is a very very very Special Place...and deserves protection. Please see attached Petition (collected in only one day).

The value of \$\$\$\$\$\$ of the community effort and Federal state regional and LOCAL governments dedication to this effort you cannot put a dollar value on it is invaluable. So it is very very important to recognize that this application would not have been possible without these efforts over this multi- year Master Plan effort .

In closing, the Master Plan has not been implemented as it should have been in many ways but the one thing was thought that the Magic Beach would always be there as the Heart of the downtown. It would hold on to our "Vilano's" funky sense of place... our one of kind authentic come find this special place place!!!! As stated in the St. Johns County Comprehensive Plan Objective A.3.2 "The Vilano Beach Town Center vision (*Master Plan*) is to create a place that maintains a small beach town "community character" through the delicate balance of the "old" with the new." A demolition permit process should not be allowed to compromise these hard-earned efforts and undermine the heart of the Master Plan. This building deserves a higher degree of scrutiny and effort to ensure it's protection.

I respectfully request the following CRRB DENY the request to demolish the Magic Beach and or consider recommend alternatives to work with County to consider planning studies to address underlying planning issues and related actions, e.g. moratoria To Save The Magic Beach, and if studies aren't done to work with developer to provide a plan that uses adaptive reuse of The Magic Beach building, and include a condition that does not allow any of the building to be destroyed until the County gives approval of the development plan and there is proof of development to occur.

Thank for your consideration of my comments and recommendations, I am,

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Georgia Katz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Georgia Katz

2601 Seagate Lane

St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Objective A.3.2
Establishment of the Vilano Beach /Town Center Mixed Use District

The model for the creation of the Town Center Mixed Use land use designation is the Vilano Beach Town Center Project, a Waterfronts and Main Street Florida Community. This project began with a vision process accepted by the County and with technical and financial support from the State Land Planning Agency and other state, regional, and federal agencies. This effort is recognized by the state as a model for sustainable growth and successful and proactive partnering between the community and government.

↑ The Vilano Beach Town Center vision is to create a place that maintains the small beach town community character through the delicate balance of the old with the new. The Vilano Beach Town Center provides a mixture of residential and commercial uses that provides goods, services, and places for a synergetic life style center for residents and visitors, alike.

The Vilano Beach Town Center contains a Main Street that will be developed with a range of commercial uses, grocery store, drycleaners, hotels professional offices, restaurants, specialty retail, and art galleries. The second and third floor will allow for commercial uses, however, it will also allow for residential uses to that support a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) concept, for example, live work opportunities. Hotels and motels, including extended stay and Bed & Breakfast, is allowed but shall not exceed commercial or residential uses within the Town Center.

The Vilano Beach Town Center has terminus at the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway. Structures and businesses shall be built and designed to promote the character of a beach community, to view the natural beauty of the area, i.e., scenic vistas of downtown St. Augustine, the Intracoastal and the Atlantic Ocean, sunrises and sunsets of the area, and take advantage of coastal breezes.

The community civic pavilions located at the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway are envisioned to be the hub for social and cultural activities for the surrounding community and visitors. These pavilions help make the area a lively and fun place to live and visit.

Policies:

✓ A.3.2.1

The Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District shall be implemented through the St. Johns County Land Development Code by the following regulatory framework:

- ✓ a. A Regulatory Plan for the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District (a graphic document that maps the location of all streets and alleys, the building types to be accommodated, and the location of any public open space and required civic sites) and
- ✓ b. Development Regulations for the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District (defining the Building Types, and for each type:

Building Placement, Building Uses, Architectural Standards, Building Preservation, Sign Standards, Parking and Loading Standards, and Landscape Standards).

✓ A.3.2.2

The Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District was developed pursuant to the objectives set forth in Goal A.3 the policies included under objective A.3.1. Per the regulatory framework laid out above and the land area included within the district, the build-out of the Vilano Beach TCMUD will not exceed:

Retail Office	33%
Residential	33% or limited to 8 units per acre as averaged over the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District.
Hotel/Motel	30%
Civic	4%

A.3.2.3 The Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District shall be exempt from the civic space requirement listed in Policy A.3.1.20.

A.3.2.4 Structures shall be built to preserve the Vilano Bridge view shed for aesthetic and economic purposes.

A.3.2.5 Economic Redevelopment Residential Units Exchange program shall allow exchange of residential unit rights between properties (sending and receiving properties) within the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District so long as any exchange of residential units results in an equal reduction of residential unit rights from a sending property located within the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District based on the boundary of the District as adopted in 2015 as shown on Exhibit 3.2.5.E below, and pursuant to implementing regulations of the County's Land Development Code. In no case shall an exchange of residential units result in a maximum density on any receiving site exceeding 16 units/acre.

A.3.2.6 In an effort to promote the preservation of historic "landmark" structures that establish the unique historic character and "sense of place" in the Vilano Beach Town Center, property owners may consider the following options:

- (a) Incentives for owners who restore and preserve a qualified historic structure on the property. These incentives include:
 - 1. Increase in the Floor Area Ratio of the buildable property from 0.80 to 1.5, excluding the floor area of the historic structure.

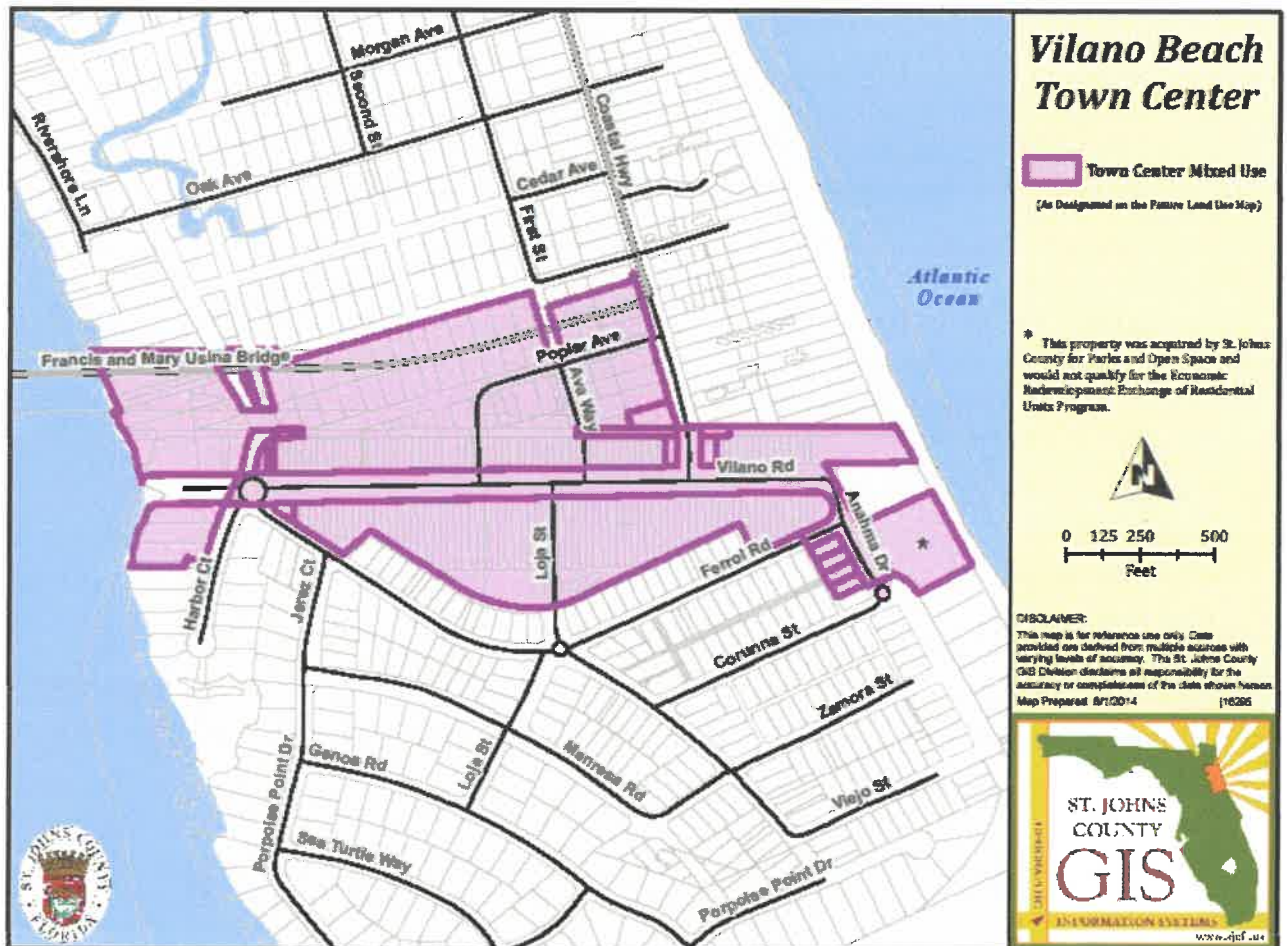
2. Increase in the Impervious Surface Ratio of the buildable property from 0.75 to 0.90, excluding the historic footprint.
 - ✓ 3. Elimination of parking requirements for Commercial/Retail/Office uses if buildable property is under 30,000 square feet.
 - ✓ 4. A fifty percent (50%) reduction of parking requirements for Commercial/Retail/Office uses if buildable property is over 30,000 square feet.
- (b) Additional opportunities supporting the preservation and restoration of qualified historic structures include Historic Preservation Ad Valorem Tax exemptions for a 10-year period, the Economic Redevelopment Residential Units Exchange Option, and potential building code waivers.

