

CONTROL GROWTH NOW

News

Save Sarasota County



February 28, 2007

Formerly GEO, the Growth-restraint and Environmental Org.

Vol. 18, No.1

VOTE "YES" MARCH 13

Join Today

Sarasota County is at a crossroads.

One path leads to gridlock, higher taxes, pollution and other problems caused by overgrowth.

The other holds a promise for a brighter future.

Help choose the right path. Join Control Growth Now today.

Return
Card
Enclosed

Charter Amendment Controls Annexed Land

On Tuesday, March 13, all voters in Sarasota County will have a chance to vote for better control of growth in the cities.

A Charter amendment will be on the ballot. It provides that if a City annexes land, County

land use rules apply unless the County and the City have a Joint Planning Agreement.

This can negate scheming between developers and City

Continued on page 5

SEE YOU AT THE PICNIC

Saturday March 24



Please see the back of this newsletter for details and return the enclosed card for your reservation. **Free to members and guests.**

Also In This Issue

The Costs of Growth — Close To Home

Page 2

Dick Clapp and Kelly Kirschner for Sarasota City Commission

Page 3

Taxpayers, Facilities Suffer Impact Fee Delays

Page 4

Alice White Is Our 2007 Citizen of the Year

Page 5

Control Growth Now News

Is A Publication Of Control Growth Now

P.O. Box 277
Osprey, FL 34229-0277
(941) 364-8777
(Mon-Fri 9-5)



Annual Membership Dues
Are \$20 Per Year

Additional Contributions
Are Very Welcome
As Are Contributions
To Control Growth
Now PAC



Control Growth Now
Board of Directors

Dan Lobeck - *President*

Judy Johnson - *VP*

Neil Bass - *Treasurer*

Tom Price

Greg Nowaski

Herb Levine



President's Message



The Costs of Growth — Close To Home

The costs of growth have hit close to home in recent months, as the County cut down the beautiful canopy trees along Bahia Vista between McIntosh and Honore in order to four-lane the road to serve future growth, at the expense of you, me and other local taxpayers.

I live in that area and bought my home in part because of the natural beauty of the large oaks and other trees that lined the quiet road that I travel every day. Now, at the same time that the County passes policies promising to protect “canopy roads”, it destroys one in my neighborhood, just as it plans to do again in turning Honore Avenue to the east of my home into a free-way.

To add insult to injury, the County is paying for this road project entirely with tax dollars, not impact fees, even though it is solely for future growth. The county's traffic studies show that the road is now at an acceptable level of service and only needs to be widened for traffic projected from growth years from now, from new “Villages” east of I-75 and elsewhere.

I and my neighbors protested this project to the County Commission and staff but our objections fell on deaf ears, except for some reduction in lane width, lower lighting and other changes. The road is needed for growth, we were told.

We need to redouble our efforts for better control of growth so that the costs of growth are minimized, both to the taxpayers and our environment, throughout the County and close to home.

President, **Control Growth Now**

Clapp and Kirschner for Sarasota City Commission



Dick Clapp

The Board of Directors of Control Growth Now unanimously endorses Dick Clapp and Kelly Kirschner for election to the Sarasota City Commission.

Both men are campaigning on a platform of more responsible control of growth in Sarasota, to better protect the neighborhoods, traffic flow and ambiance of the city.



Kelly Kirschner

Dick Clapp is challenging incumbent Mary Ann Servian in District 2, which includes the barrier islands and northern coastal areas of the city. He is a long-time neighborhood activist and currently serves as president of the City Coalition of Neighborhood Associations as well as the Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Association. He is also active in the citizens' group Save Our Sarasota and has worked with other community groups to promote positive redevelopment and affordable housing.

Dick Clapp favors honest adherence by the City Commission to its motto, "A City of Urban Amenities With Small Town Living and Feeling." He disagrees with the incumbent's pro-growth record, which includes ignoring staff recommendations in granting unwise concessions to the Pineapple Square developer and in allowing another developer to quadruple densities to 200 units per acre in a building out of scale with downtown Sarasota.

