

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.**

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# 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.

HABS History Guidelines  
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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

HABS History Guidelines  
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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](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**



## Ryan Mauch

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**From:** Claudia Howat <chcurly@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2025 11:01 AM  
**To:** Ryan Mauch  
**Subject:** The Magic Beach Hotel

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

## Ryan Mauch

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**From:** Shelby Romero  
**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2025 12:56 PM  
**To:** BCC Commissioners  
**Cc:** Ryan Mauch; Megan Wright  
**Subject:** FW: New submission from Contact 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](http://www.sjcfl.us)  
Compassionate-Trustworthy-Innovative*



**From:** St. Johns County, Florida <[noreply@sjcfl.us](mailto:noreply@sjcfl.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2025 12:37 PM  
**To:** INFO <[INFO@sjcfl.us](mailto:INFO@sjcfl.us)>  
**Subject:** New submission from Contact Us

### Name

John Benton

### Email

[jbenton2009@comcast.net](mailto: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.