A.3.2.7 Vendors may be allowed pursuant to the Land Development Code.

A.3.2.8 Due to the fact that financial institutions are appropriate for the Vilano Beach Town Center Mixed Use District (VBTCMUD) and that modern financial institutions are typically built with a drive-in and drive-up facility, the County may approve drive-in facilities attached to neighborhood-serving financial institutions and such financial institutions with drive-in/drive-up facilities may only be located within the area of the VBTCMUD bounded by Vilano Road, Coastal Highway, and Poplar Road. Prior to a drive-in and drive-up facility being permitted the County shall amend the Land Development Code to include standards and procedures to implement this policy.

1. Drive-in and drive-up facilities may only be allowed as accessory to a neighborhood serving financial institution.
2. Based on the size and configuration of the block, its location within the VBTCMUD, the fact that this particular block already attracts significant vehicular traffic due to the size and use of the retail development, and the configuration of the buildings and parking currently thereon, which allow the site and design requirements described below, and to preserve the Vilano Beach Town Center ideals, a drive-in and drive-up facility may only be located within the block of the VBTCMUD bounded by Vilano Road, Coastal Highway, and Poplar Road.
3. The drive-in and drive-up windows may not be visible from Vilano Road or Coastal Highway. The drive-in and drive-up windows must be located in the rear of a building or the interior of a parking area

EXHIBIT 3.2.5.E



Amendments:

Ordinance No. 2012-16 June 19, 2012;
Ordinance No. 2014-3 January 21, 2014;
Ordinance No. 2015-13 February 17, 2015;
Ordinance No. 2021-52 August 17, 2021;
Ordinance No. 2021-54 August 17, 2021;
Ordinance No. 2022-36 May 17, 2022;
Ordinance No. 2023-19 June 6 2023

Clark Ave

Center

Regulatory Plan

Vilano Beach Town Center Overlay District

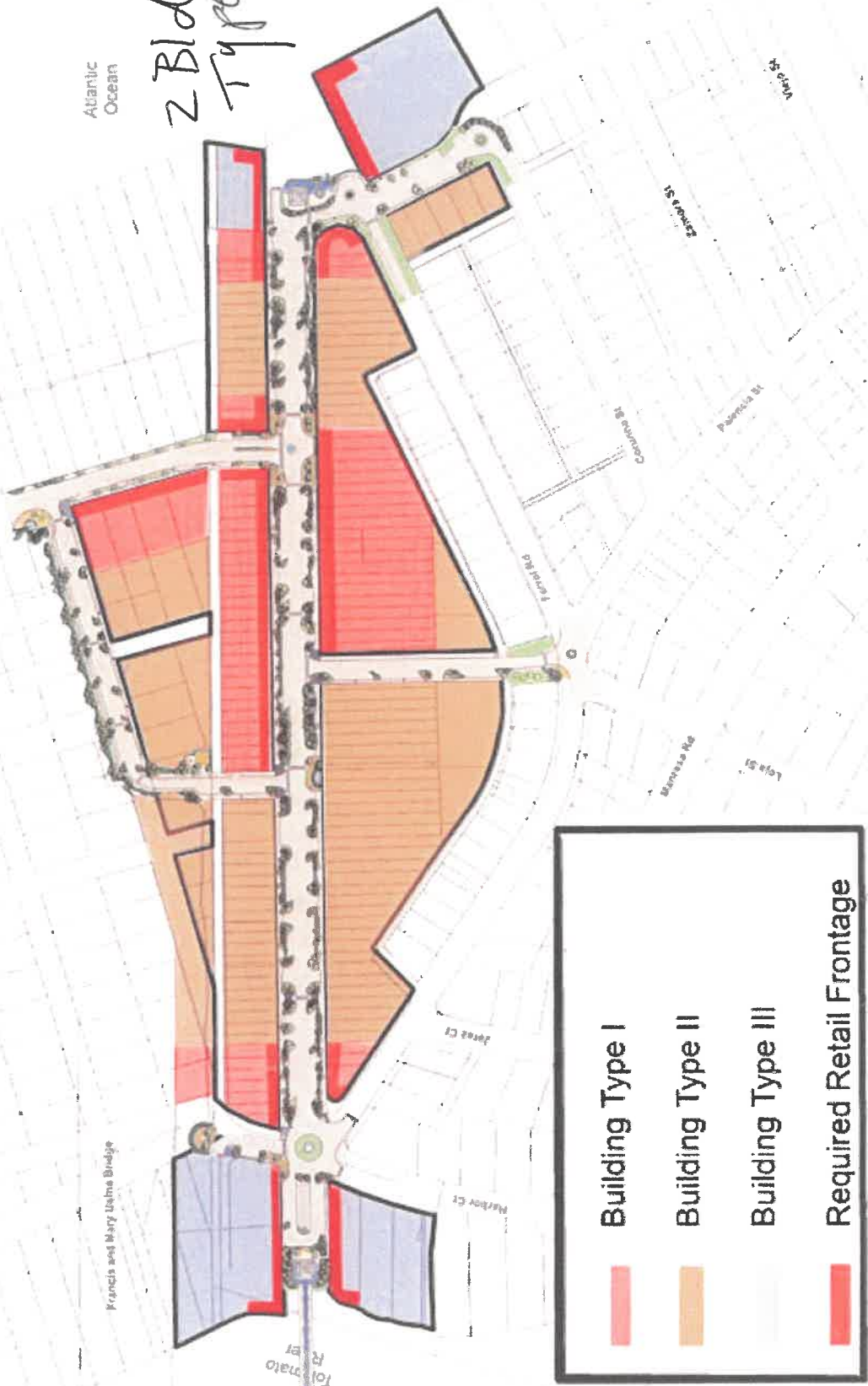


0 100 200 Feet

Francis and Mary Uelma Bridge

Atlantic Ocean

2 Bldg Types



Building Type I

Building Type II

Building Type III

Required Retail Frontage

ORDINANCE BOOK 40 PAGE 923

Save The Magic Beach

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Save The Magic Beach

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38	Felicia Regan	feliciaregan2@gmail.com	904-540-7861
39	John Regan	reganj@bellsouth.net	
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41	FRODOZUNG		804-725-0358