Kelly Kirschner is challenging incumbent Danny Bilyeu in District 3, which runs from the edge of downtown to the eastern edge of the city. He is product manager for a local business and president of the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association. He also exercised substantial responsibilities when serving in the Peace Corps and USAID in Guatemala.

Kelly Kirschner was inspired to run when Danny Bilyeu and other Commissioners ignored the recommendations of their staff, planning board and affected residents to approve a last-minute, unstudied new proposal by a developer for an intense, incompatible 380-unit condo development in his neighborhood.

Kelly also criticizes the Commission's willingness to roll over for developers in downtown projects and promises to listen to all parties and consider residents' interests first if elected.



Speak For Yourself
Quote of the Month:

"It is good to be dense."

— City Commissioner
Danny Bilyeu

Want to help the candidates or learn more about them? Check out their web sites at campaignwindow.com/clappforcommissioner/ and kellyforsarasota.com.

Taxpayers, Facilities Suffer Impact Fee Delays



Almost everyone but some builders and developers seem to agree that impact fees are far too low for growth to pay its own way for the facilities needed by growth.

Indeed, road impact fees are about the same as they were 12 years ago, despite huge increases in roadbuilding and right of way costs since that time.

As a result, roads, schools, libraries, parks, public safety and other needs are suffering from underfunding and the taxpayers are paying more than their fair share.

Developers are showing their clout by success in delaying needed adjustments to impact fees to make growth pay its way. County Commissioners have repeatedly delayed adoption of increases proposed by their expert consultants.

Now, finally, the Board of County Commissioners appears poised to adopt needed adjustments to impact fees for roads, parks and libraries and to create new impact fees for law enforcement, criminal justice and public administration. Unfortunately, they remain too low due to various factors in the methodology which favor the developers and the Board apparently plans to phase in the increases over a year or more. Nevertheless, Control Growth Now applauds our County Commissioners for having the courage to take major steps to make growth pay its own way rather than placing the costs of growth on the backs of the taxpaying public.

The same cannot be said of the Sarasota County School Board and Superintendent of Schools, who are three years behind in updating the school impact fee.

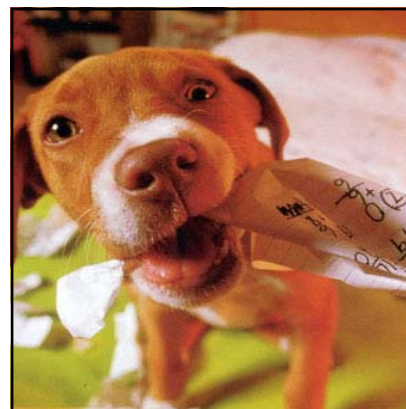
The School Board barely passed the school impact fee in 2003 by a 3 to 2 vote, after decades of delay. When the fee was adopted five months later by the Board of County Commissioners, the School Board's consultant acknowledged that the fee was outdated and way too low as a result.

This was supposed to be remedied by a provision in the Interlocal Agreement and Ordinance which adopted the school impact fee. It requires the Superintendent of Schools to issue a report every January of the data which gets plugged into the impact fee formula, with a statement of how those changes affect how the impact fee can be adjusted.

That annual report has never been issued.

With the costs of school construction and land acquisition rising greatly, if the report was ever issued, there is no doubt that school impact fees would rise significantly.

The Board of County Commissioners and the School Board should demand action. They should not let Schools Superintendent Gary Norris tell them that a dog ate his reports.





Alice White To Be Honored at Picnic

Control Growth Now will award its 2007 Citizen of the Year Award to Alice White of North

Port, a local schoolteacher for the past 17 years who is founder and president of People for Trees.

In 2002, Alice formed a political committee "North Port Citizens for Tree Protection" and through citizens' petitions placed a city charter amendment on the ballot to provide for tree protection standards during construction, modeled after a similar amendment passed in Jacksonville. The amendment faced opposition from both the city commissioners and local builder groups and was defeated (by a campaign which deceived voters into believing that the measure would actually weaken tree protection).

