

JOCKEY CLUB OF NORTH PORT PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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24 January 2019

PROPOSAL – Woods Lane Emergency Exit

- References:** A. City of North Port Website
B. City of North Port ULDC , June 14, 2010 by Ordinance No. 2010-14
C. FEMA - Flood Insurance Rate Map, Sheet 12115C0378F, Scale 1"=500'
D. FEMA - Flood Insurance Rate Map, Sheet 12115C0386F, Scale 1"=500'
E. Official Records, Book 2819, Page 1108, dated 16 January 1996
F. Jockey Club Original Articles of Incorporation dated 26 October 1997
G. Minutes – City Commission Special Meeting – 03 May 18
H. Google Earth (imagery and distance measurements)

GENERAL

1. The Jockey Club of North Port POA Inc. has been in existence since 19 October 1977. Originally founded by the General Development Corporation, the Jockey Club comprised 612 Homesite Lots (Lots with homes and individual owners), 395 Shelter Lots (vacant lots) and the Common Properties (Tract H) of Fifty-Second Addition to Port Charlotte Subdivision," according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 21 at Pages 13 through 13A-13NN of the Public Records of Sarasota County, Florida". (Ref F). A diagram depicting the Jockey Club at that time is shown at Annex A. Of note, there were multiple options envisioned for its members to enter/leave the area once the plan was fully developed.
2. Until full development was complete, a portion of the Homesite Lots was landlocked hence the construction of Woods Lane (exact date unknown). The 395 Shelter Lots were owned by Atlantic Gulf Communities and in 1996, the Jockey Club and Atlantic Gulf separated by mutual agreement. (Ref E). These lots later became the foundation for HOAs of Charleston Park (CP) and the Villas of Charleston Park (VCP). The Jockey Club no longer had any access/egress to the NORTH except via Pan American Blvd.
3. The property upon which Woods Lane runs is owned by an individual, not the City of North Port, although there is a designated right of way. Sarasota County Property Appraiser website Parcel ID 0993264135 refers. That has been the only route servicing 195 Jockey Club homes or almost one third of its members who reside on what can be described as an "island" bounded by drainage ditches to the SOUTH and EAST, Myakkahatchee Creek to the WEST and VCP occupying 86% of the NORTH boundary. A 492ft stretch of open undeveloped ground exists between VCP and Myakkahatchee Creek. This area has been surveyed and contains lots and road allowances. Annex B refers. Lots are, for the most part, contiguous apart around the "Island" from the NORTH boundary.
4. The issue of a single point of entry through Woods Lane has been discussed informally with City officials in past years. The Jockey Club was advised that once Spring Haven Drive was completed between Pan American and Price Blvd, Vestridge Street would be extended to Spring Haven providing a second entrance/exit to the "Island". However, on 3 May 2018, at a Special Meeting, the City Commissioners voted to cancel the Spring Haven Extension and study the purchase of the lots in that

area. The main reason for doing so was to “follow the strategic plan to preserve the natural environment and Little Salt Spring”.

AIM

5. To propose an emergency exit from the “Island” within the Jockey Club.

DISCUSSION

6. The “Island” consists of 195 homes and approximately 500 residents, almost one third of the Jockey Club. In the event of an emergency requiring the evacuation of all residents (ie. Hurricane or flood) all residents would have to make use of Woods Lane. Complicating the evacuation is:

- a. the funnelling of all traffic on Shenandoah and Fairbrook Streets;
- b. the requirement for respective right and left turns from those streets onto Woods Lane;
- c. the need for residents to enter crowded thoroughfares from their driveways; and
- d. an evacuation order will find some residents off of the “Island” who will strive to get home and conduct necessary preparations to evacuate, thus creating an opposing flow and adding further complications.

This results in a choke point at the junction of Woods/Shenandoah/Fairbrook and the potential for accidents or incidents resulting in further delay in evacuation. In addition, a fire or other emergency at any of the homes that border the junction would prevent access/egress until that emergency was rectified. While the probability is low, an incident during an emergency only has to happen once and would raise concerns over safety, security and liability.

7. Woods Lane is fully within Flood Zone AE with an elevation of 11.7ft (Ref D). This is the lowest point on the “Island” with this area plus the junction of Woods/Shenandoah/Fairbrook subject to inundation as a result of heavy rains and flash flooding (Annex C). Water depth would not be significant, but, in a rainstorm with restricted visibility, vehicle occupants could lose sight of the actual road and stray off of it, bogging down in the saturated road shoulders or, in a worse case, drive into the drainage canal risking injury or death. Elevation increases from SOUTH to NORTH. Therefore, consideration must be given to find an alternate route from the “Island” to the NORTH.