Save The Magic Beach

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14	October Mason	Ock91@AOL.com	904-476-8584
15	MARY WHITAKER	—	828 450-8600

Save The Magic Beach

Name

E Mail

Phone #

68. Wendy Kissinger

WJKissel@yahoo.com

352-871-0334

April 6, 2025

St. John's Cultural Resource Review Board
Attn: Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View
St. Augustine, FL. 32084

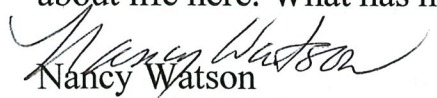
Dear Commissioners:

As a homeowner here in Vilano, I wanted to express my concerns regarding the changes. When my husband and I were snowbirds we came here for a change of Colorado life. We saw the beach area and the quaintness of life here. The biggest thing at that time in 2018 was the beach area and the Magic Beach Motel. Everyone talks about it and it's history. Artists have come here to draw pictures of it. The rooms may be small, but the history of life was in them. There was "magic" to the rooms. The pool was just outside and the food at the motel was great. What more could one ask for? Publix, gas station, Magic Beach, Hampton Hotel, Ocean View Hotel. That is all that was needed here in Vilano. SO, we bought a home and MOVED here in Vilano. Now we have the Hyatt which has clogged up the parking as they charge their patrons to park in the hotel. So their visitors now clog up the parking at the Publix or on Vilano Road in front of the Holiday Inn. Lost in all of this is the Magic Beach Motel.

I realized that initially the owner of the Magic Beach wanted to retire after all the years he put in providing a good livelihood and giving visitors a nice place to stay, History! Close to the beach, parking, food, that's all that was needed. The new owner wanted to put up a high rise Hotel, much like the Hyatt. More parking would be needed if that was to happen. That idea was scratched as the **homeowners** here knew we didn't need another highrise. So another new owner took over and promised to update the Magic Beach Motel. GREAT!! Now he has been influenced to sell and put up townhomes. There isn't any MAGIC left to downtown Vilano! You've cut down on the parking by changing the landscape of the entrance to the beach. You've torn down memorials at the entrance to the beach. What's left? NOTHING!

The Magic Beach Motel is the LAST memory of history here. If you get rid of that, what's left? Look at what has happened in to the Lights of Nights. Why do the visitors have the say as to the people who live in these areas?

The **oldest City in the USA** is being destroyed by conglomerates who could care less about life here. What has happened to the "MAGIC"?


Nancy Watson
113 Coastal Hollow Circle
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Support for Magic Beach Hotel

From Monika M. <monikamayr1@yahoo.com>

Date Tue 4/8/2025 11:46 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Dear Cultural Resources Board,

I am writing to express my hope that you find a way to encourage the new owners of the Magic Beach Hotel in Vilano to maintain as much of the historic façade and inside elements as possible. This iconic site is an attraction for tourists and residents alike. I am sure there is a way to preserve those historic elements. Thank you –

Monika Mayr
380 Village Drive

FW: Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/7/2025 3:01 PM

To Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Good afternoon,

Do not reply all

Please see email below regarding Magic Beach Motel.

Thank you!



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: doug clay <dgclay@prodigy.net>

Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 2:52 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel

Madam or Sir,

My wife and I are residents of Vilano Beach. We frequent the local coffee shop in the Holiday Inn Express hotel. Yesterday afternoon we drove there as we do many times for a coffee break. Coming into the area by Publix was no problem. But we did notice a lot of traffic trying to leave. As we sat and

enjoyed our coffee drinks, we noticed the traffic was continuing to build. Vehicles stretched east all the way to Beaches Restaurant and west to the Atlantic. Even the side streets were clogged with cars with very little movement. We decided to prolong our coffee break until the traffic thinned. After waiting for nearly two hours, we opted to leave our car at the coffee shop and walk the mile-and-a-half home. Later that evening we retrieved our car.

This wasn't an isolate occurrence. We've experienced several traffic jams such as this over the last year and it seems to be getting worse. There has been a lot of development with large hotels being built during the past few years, which has brought a lot of traffic into the area. The infrastructure is now overwhelmed. There is only one road in and out of the area. That bottle neck can't be alleviated. Unfortunately the traffic problem will worsen as more development is slated for Vilano Beach.

Currently a forty-nine unit condo development has broken ground across from the Holiday Inn. Another condo development is breaking ground just east of Publix. Now another developer wants to raze the Magic Beach Motel and replace it with more condos. This can only exacerbate the traffic problem.

The Magic Beach Motel is a landmark on Vilano Beach. Its art deco type design and colors make it stand out from the other cookie-cutter chain motels that have been built during the last few years. The Magic Beach is "the Florida" tourist expect and like to see when visiting the Sunshine State. It has and can continue to add charm to Vilano Beach.

For the sake of traffic and charm on Vilano Beach, I hope you will honor the needs of the community and keep the Magic Beach Motel intact for future generations to enjoy.

Douglas Clay

Vilano Beach, FL

FW: Magic Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 4/7/2025 2:56 PM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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From: Linda LaCerva <linda_lacerva@vilanobeachfl.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 6, 2025 3:04 PM
To: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Magic Beach

Commissioner Joseph.

Thank you again for your support of Vilano. It has helped shape our community in the past few years. And thanks for your perseverance with other issues that are negatively impacting SJC.

I am guessing you have heard that VBMS solicited community input regarding the demo of the existing Magic Beach Motel. There has been a push on social media to write emails to you. There are a number of reasons folks have expressed to stop the demo: Some are concerned it will ruin their views, afraid Vilano will lose some of its charm, we don't need any additional development on Vilano. And my favorite, that I support the demo for my own personal gain. This can't be further from the truth but you know people can say or print anything they want with no regard for the facts.

I would like you to have the Magic Beach facts.

There is an emotional attachment to the Magic Beach Motel, it is not historical. It was built in 1958. Warner Bros filmed a season of Safe Harbor there in 1998. They left what is now the Magic Beach Motel neon sign.

The motel was purchased by the Jensen's and they began extensive renovations in 2010. More than a million \$s had been invested in the renovation.

A few years ago it was purchased from the Jensens by the Patel's. For over \$4 million. It needs about another million \$ in renovations as it exists today. It's not profitable. It's 24 rooms. It does less than \$800,000 in annual volume. It's a 70 year old building that is a concrete slab on grade. One block off the beach. It would not be permitted if it was to be rebuilt today. It is not safe without a significant \$\$ investment.

Rick Johnston has proposed to demo and rebuild the iconic structure. It will retain some of the loved characteristics plus the addition of small condos and retail space that may include a salon, gym, pack and ship, etc. All things that were requested by the community on more than one occasion.

Mr. Johnston has offered the owner more than \$4.5 million for the property. He is doing due diligence. He owns the adjacent property so he is likely the only person that will be able to make such an investment.

You know how tirelessly we have worked in Vilano over the past few years. With your support. I have Vilano's best interest at heart. Haley's pub will reopen as Durty Nellie's Pub. The old Barrancottos restaurant is now a historic landmark and will reopen as Snappers in 2026. We have restored the cultural Haley's Court sign and the property has been remodeled as a short term rental Haley's Court. We are in the process of adding more historical signage throughout Vilano.

Please support the demo of the Magic Beach and let Vilano's well planned controlled economic growth continue.

Thank you.

Linda

Linda LaCerva
VBMS
614 582 7885

FW: Magic Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/7/2025 2:53 PM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



Thank you,

Shayna Keller

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 12:27 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: FW: Magic Beach

Good afternoon,

Do not reply all

Please see email below that was sent to our general inbox.

