

CCNA

COALITION OF CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS OF SARASOTA

Thursday, June 15, 2023

TRANSMITTED
ELECTRONICALLY

Lucia Panica
Director of Development Services
City of Sarasota
1565 First Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

Re: Letter in Support of DSCA's Opposition to the Proposed Development at 1260 N. Palm Avenue,
Case# 23-ASP-02.

Dear Ms. Panica:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations of Sarasota (CCNA). During a duly called Board of Directors (BoD) meeting on June 15, 2023, the Board voted unanimously to support the Downtown Sarasota Condominium Association (DSCA) in its opposition to the applicant's two administrative adjustment requests for the Obsidian project proposed for 1260 N. Palm Avenue.

The requests are explicitly identified in a letter to you from Mr. Freedman, dated May 25, 2023. They are:

1. An exemption allowing habitable space not to extend for the full height and length of the ground floor, and
2. A waiver of the requirement for retail, service use, or office use to be present along the entire length of the building frontage.

The pedestrian-friendly character of N. Palm Avenue is currently enhanced because of the retail businesses occupying the ground floor across from the City's parking garage. As you know, some streets are identified as primary grid streets. Those streets are held to a higher standard than are secondary streets to encourage walkability, including the safety of pedestrians. The proposed adjustments conflict with the principle of primary grid streets and increase the potential risks to pedestrians, this part of Palm Avenue, its neighborhood, and nearby businesses.

CCNA

COALITION OF CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS OF SARASOTA

In addition, the matter of incompatibility with the surrounding area is obvious. Regardless of what allowed this project to advance to the point of being on the June 21, 2023, DRC agenda, City staff must do due diligence in scrutinizing this application and deny the adjustment requests. We agree with DSCA that in its current form, this project contradicts the objectives of the Downtown Master Plan and is more likely to degrade rather than enhance our downtown.

We strongly urge you, the Development Services staff, and the DRC to consider these concerns, which represent a groundswell of opposition to the development.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this very significant and important matter.

Kindly,

Richard Harris
President
Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations of Sarasota

CC: David Lough, President DSCA
Marlon Brown, City Manager
Robert Fournier, City Attorney
Mike Connolly, Deputy City Attorney
Allison Christie, Development Review Senior Planner
City Commissioners