8. Two HOAs were founded from the separation of Atlantic Gulf Communities and the Jockey Club. To the NORTH-EAST, Charleston Park (CP) (139 homes) has two exits, the main entrance/exit on Spring Haven Drive and an emergency exit consisting of a gravelled culvert over a drainage ditch connecting to the NORTH end of Greendale Road in the Jockey Club. A solid locked gate controls egress. It is assumed the gate is controlled by CP. It is not known if this gate has ever been used. To the NORTH, Villas of Charleston Park (VCP) HOA (184 homes) has its main entrance/exit on Pan American Blvd and an alternate entrance/exit leading from the NORTH on a dirt track on to Spring Haven Drive. This route has been used to support home construction in VCP. The track will not support vehicle traffic when saturated. A wall separates the Jockey Club from VCP completely. There are two cul-de-sacs on Shenandoah St (Zone AE, Elev 12.5ft) and Rycroft St (Zone X) remnants of the original plan for the Jockey Club. There are no lots on the VCP side opposite the cul-de-sacs. VCP is not in favour of any exit from the Jockey Club that passes through VCP property. Therefore, this paper will not discuss any exit options that affect VCP.

9. To the EAST of VCP is open ground as mentioned in paragraph 4. It consists of surveyed road allowances and lots. According to the Sarasota County Property Appraiser website, the lots are owned by two LLCs. The road allowances consist of the proposed Spring Haven Extension and the Vestridge Street extension. It is these road allowances that are of importance to the Jockey Club as they offered the second entrance/exit to the "Island". With the cancelation of the Spring Haven Extension (Ref G) the development of these road allowances into city maintained routes was no longer possible. One of the reasons for cancelation was the environmental concerns regarding animal habitat and movement between Little Salt Spring and Myakkahatchee Creek across fully functioning roadways and the eventual development of the lots that would likely result once road construction was complete. Ref G also directed City staff to pursue the purchase of lots in that area to further preserve its natural state. An existing trail from the end of Vestridge Street connects to Butler Park and has been used for pedestrian, cyclists and, on occasion, vehicle traffic. This track will not support multiple vehicle passes particularly if the soil is saturated. (Annex D refers)

10. With environmental concerns taken into consideration, scope exists to create an emergency exit from the "Island". A single lane, all weather, gravel road constructed on the existing road allowances on Vestridge Street and the EAST portion of Spring Haven Drive where it intersects with Vestridge to the existing four lane road (a distance of approx. 1850ft) would provide the following benefits:

- a. Provide the emergency route needed by the "Island";
- b. Provide a pedestrian and cycling path connecting the Jockey Club to the Morgan Center, the Waterpark, the Middle School and High School. This would be of daily benefit to those attending school and the Waterpark, significantly shortening the distances travelled via Glenallen and W Price Blvds.
- c. The clearing of brush and creation of a dirt track from Vestridge St to the WEST would be of benefit to pedestrians/cyclists from VCP and CP and also shorten the distances between the schools and the sports fields on Glenallen Blvd.
- d. Vehicle access would be restricted by gates at either end of the road. It will also be necessary for a vehicle obstacle splitting Spring Haven Drive at Vestridge. Control of the gates would be the responsibility of the City who would open the gates once an emergency was declared. The Jockey Club would also have keys and would open the gates only with the permission of the City. These control measures would negate any impact vehicle traffic would have on animal movement.

The North Port Strategic Plan (2018-2021) states as one of its objectives "Expand and improve accessibility to Greenways and Blueways Connections". The construction of an emergency route under the auspices of a pedestrian walkway/cycling lane will contribute to this Strategic Objective. Also by restricting vehicle traffic to emergencies and by constructing the route with gravel, the project also indirectly supports the Strategic Objective: "Preserve Myakkahatchee Creek in a responsible manner". Annex E shows suggested route.

11. The City of North Port Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) Sec. 37-12. Lots and blocks. Paragraph F (4). Access, states: "All new subdivisions and/or developments shall have two (2) fully functional access streets, remotely located from one another, as determined by the City. Where feasible, these access streets shall not be onto the same roadway." It is fully understood why this regulation applies to new subdivisions as in most cases old subdivisions would be unable to create alternate routes without significant cost or hardship. Though the "Island" may be grandfathered, it is

not prudent to use this as a premise not to address the issue of an alternate route, especially when a solution exists. The concerns for safety and security that resulted in the creation of this clause remain extant regarding the "Island".

CONCLUSION

12. The "Island" within the Jockey Club presents a problem in evacuating almost 500 people over a single route that is subject to inundation resulting from heavy rains. The possibility of a local emergency at the junction of Woods Ln, Fairbrook and Shenandoah Streets could also deny entry/exit for lengthy periods of time. Though a low probability, an incident such as this need only happen once to raise safety and liability concerns.

13. A viable option exists to create a single lane, all-weather, gravel route with controlled vehicle access to the NORTH of the "Island" along the existing surveyed routes for Vestridge Street and Spring Haven Drive. This route, to be used by vehicles only in emergencies, would also be a pedestrian and cycling path, offering additional synergies for accessing the amenities of Butler Park, the Morgan Community Centre and the two schools. An extension of walking/cycling paths to the WEST along Spring Haven Drive would create further access to VCP and CP HOA.

14. The construction of this route would address environmental concerns regarding animal movement, supports North Port Strategic Plan objectives and should be addressed in accordance with ULDC Sec 37-12.

15. Vehicle use of the route would only be permitted on declaration of an emergency by government officials.

RECOMMENDATION

16. It is recommended that the City of North Port construct an emergency route to the NORTH of the "Island" providing a second exit to that area.

17. It is recommended that the Jockey Club provide a member of its Board of Directors as liaison to the City regarding this project and to brief City Commissioners as required.

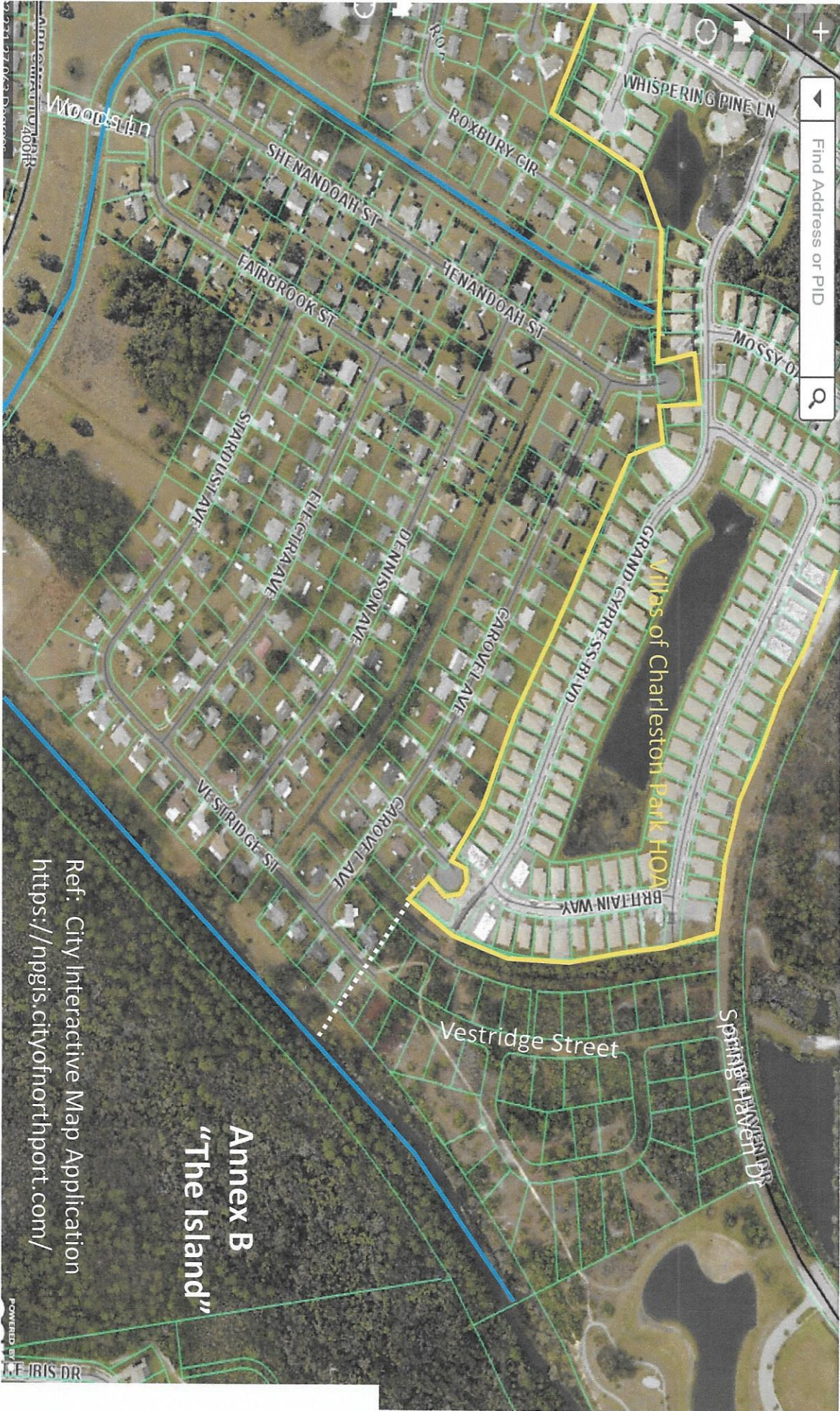
Prepared by:



David P. Casarsa
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Annex A – Original
 Jockey Club Plan





Find Address or PID

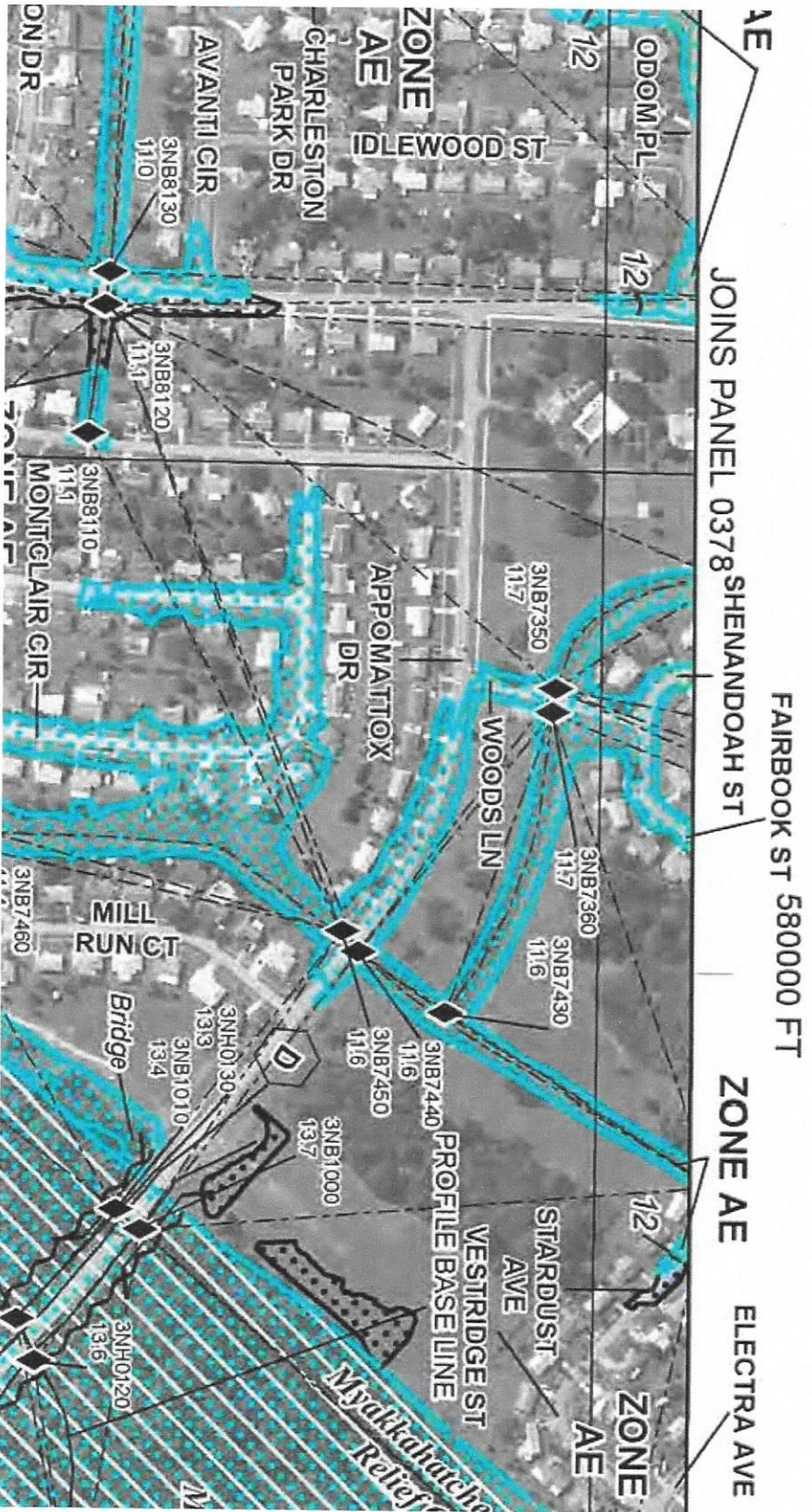
Annex B
"The Island"

Ref: City Interactive Map Application
<https://npgis.cityofnorthport.com/>

POWERED BY
IBIS DR

WOODS LANE FLOOD PLAIN

Ref: FEMA - Flood Insurance Rate Map, Sheet 12115C0386F, Scale 1"=500'



Annex D – Existing Ground
Ref: Google Earth Pro 7.3.2.5491 (64-bit)



Legend
Morgan Family Community Center

200 m



Google Earth
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Find LOMC or Certificate



Annex E
Proposed Route – Vestridge Extension
Ref: <https://ags3.scgov.net/sarcoflood>

Search and Layers