Alice White participated in Ad Hoc Committees to recommend stronger tree protection ordinances in North Port in 1999, 2000, and 2006.

She founded People for Trees, Inc., (www.peoplefortrees.com) a 501(c)(3) non-profit group in 1997, as there was a growing concern for the increased and needless destruction of the tree canopy due to development. Over the past ten years, Alice and her group have actively promoted awareness of the importance of protecting and maintaining our native tree canopy.

They host the annual North Port Tree Festival, attended by thousands over the years, sponsor a monthly environmental club for children called "The Eco-Kids Club", and through a partnership with the North Port YMCA sponsored a summer nature day camp for children. They also provide free plant and tree clinics for residents to promote Florida-Friendly landscaping, planting trees and Florida-Friendly gardens throughout the community at school sites.

Vote "Yes" On March 13

(Continued From Page 1)

Commissioners and staff to annex lands in order to allow more irresponsible development than the County will approve.

Under threat of this Charter amendment, the City Commissions of Venice and North Port have signed Joint Planning Agreements with the County which address future annexations. As such, the Charter amendment will have no actual effect so long as those agreements remain in place.

However, the amendment is needed if any agreement expires or if the state passes new laws to negate or weaken those agreements.

All registered voters throughout Sarasota County can vote March 13 and should vote "yes" on the Charter amendment.

County Needs Tougher Traffic Engineers

It has become apparent that the Board of County Commissioners needs to hire new traffic engineers or an outside firm to do more diligent studies of the traffic impacts of proposed developments.

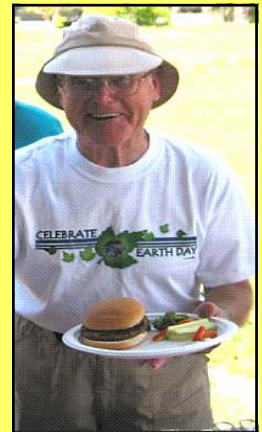
Incredibly, County staff took a pass on the traffic studies by Benderson Development showing minimal traffic impact of its new 130-acre development at I-75 and University Parkway due to "internal trip capture", despite traffic constraints on those roads. This dangerous shell game must stop before our roads are irreparably gridlocked.

Saturday **March 24** 11:30-1:00

Join Us for Our

**CONTROL
GROWTH
NOW**

PICNIC



**At Oscar
Scherer State
Park**

Off US 41 in Osprey

At the Pavilion by
The Lake

Free Park Entry—

(Tell Them You're
Here For The
Control Growth Now
Picnic)



**Free To
Control Growth Now
Members And Their
Guests**

**We Provide The
Burgers, Hot
Dogs, Veggie
Burgers and
Drinks.**



**Bring a Side
Dish or Dessert
to Share, If You
Can**

**Reservations Required — Please Fill Out And Return The Enclosed Card
Late Reservations Call 364-8777 - 9 to 5 Mon. Thru Fri.**

Join **CONTROL GROWTH NOW**

And Attend The March 24 Picnic If You Can

(More Information About The Picnic On Page 6)

We have a quarter-page ad running in the March 14 and 21 Sarasota Herald-Tribune, in the editions for Osprey, Siesta Key and a large area to the east and northeast. It seeks members for Control Growth Now and invites new members and guests to the picnic, as does our mailed newsletter and this email version, so we hope to have good attendance. Come and enjoy the fellowship, food, good weather, nature and fun!

Please sign me up

Yes, **CONTROL GROWTH NOW**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Enclosed is my/our check to CGN in the amount of \$20 per person (or more) for CGN membership
Please Check One:

I will not be attending the CGN Picnic

OR

I'll see you on March 24. With our guests, we'll need ____ hamburgers, ____ hot dogs and/or ____ veggie burgers

**Please mail this form and your check for \$20 per person to Control Growth Now
 P. O. Box 277, Osprey, FL 34229-0277**

Thank You!