

Tarpon Woods BOCC advocacy packet — September 2024

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Tarpon Woods Golf Course / Brooker Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank Project

- Due to the shortened timelines we find ourselves under, you are being presented with hard copies of cited materials today. The non-profit that managed the golf course failed to file change of ownership for two and a half years after they sold the course. Residents of the neighborhood stumbled upon info RE: a possible sale and proposed future development plans by chance, only a few weeks ago. Representatives of new ownership did not hold a formal meeting to officially announce their plans to the community until last week, & a mere 8 business days before they expected the submission window on their SWFWMD application to close. 1) *Nextdoor / Vandiver pg 5* 2) *Spectrum News / Bay News 9 pg 6-7*
- This proposed development has already cost the County greatly in lost tax revenue, as Mike Twitty can attest, and the execution of the proposal will cost the County even more money due to sheer size of the project's overlap with existing County assets that will need to be reconfigured and removed. 3) *Warranty Deed pg 8*, 4) *Pinellas County Property Appraiser pg 8*, 5) *Pinellas County Property Appraiser pg 9*, 4) *Pinellas County tax collector pg 9*, 7) *WFLA Channel 8 pg 10-12*
- Tax revenue for the county will also fall along with our property values if this plan goes through, as homes that were previously valued for their golf course view would now face either a chain link fence swamp view, or the back of new housing developments that could be homes, condos, or apartment buildings. 8) *LinkedIn pg 13*
- This particular area has already shown a high propensity for flooding and the short-sightedness of the proposed plans threatens to turn a residential golf course community with an environmentally valuable corridor for wildlife classified as endangered, threatened and imperiled by FWC that bridges the gap between John Chestnut Park and Brooker Creek Preserve, into another flooded bog, leaving our North Pinellas neighborhood in a quagmire like Sarasota. 9) *Pinellas County DRC Meeting pg 14*, 10) *MyFWC.com / Neighbor Submissions pg 14 – 15*,
- Under current County flood plans, when the Brooker Creek water gauge at Tarpon Woods approaches 12 feet, or when a heavy rain event is expected to impact the area such as a hurricane or tropical storm, the County deploys stormwater pumps within the Tarpon Woods neighborhood. 11) *Tarpon Woods Resident pg 16*, 12) *Fox 13 Tampa Bay pg 17-18*
 - County pumps move the encroaching water from the street and away from residential homes, emptying the potential flood waters into the ponds on the Tarpon Woods Golf Course .
 - The current proposed development plans to fill these ponds, leaving only a foot-deep depression at the annual high water line (a far cry from current pond water storage volumes, even factoring in the shallow littoral shelves), and includes no plans to provide new stormwater depositories to replace those they are removing. One is left to wonder if they expect it to fall upon the County to craft a new solution as they have yet to present one.
- In 2007 Pinellas County explored the possibility of purchasing Tarpon Woods Golf Course for \$4 million using grant but nixed the idea after a study by Tampa Bay Engineering determined that

storing flood waters on the course itself would not ease seasonal flooding for residents. We can furnish this study with highlighted areas of interest but due to the volume of pages we are unable to include it in your packet. 13) *Tampa Bay Times pg 19*

- In a meeting with the Pinellas County Development Review Committee representatives for the Brooker Creek Wetland Mitigation Project were asked if they had any plans that would improve the flood zoning for the existing residents. The representatives for the development group expressed **no plans** to look into improving current flooding / flood plain, and flood zoning issues faced by existing residents, and seemed to want to shift the conversation to the requirements of federally backed insurance, which the county correctly pointed out most people in this area do not have. 14) *Pinellas County DRC Meeting pg 20 - 21*
- We have looked at the majority of existing wetland mitigation banks, not just in our county and the greater Tampa Bay area, but across the state, and we have yet to find a single example of one being built inside an existing neighborhood surrounded on all sides by pre-existing homes. We would prefer our neighborhood not to serve as the test case for this. 15) *Florida Dept of Environmental Protection pg 21*
- Though representatives on behalf of new ownership submitted in their permit application to SWFWMD that the creation of the Brooker Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank Project was not tied to any other development projects, in their meeting with the County Development Review Committee it was made quite clear that they plan to use the 300+ unused residential building units granted in the original developers of Tarpon Woods neighborhood in the 1970s to build on the uplands they will create when building out the Wetland Mitigation Bank. 16) *Pinellas County DRC Meeting pg 22 – 23*, 17) *Pinellas County DRC Meeting pg 23*
 - It was stressed that they needed assurances they would have a clear path for their clients to build, but wanted to hold off on making the master plan adjustments until getting SWFWMD approval as they believe the conservation easement will protect the site and lock them in for construction.
 - These residential credits were issued at a time when the Ridgemoor subdivision did not even exist, and we feel that building credits issued in the 1970s should not apply to an area that has gone through 50 years of residential growth since.
- When asked how much earth they would be removing from the course at the public announcement meeting, representatives for the project projected 242,000 cubic yards = to 13,000 truckloads.
 - Tarpon Woods Blvd is a narrow 2-lane road that already is facing questions if it can support the traffic of Ridgemoor residents if they are re-routed to solely use Tarpon Woods Blvd during the construction of the Brooker Creek Bridge Project. Those issues become compounded when combined with concerns about Tarpon Woods Blvd's ability to support the wear and tear of 13,000 truckloads of contaminated topsoil.
 - Also, while there are plans in the works to widen East Lake Road, where in that project's timeline will 600+ currently unaccounted-for new residents fit into those plans?
- County Code Enforcement can verify that residents have reported issues with snakes and alligators coming into backyards via the high overgrowth on some of the more poorly maintained areas on the course, resulting in close encounters for our residents.