Thank you!



Thank you,

Shayna Keller

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Sandy Lenney <lenneysandy@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 12:23 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach

Hello, since we've been coming to St Augustine, and now that we have lived here 25 years, we always stop to look at the magic Beach motel, we stayed there a long time ago, and loved it. The magic Beach, has history, nostalgia, presence on vilano. St Augustine and it's surroundings, being eroded, by development. Vilano Beach, still retains, some of the quaintness, and charm that is almost gone in St Augustine. One also, does not need any more hotels or tourist destinations. Building a high-rise, or anything that is larger than the magic Beach motel on that spot, also will negatively affect the environment, please consider keeping this treasure. Thank you.

FW: Magic Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/7/2025 2:52 PM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Hello Ryan,

Please see email below for your situational awareness.

Thank you!

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative

-----Original Message-----

From: Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 8:28 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: FW: Magic Beach

Good morning,

Do not reply all

Please see email below that was sent to our general inbox.

Thank you!

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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-----Original Message-----

From: Jennifer Weyrauch <tidywrap@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 9:22 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach

My family lives out of state & love their stays at the Magic Beach motel. What a shame it would be to lose this wonderful landmark that takes us back in time. We also NEED affordable places for families to enjoy our charming Vilano Beach.

Sent from my iPhone

FW: Save the Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 4/7/2025 11:53 AM

To Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Good morning,

Do not reply all

Please see email below. Thank you!

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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-----Original Message-----

From: Helenbarber <grnidtgr@bellsouth.net>

Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 11:38 AM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Save the Magic Beach Motel

Helen Barber
Vilano Beach
Sent from my iPhone

Magic Beach Hotel

From Helenbarber <grnidtgr@bellsouth.net>

Date Sun 4/6/2025 1:54 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

I want the Magic Beach Motel to stay at Vilano. I've lived here many years and I love it being it the neighborhood.

Sent from my iPhone

Magic Beach Demolition

From Carol Ann Sacha Martin <sachamartin@msn.com>

Date Sun 4/6/2025 3:26 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

This photo was taken yesterday, Saturday April 5th. There were 18 cars and one motorcycle in their parking lot.

— A parking lot of a presumably “unsafe” building???



Magic Beach motel.

From Sandy Lenney <lenneysandy@gmail.com>

Date Thu 4/3/2025 12:25 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

The motel is magic, taking one back to a simpler time. We have been coming to St Augustine for 10 years and now have lived here for 25. We have stayed at that motel, and when we go to the beach we just admire it. We don't need any more high-rises on the beach, we don't want to be Daytona, it also will have a very negative impact on the surrounding environment. Please decide to leave it alone. Thank you.

Save Magic Beach Motel- Meeting April 14, 2025

From MAUREEN OCONNOR <oconnormaureen@mac.com>

Date Thu 4/3/2025 4:58 PM

To BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

I am writing to urge the Commissioners and Mr Wright to put aside the petition to demolish the Magic Beach Motel. This Motel is an iconic image to those of us who have lived in Vilano Beach.

Over the last 5 years Vilano Road, our main street, has drastically had its appearance altered. Some good, others bad. The Commissioners turned down plans to develop the "Pizza Hut" and Magic Beach Motel sites into a huge hotel resort. However very similar construction projects have been approved. This time consisting of Condos and now two multi purpose buildings which plan to house condos, offices, and retail shops. Besides demolishing Magic Beach this development will cause more traffic, need for more parking space and worse negative environmental impact on water, sewage and flooding. As it's elevation must be at least eight feet above sea level, it no doubt will cause flooding to adjacent buildings.

Just think of what South Beach FL would look like if the planning commissioners decided to demolish all these art deco buildings. Please deny this request.

Sincerely

Maureen O'Connor
4260 Myrtle St
St Augustine, FL 32084

Magic Beach Motel proposal

From Suzanne Spicer <spicerfam@gmail.com>

Date Thu 4/3/2025 5:28 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>; BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

My comments on the pending demolition permit for the Magic Beach Motel. I am unable to attend in person.

Could the neon sign be saved somewhere? I understand progress so won't fight that it should all be saved. But, is there a place the county could save and display the neon sign? I don't know where; perhaps the World Golf Village the county now owns.

Thank you,
Suzanne Spicer

Fwd: Plight of Magic Beach Hotel

From Thomas Lucarelli <tglucarelli@gmail.com>

Date Thu 4/3/2025 7:37 PM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

>

> As a long term resident of Vilano Beach I'm saddened to hear about the potential demolition of this iconic Florida hotel. We in Vilano are inundated with traffic and tourists to the point that I have to wait to get into my driveway and circle Publix for parking. I don't dare take my littler family members during the summer to the beach for fear of getting run over. The neighborhood is a constant swirl of cars as the beach and street parking fills quickly. The traffic peanut that once worked no longer does during events, holiday weekends and most of the summer. How much development and reduction of smaller hotels to accommodate larger ones and condos can we take? The quaint little Vilano center and beach is overrun. The Holiday Inn Express is an eyesore with cheap construction and mismatched siding. Businesses like Publix have to hire security to protect their parking spaces. There is little public parking and as a result of poor planning (guests at the Hyatt park overnight on the street as the hotel charges to valet) this should not of been a surprise or allowed. Obviously the foot print of some structures can support larger occupancy but should it when parking and infrastructure is already maxed out. With new townhouses in progress and condos on the same corner we are caving to overzealous developers intent on losing our history and charm to make a bigger buck. As for the story the hotel is beyond repair that is not true. I have family members that stay there and find it very nice and more importantly affordable. The smaller hotels are typically full and there is a need to preserve affordable options, a bit of our history and charm. Vilano beach is already on the verge of being ruined for full time residents if it is not so already. Our once resident neighborhood is becoming increasingly commercial. Please vote to preserve this piece our small town history and ensure Vilano remains livable and not overdeveloped.

FW: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:37 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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From: Kinchen, Chris <ckinchen@presidio.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:36 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc: benkinchen@yahoo.com

Subject: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

Commissioners,

We are writing this email to express our opposition to the demolish of the 1951 Magic Beach Hotel....a long-standing iconic gem in our community.

It is disturbing to us that you would vote in favor of such a proposal. As we understand the developer, Rick Johnston, has plans to build townhouse units where the hotel stands as well as the land next to it (Project name:Colonia).

Johnston does not own the hotel yet but the application for demolition was filled out in February by the motel's managing member, Tajel Patel and by the contractor, Fabio Fasanelli.

As a reminder the mission of Vilano Beach Main Street is to "Preserve, maintain, and improve the Historic Vilano Beach Community while protecting the small-town beach vibe." How does this proposal do this???

This proposed project goes against the mission of our community. In addition, traffic is already a nightmare with the lights being "off sync" and the side streets and bridge being backed up. We already

have townhouses that were just built. Why can't the owner renovate the hotel? We would be support of the preservation.

We love Vilano as a small-town beach community and want it to stay that way.

WE ARE IN OPPOSITION OF THIS PROPOSAL!

Ben and Theressa Kinchen
108 Surfside Ave

Chris Kinchen | Customer Experience Manager

Presidio | [presidio.com](https://www.presidio.com)

8647 Baypine Road, Suite 100, Building 1, Jacksonville, FL 32256

D: [+1.904.236.5514](tel:+19042365514) | ckinchen@presidio.com

AWS

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FW: Magic Beach Motel in Vilano

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:37 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative

-----Original Message-----

From: Ted Judy <oldcityprintmakers@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:15 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1whitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel in Vilano

Hello,

Please do not approve the pending demolition permit that would destroy the iconic Magic Beach Motel in Vilano. There is no good reason to remove this culturally-iconic business and architecture from historic Vilano, which has already be changed so much through development. The building is functional and in good shape. The business appears to be thriving, though only the owners could speak to that. If they no longer want the building, there are other uses. The county could procure the property and use it for an art incubator space, like the CoRK in Jacksonville. A space like that is sorely needed in St. Augustine. There are many young and aspiring artists who have a hard time finding studio space to work in. And art studios would be a great draw and asset to the Vilano business community.

