

What If

What if we lived in a world where the people of Sarasota County (Republican, Democrat, Independent) felt compelled to unite in one strong voice to demand their elected officials do the right thing for the people who elected them.

What if that request was to preserve the health and wellbeing of a magnificent Jewel called “The Celery Fields Park and Stormwater Treatment Area” located right in the heart of the County. This “Central Park Wonderland” is a rare combination of natural wildlife habitat, recreational area for people and stormwater treatment is being threatened by a proposed development on farm land just east of Raymond Rd. which has been the Celery Fields back yard for many decades.

What if The property in question has for years also provided:

1. additional wildlife habitat, food source for birds and animals and a buffering zone from surrounding developments
2. 50 acres of open land to soak up and retain rainwater and reduce runoff and local flooding from hurricanes
3. A quiet place for people to walk or bike along Raymond Rd. and enjoy this small piece of old Florida

What if the only thing the County Commissioners had to do to stop the development was to “DENY the Rezoning Request to change the land from farmland to residential to the benefit of all Sarasota County residents. This would allow the landowner to maintain the land as a farm or in the future negotiate with environmental groups and local and state agencies charged with using our tax dollars to purchase land that should be protected and kept as open land.

BUT, What if the County gives into the pressure of a developer and the rezone is approved?

1. The environmental and recreational value of the land would disappear as the land was stripped and covered with concrete and asphalt house pads, streets and sidewalks.
2. 170 new homes would be built directly across the street less than 200 feet from the Celery Fields along with the approximate 500 people and 1000 cars coming and going onto Raymond Rd, Palmer Blvd and Porter Rd. increasing existing traffic issues.
3. Building the project will require a daily onslaught of dump trucks, heavy equipment, pavers, masons, carpenters, roofers, painters, plumbers and other construction workers. The associated noise and traffic could disrupt the Celery Fields and nearby neighborhoods for years.
4. Many thousands of tax dollars will be used for enhancing roads, electric power and, water/ sewer infrastructure required for the development to go forward.

5. The already strained “Celery Fields” wildlife habitat would be diminished by light and noise pollution, animal predation from the new dogs and cats in the new subdivision
6. The thousands of people who come from afar to enjoy the “Celery Fields” every year would stop coming as the brilliance of this Jewel fades as it is over run and “loved to death” by the new development local inhabitants.
7. In addition, the roof tops, roads and sidewalks will hold heat from the sun creating a “Heat Sink” affect increasing local temperatures, Summer heat waves in the area and worsening future draughts.