- We don't mind when snakes and gators cross the mowed areas of the course because we can see them. We also know as Florida residents that alligators and snakes are among the few wild creatures whose travel by land won't be impeded by chain link fencing.
- Also, once the mitigation bank is established, the County will no longer be able to spray the area for mosquitos. We have grave concerns about the dangers this would be exposing the residents to, and greater still, the dangers to our children.
- As no test case for putting a Wetland Mitigation Bank in the middle of a pre-existing neighborhood seems to exist, and given the lack of care and concern demonstrated in the comments of Tarpon Woods Wetland Mitigation Bank project owners to County DRC members regarding flooding concerns, property values, and quality of life for existing Tarpon Woods residents, would it be prudent to grant a Limited Liability Company the ability to test something of this magnitude out in Pinellas?
- There are parties that have expressed interest in purchasing the Tarpon Woods Golf Course and keeping it a golf course. These offers were placed at contemporary fair market value for the parcel versus the under-market value paid by the current owners, Tarpon Woods Properties LLC, to acquire it from the charity it was gifted to.
 - Selling it to an organization that will keep it a course for its fair market value, in our opinion, would be the ideal outcome. This way Tarpon Woods stays a golf course, the residents no longer have to fear uncertainty, the wildlife we cherish is not displaced, and the corridor between the park and the nature preserve is maintained.
 - If the Wetland Mitigation Bank development plans are rejected, the County would not have to come out of pocket to possibly create new flood mitigation plans or concern itself with building new roads and having to replan infrastructure to accommodate 600+ new residents in an area already struggling with meeting the needs of its current capacity. While this would probably not be the windfall the individuals that comprise new ownership had hoped for, they would be making a return on their original investment. While we don't know the figures on what they spent on planning, it should be noted that had the change of ownership been filed according to the laws of Pinellas County, this would have come to light for all parties concerned over 2 1/2 years ago, and perhaps they could have avoided incurring those expenses.

A Word From Tarpon Woods Resident Doug W.

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This page contained a resident social-media message with sensitive disability, paralysis, cancer, chemotherapy, and family details. Those details are unnecessary to understand the permit issues and are not republished here.

The source original is preserved unchanged in the private evidence archive.

Original page 5 withheld from this website copy

This page contained an identifiable social-media profile and reaction data.
The website edition does not republish that personal profile material.

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2) Residents created a website to save their community. These yard signs are on several lawns in the neighborhood. (Spectrum Bay News 9/Sandra Weathers)

COMMUNITY

Tarpon Woods residents worried that development plan will change community

BY SAUNDRA WEATHERS | PINELLAS COUNTY
UPDATED 10:33 AM ET AUG. 28, 2024 | PUBLISHED 5:54 PM ET AUG. 27, 2024

PINELLAS COUNTY, Fla. — Residents who live in a Pinellas County community are demanding answers after learning their golf course community is about to undergo some major changes.

What You Need To Know

- Bill Nobles said the charm of Tarpon Woods has been a draw for everyone who has moved there
- Residents just launched a website, savetarponwoods.com, after hearing about development plans
- Representatives for the developers say residents are misinformed and that there are no plans for a rumored huge development project
- A meeting is planned with community members

Bill Nobles said the charm of the small Palm Harbor community, called Tarpon Woods, has been a draw for everyone who has moved there. He said his family actually developed the property back in the 1970's, and most people bought into it because of the wildlife and the golf course.

"My aunt bought the property in 1971, they developed it and I was born in Mease Dunedin Hospital," Nobles said.

"I came home from the hospital to this neighborhood. Later on, I built a house right next to where I grew up. We just love the nice, quiet neighborhood. The wildlife. Having the golf course. This is what we bought into when we bought our properties. This is the way we want it to remain."

He said he recently learned their dream of living on the green is about to be disrupted by new development and the closing of the golf course.