Thank you for your consideration

Ted Judy
3401 Sanddollar Ct
St. Augustine
(608)695-0540

oldcityprintmakers@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

FW: NO CHANGES TO MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:36 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative

-----Original Message-----

From: William Irvine <williamalanirvine@icloud.com>

Sent: Sunday, March 9, 2025 1:48 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: NO CHANGES TO MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

Please do not let that company destroy magic beach motel.. it has been here longer then most of us.. and the company has already tried going back on their word to not mess with it.. leaving no reason to assume that if we don't force them to leave it alone with paperwork they will lie to us and do it anyway.. Label the building of historical significance and let them build around it please.

FW: magic beach motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:36 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Henry-Arpe, Marina <Marina.Henry-Arpe@elliman.com>

Sent: Saturday, March 8, 2025 6:32 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>

Cc: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: magic beach motel

To whom this may concern:

Please don't let the owners demo the
Magic Beach motel located at:

50 Vilano Rd
Saint Augustine, FL 32084
United States

We have lots of family memories here and St John's county needs to keep some historical real estate for the locals.
Don't turn your county into sunny isles beach.

Please keep some Florida charm for the Floridians !!!

Thanks for keep Magic Beach the same it always has been

Marina Henry-Arpe

Sent from my iPad



MARINA HENRY-ARPE

SALES ASSOCIATE

DOUGLAS ELLIMAN REAL ESTATE

OFFICE: 561.245.2635

MOBILE: 305.342.2457

Marina.Henry-Arpe@elliman.com

444 EAST PALMETTO PARK RD, BOCA RATON, FL 33432

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FW: Save the Magic Beach Hotel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:32 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative



From: Thomas Christianson <christiansonthomas1027@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 6:50 PM
To: Thomas Christianson <christiansonthomas1027@gmail.com>
Subject: Save the Magic Beach Hotel

Dear Commissioners Whitehurst, Arnold, Murphy, and Taylor,

I am writing to express my strong support for preserving and adaptively reusing the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. This historic establishment, built in 1951, is not only a cultural landmark but also a potential catalyst for economic revitalization in our community.

Economic Benefits of Preservation

Historic preservation has been shown to enhance real estate values, foster local businesses, and keep historic main streets economically viable. Investments in preserving historic structures often yield substantial returns, as these buildings attract tourists, new residents, and businesses seeking unique and authentic experiences.

Environmental Sustainability

Preserving existing structures like the Magic Beach Motel aligns with environmental sustainability goals by reducing the need for new construction materials and minimizing waste. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings

often results in a smaller carbon footprint compared to demolition and new construction, contributing to our community's environmental stewardship.

Community Identity and Tourism

The Magic Beach Motel contributes significantly to Vilano Beach's unique identity. Its preservation would reinforce our community's character, making it more attractive to heritage tourists who seek authentic and historic experiences. Heritage tourism is a real economic force, evident in places that have preserved their historic character.

Recommendations

I respectfully urge the Board of County Commissioners to:

1. **Deny the Demolition Permit:** Protect this irreplaceable historic resource from destruction.
2. **Promote Adaptive Reuse:** Encourage developers to explore creative ways to integrate the Magic Beach Motel into new development plans, preserving its historical elements while providing modern amenities.
3. **Engage Stakeholders:** Facilitate discussions among developers, preservationists, business owners, and residents to identify mutually beneficial solutions that honor our community's heritage and promote economic growth.

By preserving and adaptively reusing the Magic Beach Motel, we can honor our past while fostering a vibrant and economically prosperous future for Vilano Beach.

Thank you for your consideration.

LTC (R) Thomas Christianson

FW: Stop the Demolition of the Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:32 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Darlene C <darlene2027@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 6:36 PM

To: darlene christianson <darlene2027@gmail.com>

Subject: Stop the Demolition of the Magic Beach Motel

Dear Commissioners Whitehurst, Arnold, Murphy, and Taylor,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. This iconic establishment, built in 1958, is not only a testament to mid-20th-century Floridian architecture but also a cherished landmark that embodies the unique character and history of our community.

The Magic Beach Motel has been more than just a place of lodging; it has been a symbol of our local heritage, attracting tourists and serving as a backdrop in television productions such as the 1999 series "Safe Harbor" and the upcoming Netflix series "3 Body Problem." Its distinctive neon signage and classic design contribute significantly to the cultural tapestry of Vilano Beach.

While I understand that there are plans to replace the motel with modern condominiums and retail spaces, I believe that preserving the Magic Beach Motel would maintain the historical continuity and charm that define our area. The proposed development, as reported, includes up to 20 condominiums and 5,000 square feet of retail space, altering the current landscape significantly. Based on "The Business Journals".

I urge the Board of County Commissioners to consider the following actions:

1. **Deny the Demolition Permit:** Given the motel's designation as a significant cultural resource, its demolition would result in an irreplaceable loss to our community's heritage.
2. **Explore Preservation Alternatives:** Engage with preservationists, historians, and the community to explore viable alternatives that could allow for the restoration and adaptive reuse of the motel, ensuring its historical elements are retained while meeting modern standards.
3. **Facilitate Community Dialogue:** Prior to making any decisions, hold public forums to gather input from residents and stakeholders, ensuring that the voices of those who value this landmark are heard and considered.

Preserving the Magic Beach Motel aligns with our collective responsibility to honor and maintain the unique historical and cultural assets of St. Johns County. I respectfully request that the Board takes these considerations into account and acts to protect this irreplaceable landmark for current and future generations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Darlene Christianson

Saint Augustine Residence.

FW: Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:32 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
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From: David Gourlay <dgou114479@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 1:30 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel

Please don't approve the permit to demolish the Magic Beach Motel.

We have seen the county change and grow over the last 30 years, which is to be expected. I think it's called progress. I may not agree with some of the improvements to downtown St. Augustine, but I do understand the value of growth, development and people making money. However, I think we should protect the past from being removed along with the joy, smiles and memories of perhaps a simpler time this motel brings. The Magic Beach Motel I feel ticks all those boxes for many residents and tourists alike.

A vote to deny the demolition is appreciated.

Thank You

FW: Preserving the Charm of Vilano Beach: Protecting Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:31 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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From: Kim Tippin <kimtippin@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 2:24 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Preserving the Charm of Vilano Beach: Protecting Magic Beach Motel

Good afternoon,

As a lifelong Floridian and proud resident of St. Johns County, I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed sale of the Magic Beach Motel property. The potential development of this land into private condos would not only destroy a cherished local landmark but would also diminish the unique charm that makes Vilano Beach a special destination for both residents and visitors.

With over 20 years of experience in advertising, including working with Visit Jacksonville at the Dalton Agency, I've come to understand the importance of preserving the unique qualities that define a community. Much of our efforts at Visit Jacksonville were focused on highlighting distinctive features that set the city apart and made it an accessible, inviting destination. The Magic Beach Motel is a prime example of such a landmark—its character, charm, and the sense of nostalgia it evokes are integral to the identity of Vilano Beach. Replacing it with a generic condo development would strip the area of its authenticity and appeal.

For many, the Magic Beach Motel is more than just a place to stay; it's a living piece of history that continues to create lasting memories for visitors from all walks of life. A shift to private, exclusive

condos would undoubtedly alienate the very people who have made this area what it is today.

As commissioners, it is your responsibility to consider the long-term impact of such decisions and to advocate for the preservation of the local culture and character that so many of us hold dear. We have already witnessed too much of our land being transformed into developments that prioritize profit over preservation. Now is the time to stand up for our community and ensure that Vilano Beach remains a place of warmth, accessibility, and charm, not a sterile, cookie-cutter development.

I urge you to recognize the collective voice of the community and to take a stand against the destruction of the Magic Beach Motel. Protecting this landmark is not just about maintaining a building; it's about preserving the essence of what makes Vilano Beach truly special.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind Regards,

Kim Tippin

904-662-7661

FW: MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:30 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
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904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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From: Katie Blaylock <katie@katiescreations1.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 12:33 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

Dear County Commissioners,

Please do not allow this historic landmark to be torn down. Buildings like the Magic hold an incredible historical significance as they teach us about travel of the past. Imagine how many people came to the beach in the 50's and stayed in this very hotel. This was back when themed/roadside motels were huge in America. The Deco-Revival / MCM architecture of this building is becoming more and more endangered as other buildings like this are cast to the side. Soon there will be very few places that showcase this design. We can't let history be demolished.

The Magic holds a very special place in the heart of many fans of the show *Safe Harbor* as it features, Rue McClanahan, originally in the show *Golden Girls*. I know people travel here just to see the adorable bunny neon sign created for the show.

The Magic is a wonderful value add to the city as it creates a retro space for people to stay and can be a fun themed part of any family vacation. It's a great learning opportunity for the kids to explore what different eras of the past would have been like. When you take places like these

away, you're giving families or vintage enthusiasts only corporate options, and those places don't add the cherry on top of your vacation.

It is your duty to keep the past alive for future generations just like Saint Augustine as a city strives to do all the time.

Thank you for reading my letter!

Kindly,

Katie

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

FW: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:29 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
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From: Kinchen, Chris <ckinchen@presidio.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:36 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc: benkinchen@yahoo.com

Subject: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

Commissioners,

We are writing this email to express our opposition to the demolish of the 1951 Magic Beach Hotel....a long-standing iconic gem in our community.

It is disturbing to us that you would vote in favor of such a proposal. As we understand the developer, Rick Johnston, has plans to build townhouse units where the hotel stands as well as the land next to it (Project name:Colonia).

Johnston does not own the hotel yet but the application for demolition was filled out in February by the motel's managing member, Tajel Patel and by the contractor, Fabio Fasanelli.

As a reminder the mission of Vilano Beach Main Street is to "Preserve, maintain, and improve the Historic Vilano Beach Community while protecting the small-town beach vibe." How does this proposal do this???

This proposed project goes against the mission of our community. In addition, traffic is already a nightmare with the lights being "off sync" and the side streets and bridge being backed up. We already

have townhouses that were just built. Why can't the owner renovate the hotel? We would be support of the preservation.

We love Vilano as a small-town beach community and want it to stay that way.

WE ARE IN OPPOSITION OF THIS PROPOSAL!

Ben and Theressa Kinchen
108 Surfside Ave

Chris Kinchen | Customer Experience Manager

Presidio | [presidio.com](https://www.presidio.com)

8647 Baypine Road,Suite 100, Building 1, Jacksonville, FL 32256

D: [+1.904.236.5514](tel:+19042365514) | ckinchen@presidio.com

AWS

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FW: Magic Beach Hotel - Approve Demo

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:29 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
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Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Anastasia OConnor <anastasia_oconnor@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 10:11 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Hotel - Approve Demo

Hello, Commissioners,

Firstly, thank you for your prompt attention to my prior email about the homeless camp at the May Street Bridge. The Sheriff was on top of clean-up that day and the crew did a fantastic job!

As a Vilano Town Center resident, I fully support the demolition of the Magic Beach Hotel and the proposed plans for re-development. Parking is an issue for Vilano, and the developer will not only provide the required parking for his construction, but he will also add more parking that the community has been crying for. The developer's plans will be a welcome addition to downtown Vilano. I hope you will fully endorse the project.

Thank you, again,

Anastasia O'Connor
2733 Palencia Street

St. Augustine, FL 32084
585 967-2220

On Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 08:54:01 AM EST, Anastasia OConnor <anastasia_oconnor@yahoo.com> wrote:

A homeless camp has popped up on the northeastern bank of the creek that is traversed by the May Street Bridge. This is a popular spot for runners, fisherman, bicyclists, and walkers and is not in accordance with HB 1365. What steps can be taken to dismantle the camp and clean the refuse that is being generated here?

Thank you.

Anastasia O'Connor
585 967-2220

FW: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:28 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Kinchen, Chris <ckinchen@presidio.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:36 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Cc: benkinchen@yahoo.com

Subject: *SAVE MAGIC BEACH HOTEL*

Commissioners,

We are writing this email to express our opposition to the demolish of the 1951 Magic Beach Hotel....a long-standing iconic gem in our community.

It is disturbing to us that you would vote in favor of such a proposal. As we understand the developer, Rick Johnston, has plans to build townhouse units where the hotel stands as well as the land next to it (Project name:Colonia).

Johnston does not own the hotel yet but the application for demolition was filled out in February by the motel's managing member, Tajel Patel and by the contractor, Fabio Fasanelli.

As a reminder the mission of Vilano Beach Main Street is to "Preserve, maintain, and improve the Historic Vilano Beach Community while protecting the small-town beach vibe." How does this proposal do this???

This proposed project goes against the mission of our community. In addition, traffic is already a nightmare with the lights being "off sync" and the side streets and bridge being backed up. We already

have townhouses that were just built. Why can't the owner renovate the hotel? We would be support of the preservation.

We love Vilano as a small-town beach community and want it to stay that way.

WE ARE IN OPPOSITION OF THIS PROPOSAL!

Ben and Theressa Kinchen
108 Surfside Ave

Chris Kinchen | Customer Experience Manager

Presidio | [presidio.com](https://www.presidio.com)

8647 Baypine Road, Suite 100, Building 1, Jacksonville, FL 32256

D: [+1.904.236.5514](tel:+19042365514) | ckinchen@presidio.com

AWS

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FW: Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:28 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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From: Christine and John McQuade <kilofox2@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:20 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel

Dear Commissioners,

I live in Vilano Beach and support the new plans for the location of the Magic Beach Motel. The building needs many repairs. In my opinion it is run down and out dated. I don't believe it's culturally significant. A TV show was filmed there, but it wasn't successful. Not many people are coming here to see where it was filmed. There's 2 brand new hotels in Vilano Beach as well as the recently renovated Haley's Court to cover the needs of visitors to our beautiful little Main Street area. The proposed living and retail space have been designed to blend in with the style of Vilano Beach and will help our community move into the future as opposed to being stuck in the past. I have never stayed at the motel and don't know anyone that has. Please allow the proposed demolition to proceed.

Thank you,
Christine McQuade
3385 Coastal Highway
Unit 14
St Augustine, FL 32084

FW: Magic Beach Motel-Vilano

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:26 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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-----Original Message-----

From: Angelina Morales <angelinadevans@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 15, 2025 4:40 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Magic Beach Motel-Vilano

Please save the iconic Magic Beach Motel from demolition!
I am a local resident just a few blocks away and love the history and charm this place provides. Please do not allow it to be demolished.

Thank you
Angelina Evans
124 Oak Ave

FW: Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:23 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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From: Sidney D <sdeese97@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, March 8, 2025 4:15 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel

Hello Commissioners,

I am writing you about the cultural significance of the Magic Beach Motel. I am a former resident of Villano Beach and this motel is honestly such an iconic landmark for the town. It's one of my fondest memories about living there, no joke!! My dad was the project manager for a construction job near that area and when I would go visit him I always loved passing by the Magic Beach Motel. Please keep it the way that it is! Don't let these evil developers take away the character of Florida so easily!

Thank you

Sidney Deese

FW: Beach motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:22 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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-----Original Message-----

From: Kathe O'Donnelly <okathe5765@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 9, 2025 9:32 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Beach motel

Please save the iconic beach motel in Vilano. Please! Everybody I know local and otherwise loves this fabulous place. We need to save these wonderful places full of history and memories. This one in particular is so visually stunning and magical. Please do what you can to save it.

Thank you so very much
Kathe O'Donnelly
St. Augustine

FW: SAVE THE MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:19 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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From: Cole Rutkowski <cole15@me.com>

Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 10:33 AM

To: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>

Subject: SAVE THE MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

SAVE THE MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

Please save the Magic Beach Motel. It is historic. It's my favorite place to visit and stay at in the are. Don't give in to more real estate developers destroying our history and land.

FW: Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:19 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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From: RBy <rebecca.lfxx@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 11:59 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel

Hello,

I am Rebecca F, Avid St. Augustine and FL lover/advocate. Here is my short and sweet plea. Please do not allow any demolition or major physical changes to the Magic Beach Motel. We want it to stand as is, as promised. The cultural and historic value is too high a cost to pay. Please protect it!!!

Thank-you,

Rebecca Flanagan

FW: Please develop carefully

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:18 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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-----Original Message-----

From: Jessica Lynch <jessicalnaples@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 10:33 PM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Please develop carefully

Hi,

I'm writing today to ask you to preserve as much as you can of what makes St Augustine charming & beautiful. I love it that you have the Magic Beach Motel & other businesses like it. Some of the new hotels (like the one at King & US1) are VERY unattractive & completely lack charm.

Know St. Augustine's worth! I know we can't stop development but I ask that you demand more from the developers when reviewing what they will contribute to the landscape of the city & the surrounding area. They will comply with your requests. They see the dollar signs & it's up to you to make sure the growth is beautiful & improves/protects the aesthetic of the area.

Please make sure you protect the locals too. Demand these developers provide x amount of affordable housing as part of the package so people can live where they work.

I'm from Naples. Many people think it's beautiful but it doesn't have any charm any more. We had no foresight or consideration for the runaway train of development in our area. Horrible traffic, unaffordable housing, constant construction, environmental upheaval, etc... make it a difficult place to live/work. Development has so far exceeded infrastructure that it takes people an hour to drive 10 miles to their job. And they are getting sick of it.

Thank you for your time.

Jessica E. Lynch

Sent from my iPhone

FW: SAVE MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:18 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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-----Original Message-----

From: paul henry <wmhp3842@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 6:02 PM
To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>
Subject: SAVE MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

Please save this hotel, it's iconic and has history and deserves to be where it's at. Florida has become overdeveloped in the last few years and has lost buildings that gave charm and old Florida vibes.

FW: Save Magic Beach Hotel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:17 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
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From: d ** <onlyonedonna@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 8:29 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Save Magic Beach Hotel

The Magic Beach Hotel in Florida should not be torn down because of its significant historical value and unique architectural design. As a landmark, the hotel stands as a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage and past, representing a bygone era of Florida's tourism and hospitality. Its distinctive features, including vintage architectural details, reflect the charm and character of the area, providing a sense of place and continuity for both locals and visitors. Preserving the hotel not only honors its legacy but also offers a chance to showcase its potential as a historical site, contributing to the community's identity and tourism appeal please stop taking away Florida's uniqueness save the magic beach hotel!

FW: NO TO DEMO OF MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:17 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Lucy Nadeau <lucy_nadeau@yahoo.com>

Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 5:57 AM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: NO TO DEMO OF MAGIC BEACH MOTEL

Dear Commissioners,

As a lifelong Florida resident, I am writing to implore you to consider the ramifications of allowing the destruction of such a iconic property, especially near our oldest historic city known for tourism. It is beyond sad how “progress” continues to rob our beautiful state of not only our natural beauty but also our amazing heritage. Rather than invest in maintaining the cultural history that made our state what it was. We are gradually losing properties of architectural significance like this one and in place go up plain, characterless blobs. It is beyond maddening that this continues to happen.

Please don't allow this person, who is obviously NOT a Florida native, to come and steal OUR iconic piece of history.

Respectfully,
Lucy K Peistrup

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

FW: Magic beach motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:16 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative

-----Original Message-----

From: Collin 02456 <collintnorris@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 7:52 PM

To: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic beach motel

Hello! What a rich and impressive life you've led. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you how places like the Magic Beach Motel are part of our culture, our history. We can all share these things with each other no matter how divided this country is. Please save the motel.

I'm really impressed with you. Mother of two Navy SEALs, no less. You continue to accomplish a lot and pressed through the worst thing someone can imagine. I hope it isn't pushy to ask you for any advice or words of wisdom you have on resilience and accomplishment? I'm sure you're very busy so I'll take whatever you have to say. Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

FW: magic beach motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:16 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
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-----Original Message-----

From: fishician@bellsouth.net <fishician@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 11:45 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1whitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: magic beach motel

dear St. John's County commissioners-

I do not live in St. John's County, however, I am a born and raised Floridian, in Palm Beach County my whole life. It saddens me greatly to see places that are bits of old Florida being demolished for something that will look just like the rest of the beachfront properties. No character, nothing unique, no history, nothing. I have seen 2 lovely beachfront hotels within 5 miles of my home get demolished for big ugly condos. Retain the charm that is there.

Sincerely-

Heidi Simons
518 North Atlantic Drive
Lantana, Fla. 33462
fishician@bellsouth.net

Sent from my iPhone

FW: Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>
Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:15 AM
To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Thank you,
Shayna Keller
Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
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-----Original Message-----

From: teenie <pinkpanda032@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 8:39 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Motel

Don't tear down the motel!!! It's such an iconic landmark. Give the people a victory with all the developing going on in Florida right now, protect what's left please !

Sent from my iPhone

FW: Iconic Magic Beach Motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:14 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
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Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Cassie Wills <cmw24d@fsu.edu>

Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 8:00 PM

To: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Iconic Magic Beach Motel

Good evening,

Please do not demolish th Iconic Magic Beach Motel. It is a piece of Florida history.

Thank you,
Cassie Wills

FW: Magic Beach Motel - Deny Development.

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:14 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Kaitlyn Gualillo <kaitlyn.gualillo@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 6:31 PM

To: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Motel - Deny Development.

Commissioner Joseph,

Hello. I am emailing you today regarding the Magic Beach Motel. This Vilano Beach hallmark should not be demolished for new development. As a local, St. Augustine has been tarnished with all the new poorly constructed commercial housing. It is devastating to watch this continue. Preserve what we still can, given that many historical and old growth forests have been leveled for greedy construction. Keeping St. Augustine as St. Augustine is crucial to those who grew up here, made memories here, and to those who would like to join the community. Please do not allow the identity of St. Augustine to be further stripped of its heritage.

Thank you,
Kaitlyn Gualillo

FW: magic beach motel

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:11 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Kim Tippin <kimtippin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 9:23 AM
To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>
Subject: magic beach motel

Good Morning,

I am writing as a concerned resident of St. Johns County to express my opposition to the proposed demolition of the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. This charming and iconic property, designated as a significant cultural resource, is an integral part of our community's history and character.

The Magic Beach Motel not only represents a nostalgic piece of Americana but also contributes to the unique charm that sets Vilano Beach apart. Preserving this beloved landmark would honor our community's heritage and continue to attract visitors seeking authentic experiences, which benefits our local economy.

I strongly urge you to explore alternatives to demolition, such as restoration or adaptive reuse, which would preserve this cultural treasure for future generations.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter.

Kim Tippin

FW: Magic Beach Hotel, Colonia project, and Vilano Beach area

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:10 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>



*Thank you,
Shayna Keller*

*Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



From: Bethany Groves <Bethany.Groves@stjohns.k12.fl.us>

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 9:47 AM

To: BOCC Office <boccoffice@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Magic Beach Hotel, Colonia project, and Vilano Beach area

Dear St. Johns County Commissioners,

As a homeowner at 80 Corunna Street in Vilano and a 20-year resident and educator in the St. Johns County School District, I am asking you to step in and address the general overcrowding and overdevelopment in St. Johns County in general and on Vilano Beach specifically. The Colonia project is another example of improvements that the infrastructure of Vilano cannot sustain. Now this developer is trying to purchase and demolish the Magic Beach Hotel in order to expand this project even further. PLEASE block this demolition and further development. Our quality of life on the Porpoise Point side of Vilano as well as the environment cannot continue to support this much development. The addition of the hotels has already stressed this area greatly. Then townhouses are still undeveloped but will continue to impact the area and now this new complex with its desire to expand further will drive the quality of the residents down even further. Most residents are getting out of the area completely. The area no longer has the cultural feel it used to and no longer has a population that respects the environment and our community values. Please stop the overdevelopment on Vilano, do NOT allow the demolition of the Magic Beach hotel or the further expansion of the Colonia project which I wish had never been approved in the first place. Thank you.

Bethany Groves Smith

80 Corunna Street
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Webster Elementary School
Principal

FW: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach

From Shayna Keller <skeller@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/31/2025 11:09 AM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Good morning,

I am forwarding you this email for your situational awareness.

Thank you!



Thank you,

Shayna Keller

Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0309 | www.sjcfl.us

Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative



From: Cindy Campbell-Taylor <cindycampbelltaylor2@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 5:30 PM

To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>

Subject: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach

Importance: High

St. Johns County Commissioners

St. Johns County Administration Building

500 San Sebastian View

St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Members of the St. Johns County Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the potential demolition of the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. The Magic Beach Motel is not only a culturally significant landmark but also a vital part of the unique "beach vibe" that Vilano Beach and St. Augustine are known for. This

vibrant, coastal atmosphere is an essential part of what makes our area so special, and it must be preserved at all costs.

While I recognize that Anastasia Island and St. Johns County are growing, we must be cautious about the kind of development that takes place. The continuous construction of 2- and 3-story buildings and commercial developments is beginning to compromise the character of our beloved beach communities. St. Augustine has built its reputation on its historic charm and coastal beauty, and Vilano Beach should not be transformed into just another stretch of high-rise developments that lack the unique appeal that currently draws visitors and residents alike.

The Magic Beach Motel stands as a reminder of a time when Vilano Beach was a more intimate and relaxed coastal destination. Allowing its demolition to make way for more 2- and 3-story condos and a large commercial building will only further erode the beach vibe that makes this area so unique. It is critical that we do not allow Vilano Beach to follow the same development pattern that has overtaken other parts of the island. If you visit other small beach towns there are moratoriums on height – keeping them one level with very strict guidelines. Why can't this be instituted in St Augustine, particularly Vilano Beach before it gets out of hand?

In addition to the cultural loss, the ongoing pressure on our infrastructure is a growing concern. As more development is approved, our roads, utilities, and services are becoming strained. We must take a more measured approach to growth—one that balances smart development with the preservation of the environment and the quality of life for all who live here.

The developer, Rick, has made it clear that his intention for the property is not to contribute to smart growth but rather to maximize his profit by demolishing the Magic Beach Motel and replacing it with high-density condos and a 5,000-square-foot commercial building. He has openly discussed this plan with the Vilano Beach Main Street Board, and previously, his request to develop the property with the existing footprint was denied. Now, he is seeking approval for demolition to push forward with his original plan, which will further exacerbate the issue of overdevelopment.

Rick the developer has said “the Magic Beach is in disrepair”. Well, this is obvious, there has not been any money put towards restoration or renovation, or it has been minimal. But if you look at what was recently done with Haley’s Court – they did an incredible job of investing in the property while maintaining the look, feel and vibe of what our Beach Towns should be. To me they are the shining star of Economic Development and Preservation and caring about the impact on the community.

I urge you to consider the lasting impact that the demolition of this culturally significant property will have on our community. It is crucial that we protect the character of Vilano Beach and St. Augustine for future generations. I ask that you reject the proposal to demolish the Magic Beach Motel and work to preserve this important landmark. Let's protect our heritage, our infrastructure, and the very essence of what makes Vilano Beach and St. Augustine so special. Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. I trust that you will make the right decision in preserving the character and charm of our community.

I look forward to hearing how you will help Vilano Beach maintain its integrity, your plans on smart growth vs. bigger & better without regard to the community, and next steps as you see them.

And I am happy to work with Commissioner Taylor on this important initiative.

Sincerely,
Cindy Campbell-Taylor
A Vilano Beach Resident

Past Vice President of Villano Beach Main Street (2022-2024)

Article:

<https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/magic-beach-motel-in-vilano-beach-faces-demolition-again/77-c92a1632-d7bc-4c22-b4c9-e68c6edbe52a>



May 22, 2025

Dr. Leslee Keys, Chair – St. Johns County Cultural Resources Review Board
Ryan Mauch, Supervising Staff for Cultural Resources Review Board
Megan Wright, Staff Liaison for the CRRB
St. Johns County Growth Management
4040 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Re: Historic Preservation Efforts in St. Johns County

Dear Dr. Keys and CRRB Staff,

Please consider the following requests regarding cultural resource protection and preservation.

1. Independent Historic Preservation Structural Assessment – 50 Vilano Road

At the April 14, 2025 CRRB meeting, the demolition request for the Magic Beach property was deferred, pending additional documentation on the building's condition. However, the motion did not specify the type of evidence required.

We respectfully request that the CRRB seek an **independent historic structural engineering assessment** of the building. This aligns with St. Johns County Land Development Code provisions, including:

- Preventing deterioration of culturally significant properties (Sec. 3.01.01 A.2)
- Discouraging demolition and promoting adaptive reuse (Sec. 3.01.01 B.6–7)
- Maintaining a cultural asset inventory (Sec. 3.01.01 C.2)
- Allowing further review or second opinions by SHPO or others (Sec. 3.01.04 D.2–4)
- Determining “Adverse Effect” and evaluating alternatives (Sec. 3.01.04 E–F)

2. National Historic District Nomination – Vilano Beach Main Street

In the absence of leadership by the CRA or local Main Street program, we ask that CRRB initiate steps to nominate Vilano Beach Main Street as a **National Historic District**, as recommended by the 2022 GAI consultant report.

This is allowed under Section 9.04 B. (Special Districts) and Land Development Code 3.01 (June 2023 revision). Unlike landmark status, Significant Cultural Resource designation does not require owner consent nor does designation of a district with the majority of properties concurring.

This step would better align preservation with the CRA and Main Street regulatory plans.

3. Protection from Demolition by Neglect

We recommend the CRRB begin drafting policy to **prevent demolition by neglect** of historic properties, using the March 2025 Jacksonville Historic Commission report as a guide.

4. Stronger Demolition Penalties

Consider supporting new penalties for unauthorized demolition, such as the **July 2025 law assessing a 20% fine based on property value** for demolishing designated historic sites.

5. Grant Resubmission

As the two 2024 Small Matching Grant proposals (A1A Survey and Hastings Record Digitization) will not be funded, please direct county staff to **revise and resubmit** these applications in the next cycle.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sallie O'Hara

Sallie O'Hara
President, Florida Downtown Association



FLORIDA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

107 N. Main Street, Wachula, FL 33873

Tax ID #84-2753209 | CH61032

www.FloridaDowntownAssociation.com | Office@FloridaDowntownAssociation.com