



# *PARCELS FROM PARADISE*

***JULY 2013***

*Published by the VGRCCA as a service to its members and residents of the Venetian Golf and River Club.*

•**Laurel Road Commercial Property Has Activity** After lying dormant since 2008, things are happening with the corner of Laurel Road and Knights Trail. The 52-acre site was once referred to as the “Renaissance Project.” Many Venetian residents recall that this property was the proposed site of a Super Wal-Mart, plus a hotel, a movie theater, various retail outlets and multi-residential properties. Eventually Wal-Mart withdrew its interest in the site and the property was never developed. Today this corner is being referred to as “The Laurel Road Property.”

Fast-forwarding to 2013, another developer, John Peshkin, has stepped in. Mr. Peshkin, along with his attorney, Jeff Boone, held an open public meeting for primarily Venetian and Willow Chase residents on June 5<sup>th</sup> where he gave a very general outline of his plan. Currently the property is zoned “Commercial General”. At the meeting, Mr. Peshkin advised us of his intent to request a change in the zoning to “Commercial Mixed Use” which translates into mixed residential, retail stores, office space and commercial properties. He has established at this early stage an advisory committee comprised of three representatives from Willow Chase, plus one from the VGRCC Community Association (Carol Barbieri), one from the VCDD (Jerry Jasper), and one from the Venetian POA (Peter Phillipps). The developer has informed us that he has no committed tenants at this time and predicts that it may take 3-5 years before the Laurel Road Property will begin to take shape. Mr. Peshkin took questions from the audience and was open to comments.

Like any developer, Mr. Peshkin will have to go through a number of steps to accomplish his plans. He is eager to move quickly this summer to get the re-zoning process underway, and this will involve both the City Planning Commission and City Council. Public input is permitted at these meetings, so residents may wish to pay close attention to related public notices and agendas. The City of Venice posts all of its public meetings on their web site at [www.venicegov.com](http://www.venicegov.com)

Updates on this property will be provided in future *Parcels*, and the VGRCCA plans to closely monitor developments. If you have a comment, please submit it by clicking "**Reply**" to this newsletter.

•**Connector Road Progress** Here is a quick update on the Jacaranda Blvd. connector road project. The city reports that things are moving along quite well. Weather permitting, the road is scheduled to open by September 30<sup>th</sup>. The contractor is planning to get started on the Laurel Road turn lane at the Venetian's entrance very soon. The initial phase will include widening the road to accommodate the turn lane and the 4' paved shoulder. The base material will be stabilized and the main travel lanes will remain paved as they are now. When the paving is started on Jacaranda Blvd., the final prep of the paved shoulder will be done and paving/stripping activities will be completed. The push to build this road and provide a secondary outlet for Venetian residents was a major initiative of the VGRC Community Association.

•**Publix Update** *Parcels* told readers that we would provide an update on the new Publix shopping center at the corner of Laurel and Pinebrook Roads. Based on a conversation with the property manager, there is no change on the list of tenants provided in last month's issue. For those who have retreated to the northern states, *Parcels* is happy to say that the shopping center is rapidly moving ahead. The building has been painted and blacktopping has taken place on much of the property. It appears that the scheduled opening for this August will happen!

•**Improvements for Beach Lovers** For those who frequent the North Jetty County Park, there is good news. This park will receive a facelift with new restrooms, outdoor showers and a beach concession. It is expected that the work will be done by January 2014.

•**No Cars For Sale** The Venice Police Department has informed *Parcels* that it is illegal to place a car on Laurel Road with a "for sale" sign on it. Usually the police will call the owner telling them to remove the car, however they have the option to write a ticket.

•**Same Owner – New Name** T.J. Carney's, a popular Venice downtown eatery, will go through a major renovation and name change. It will be called the *Brew House* with a sports bar motif and should be a great place to catch Saturday and Sunday football games. T.J. Carney's will close after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, with the renovations taking approximately 3 months.

•**Sarasota National Purchased by WCI** WCI recently purchased Sarasota National, which is located on Rt. 41 south of Jacaranda. This property has changed ownership over the years and has not been able to get off the ground financially. Only about 30 homes have been built. According to a WCI spokesperson, about one third of the infrastructure is in place. WCI plans for approximately 1,300 homes to be built. Their timeline includes construction start up in August of this year, the establishment of a sales center in September, with models available by January 2014. The homes will be similar to the styles that are currently being built at the Venetian. WCI will soon reactivate the gated community security, and the frontage area along 41 will receive a noticeable makeover in the next few months. Sarasota National has an 18-hole golf course, which is currently closed for maintenance including fertilization, bunker repairs and greens aeration. Lakes and wetlands also will receive attention. Troon is currently managing the golf course and has a contract to January 2014. Sarasota National will remain a public course. With the entire property being unkempt for so many years, WCI has certainly their work cut out for them in the next several months.

•**Umbrellas, Anyone?** Last year, Venetian summer residents were doing their own rain dance begging for more precipitation. This year no one has had to do any dancing as the Venetian has been deluged with a number of high powered storms, usually in the late afternoon. The good news is that the lakes, lawns, and golf course have benefitted from the rain.

•**Congratulations, Nik** High wire daredevil Nik Wallenda sure brought international attention to Sarasota with his nail-biting walk across the Grand Canyon. Rumors that his next venture will be a high wire walk from the River Club to the Golf Club are totally erroneous.

•**Sea Turtle Nesting Scorecard** As of June 8, Venice Beach has 60 sea turtle nests and 35 false crawls (where the female crawls up on the sand but doesn't lay any eggs). Information was not available for Nokomis Beach. When you're at the beach, look for the stakes with orange ribbon which mark a nest. Nesting season runs until Oct. 31.

# Happy Birthday, USA!

***Calendar follows on Page 4***

# Venetian Calendar

## Upcoming meeting dates

**These meetings are held at the River Club and are open to all residents:**

July 8 – VCDD board meeting – 9:30am [www.vcdd.org](http://www.vcdd.org)

July 9 – Venetian Architectural Control Committee (ACC) – 9:30am

*(meetings are held monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 9:30am)* [dliston@castlegroup.com](mailto:dliston@castlegroup.com)

July 22 – VCDD board meeting – 1:30pm [www.vcdd.org](http://www.vcdd.org)

August 12 – VCDD board meeting – 9:30am [www.vcdd.org](http://www.vcdd.org)

August 21 – POA board meeting – 10:00am [dliston@castlegroup.com](mailto:dliston@castlegroup.com)