"I was informed by a friend that there were developers planning on building 320 plus residential units on the golf course. That was a couple days before the hurricane (Debby) came through and with a prediction of 48 plus inches of rain that puts this neighborhood in a panic because we have existing flooding issues," he said.

Residents just launched a website, savetarponwoods.com. The signs for the website are now staked in the yards of several homes in the neighborhood.

"Their plan is to give us 12 days notice prior to them having their deadline to turn in all of their paperwork and fast roll this through SWIFTMUD (Southwest Florida Water Management District). That right there tells us that they have no interest in the community," said Nobles.

Representatives for the developers say residents are misinformed. They plan to turn the golf course into a wetlands area and they're not planning for a rumored huge development project.

"This deal, this contract, if you want to call it, there's a statute in state law that defines what a wetlands mitigation bank is. And by the owners signing on to this, it guarantees that there will not be residential development," said Kyle Parks, Tarpon Woods Golf Course representative.

Parks said the owners plan to turn the golf course into wetlands that will benefit the wildlife, and in turn, it will allow them to later cash in on a credits they earn from a program with SWIFTMUD.

"You're selling these wetlands mitigation credits to companies or state agencies that buy these credits and that's the revenue," he said.

It's a process Parks said may sound confusing, but he believes it will benefit wildlife and could also help with the flooding the area is known for. As for building new homes on the property, Parks says the information residents have is just not accurate.

"There are two small spots in the entire acreage that equal about six acres. That one is where we sit now in the clubhouse, and there's another spot on another part of the course being reserved for a future decision on what to do, but that's six acres out of the entire acreage," he said.

Parks plans to meet with residents to lay out this plan and clear up any confusion. But people like Nobles are going into this meeting with some serious doubts about the path forward for their beloved community.

Bay News 9 Article on Resident Response Pre-Public Meeting held on August 25th, 2024

<https://baynews9.com/fl/tampa/news/2024/08/27/tarpon-woods-gulf-course->

3)

SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED

THIS SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED is made this 3rd day of February, 2022, by JAN STEPHENSON'S CROSSROADS FOUNDATION, INC., a Florida not-for-profit corporation ("Grantor"), whose address is 1100 Tarpon Woods Blvd., Palm Harbor, FL 34685, for and in consideration of the sum of One Million Six Hundred Fifty and No/100 Dollars (\$1,650,000.00), and other good and valuable consideration in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, hereby grants, bargains, sells, aliens, remises, releases and conveys unto TARPON WOODS PROPERTIES, LLC, a Florida limited liability company, whose address is 209 Turner Street, Clearwater, Florida 33756 ("Grantee"), the following described real property in the County of Pinellas, State of Florida, to-wit:

See Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part hereof "Property"

Together with all the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining, to have and to hold the same in fee simple forever, and including without limitation, all of Grantor's rights, ways, privileges and easements appurtenant to the Property, including Grantor's right, title and interest in and to all strips, gores, streets, alleys and ways, public or private, adjoining or crossing the Property, all of which are appurtenant to, and shall benefit, the Property.

AND Grantor hereby covenants with Grantee and Grantee's heirs, successors and assigns that it is lawfully seized of the Property in fee simple; that it has good right and lawful authority

Warranty Deed transferring ownership of Tarpon Woods Golf Course for \$1,650,000 showing the date of sale as February 3rd, 2022

4)



Mike Twitty, MAI, CFA
Pinellas County Property Appraiser

Select Language ▾

Home Search ▾ Exemptions ▾ Tools | Forms | Data ▾ How Do I... ▾ Learn About ▾ Contact Us ▾

Showing 1 to 5 of 28 entries - Yellow indicates corrected value

2023 Tax Information ▾

Tax Bill

[View 2023 Tax Bill](#)

Do not rely on current taxes as an estimate following a change in ownership. A significant change in taxable value may occur after a transfer due to a loss of exemptions, reset of the Save Our Homes or 10% Cap, and/or market conditions. Please use our **Tax Estimator** to estimate taxes under new ownership.

Quick Pick Tool

Print Email Custom Report Contact Us

Tax Estimator Comparable Sales

Large Map Property Record Card

Apply for Exemptions ? Check Exemption Status

TRIM Notice Link to Tax Bills ?

Change Mailing Address Request Property Review

FEMA/WLM Letter Radius Search/Mailing Labels

Sales History ▾

Show 5 ▾ entries

Sale Date	Price	Qualified / Unqualified	Vacant / Improved	Grantor	Grantee	Book / Page
21-Feb-2017	\$100	U	I	TARPON WOODS GOLF CLUB LLC	JAN STEPHENSON'S CROSSROADS FOUNDATION INC	19542/1389
10-May-2012	\$2,162,000	U	I	BROOKER CREEK GOLF CLUB INC	TARPON WOODS GOLF CLUB LLC	17594/0715
13-Jan-2003	\$2,300,000	U	I	GULF TR OF AMER LP	H & M INVESTMENTS CLEARWATER	12469/2582
03-Oct-1997	\$5,700,000	U	I	MEGHAN ASSO LLC	GOLF TRUST AMERICA	09860/0443
20-Feb-1997	\$3,555,400	U	I	RYKA TARPON GOLF CORP	MEGHAN ASSOCIATES	09615/1366

Showing 1 to 5 of 7 entries Previous **1** 2 Next

2024 Land Information ▾

Land Area: ≈ 6,399,596 sf | ≈ 146.91 acres
Frontage and/or View: None
Seawall: No

Property Use	Land Dimensions	Unit Value	Units	Method	Total Adjustments	Adjusted Value
Golf Courses	0x0	\$3,500	130.9300	AC	1.0000	\$458,255

Tarpon Woods Golf Course Sales History via Pinellas County Property Appraiser website on 08/24/2024

5)

Mike Twitty, MAI, CFA
Pinellas County Property Appraiser

Website Search Select Language Powered by

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Quick Search

Exemptions Misc Parcel Info Value History Tax Info Sales History Land Info Building Info Extra Features Permit Data

Parcel Summary (as of 30-Aug-2024)

Parcel Number
34-27-16-00000-140-0000

Owner Name
TARPON WOODS PROPERTIES LLC

Property Use
3855 Regulation, PAR 3 Golf Course

Site Address
1100 TARPON WOODS BLVD
PALM HARBOR, FL 34685 (Unincorporated)

Mailing Address
209 TURNER ST
CLEARWATER, FL 33756

Legal Description
PT OF SEC 34 AKA TARPON WOODS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB DESC AS S 3/4 OF N 1/2 & S 1/2 OF SEC LYING E OF TANGLEWOOD TRAIL & N OF TARPON WOODS BL ...

More

Current Tax District
EAST LAKE FIRE (ETF)

Year Built

Parcel Map

Selected My Location Sales Measure Large Map Map Style Help

Tarpon Woods Golf Course Ownership as listed through Pinellas County Property Appraiser website on 08/30/2024

6)

Charles W. Thomas
pinellas county tax collector

Español

Vehicle Registration Renewal Property Tax Tourist Tax Reports

Search > Account Summary

Real Estate Account #R370232

Owner: JAN STEPHENSONS CROSSROADS FNDTN INC

Situs: 1100 TARPON WOODS BLVD
PALM HARBOR

Parcel details
Property Appraiser
Homestead penalty

Get bills by email

Amount Due

PINELLAS COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR

Notice of Ad Valorem Taxes and Non-ad Valorem Assessments

BILL	AMOUNT DUE	
2023 Homestead Penalty Bill	\$70,034.79	Add To Cart
2023 Annual Bill	\$4,028.22	Print (PDF)
Total Amount Due: \$74,063.01		Add All To Cart

<https://county-taxes.net/pinellas>

Jan Stephenson's Crossroads tax bill and fine for neglecting to report the sale of Tarpon Woods Golf Course as listed on the Pinellas County Tax Collector website updated 08/30/2024

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“There is conservation lands to the north and to the south so it (proposed wetland mitigation bank site, Tarpon Woods Golf Course) provides a corridor between existing conservations lands.” – Ryan Deibler, Green Source Environmental Professionals Inc.

Pinellas County Development Review Committee Meeting on Brooker Creek Mitigation Bank Project held on 07/01/2024, time stamps 2:55 -3:01 text in parenthesis added for context, not part of quote <https://player.vimeo.com/video/997208128?h=aa38acd0c4>

10)



A Bald Eagle at the edge of a pond on Tarpon Woods Golf Course and a Gopher Tortoise on Annwood Rd submitted by Tarpon Woods Residents

Species on FWC has listed as Endangered, Threatened, and / or Imperiled that currently reside on Tarpon Woods Golf Course and adjacent residential properties-

American Alligator

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

Gopher Tortoise

Florida Kingsnake

Little Blue Heron

Reddish Egret

White Ibis

Bald Eagle

Wood Stork

Osprey

Roseate Spoonbill

Limpkin

Cyprus Fox Squirrel

Monarch Butterflies

List of species on FWC's Endangered and Threatened as well as Imperiled lists (<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/>) that neighbors have submitted photos of to verify their current activity in the area of the Tarpon Woods Golf Course and abutting residential properties. Additional but not all inclusive photos can be found at <https://savetarponwoods.com/gallery>

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14)

“And then 6 A, uh, ‘Provide floodplain improvements to remove existing residences...’ is that, a request? ... or what? How? I mean, not that we’re-” – unknown male voice

“He, he wrote it like a request. