
SPIKOWSKI PLANNING ASSOCIATES

1617 Hendry Street, Suite 416
Fort Myers, Florida 33901-2947

telephone: (239) 334-8866
fax: (239) 334-8878

September 24, 2004

RE: GREATER PINE ISLAND - 9/28/04 AGENDA

Dear County Commissioners:

Please reject the suggestion from Tim Jones to repeal part or all of the Greater Pine Island community plan. Such action would be a tremendous breach of faith with the hundreds of folks who worked several years, under your sponsorship, to develop this model community plan.

I do not believe that the Hanson Report provides credible evidence that the Coastal Rural category makes Lee County particularly vulnerable to a Bert Harris claim. However, if you disagree, you could reduce that vulnerability without gutting Greater Pine Island's community plan.

For instance, it would not make any practical or legal sense to repeal Coastal Rural just because you decide that amending it may be in order. In fact, repealing Coastal Rural would make it harder to modify its provisions; **why not just sponsor a plan amendment to reexamine it in the coming year?**

Coastal Rural was a complex compromise to achieve as many of these goals as possible:

1. Maintain the rural character of Pine Island including its mosaic of farms and natural lands.
2. Reduce the build-out population of Pine Island (due to general evacuation and road limitations).
3. Discourage excessive clearing of natural lands.
4. Protect the aquatic preserves from unnecessary pollutants from farming.
5. Discourage further subdivision of sprawling large-lot subdivisions.

Coastal Rural's only cost to landowners that the Hanson Report identified as being more than nominal was to farms with highly engineered water management systems. This cost could be mitigated by adding a sixth goal as follows:

6. Keep Pine Island's best farmland in production as an alternative to restoration.

There would be several ways to incorporate this goal. One would be to modify Coastal Rural to allow some development rights to be transferred off farmland, thus allowing limited development alongside continued farming. Agricultural easements would ensure the remaining farmland wouldn't later become residential, and the engineered water management system would continue to protect the environment.

Creative solutions are possible even in this contentious situation. The County Commission needs to stand behind its previous planning efforts while ensuring their fairness to all parties. **Abandoning** Coastal Rural would move the county many steps further away from an optimal solution to Pine Island's future. **Improving** Coastal Rural is a worthy goal that deserves all of our careful attention.

Sincerely,

Bill Spikowski