

Bachteler, James J

From: Justice, Charlie
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2016 9:06 AM
To: BoardRecords
Subject: Re: St. Pete Beach CRA
Importance: Low

From: form_engine@fs30.formsite.com [mailto:form_engine@fs30.formsite.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 10:08 PM
To: Justice, Charlie
Subject: [BULK] Online Customer Service Contact Us Form Result #6094682
Importance: Low

This information is the result of a Pinellas Online Customer Service form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

Direction of inquiry * General Information
Commissioner Janet C. Long - District 1 (2016 Vice Chairman)
Commissioner Pat Gerard- District 2
Commissioner Charlie Justice - District 3 (2016 Chairman)
Commissioner Dave Eggers- District 4
Commissioner Karen Williams Seel - District 5
Commissioner John Morroni - District 6
Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch - District 7
County Administrator

Subject * St. Pete Beach CRA is Justified

Message * The residents of St. Pete Beach have been embarrassed and angered by the fighting between a minority of our citizens, our elected leaders and city management. The legal battles really involve our hotels, and their right to expand as they redevelop. We feel we are a forward thinking group, that wants a more modern look in our downtown and our large hotel district. We currently have mostly 1960's buildings and a sewer system of roughly the same age. We suffer power outages more frequently than our mainland neighbors and hope one day not to have to worry about loss of power when the wind blows hard, which it often does at the coast. We residents of St. Pete Beach have fought for the right to redevelop, knowing that this redevelopment will provide jobs and tax dollars to help bury our power wires, fix our sewer system, widen our sidewalks and provide safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. We paid dearly for the hoteliers rights to redevelop, so much so that we had to cut our city staff in half, eliminate our police force and more. We bravely borrowed \$20,000,000 to tackle the rebuilding of Pass-a-Grille Way for 32 blocks south of the Don CeSar. It is easy to see the nice parts of the beach, but you have to live here to know the area's we are not so proud of. Take our 'large hotel district'. The Coral Reef is a great example. It was condemned two weeks after the Fleeting's bought it, ten years ago. They had a contract for a 300

room 'W' hotel to be built there in 2007, which would have provided many jobs and a lot of tax dollars but was stopped due to the fight over the comp plan.

Our hotels are all aging. Only the Don is historically significant. The others are very expensive to maintain, are not energy efficient and in short, need replacing. Other than a old Howard Johnsons' that needs to be leveled, there is not a name brand hotel in the batch. The TradeWinds Resort has done a remarkable job of making people comfortable in their hodge-podge collection of '60's buildings.

There have been vacant lots, a gentlemen's club, an almost empty strip center, and a specialty shop "for adults only" surrounding the main intersection at Gulf and 75th Ave for years. A block away, across from city hall is a drug rehab center.

To the east of city hall is an abandoned construction zone. To the west of Gulf on Corey Ave., is the area locals know as "the slums of west Corey." This area has been the drug and violence center of the beaches for years. Just check the Sheriff's police call log.

The CRA was an integral part of the comprehensive plan that we residents fought for and ended up spending over a million of OUR TAX dollars to defend.

We did it knowing that we had blighted areas and infrastructure needing attention.

The war has lasted so long that we had to do a lot of infrastructure repair that otherwise should have been paid for by CRA funds, ourselves.

There is still a lot we want to do to make out community more attractive to visitors.

CRA funds have to be spent on infrastructure and beautification in the district.

Our hotels need to redevelop. Our infrastructure needs help. Our power needs to be underground. We do not have the money anymore to do it without the CRA.

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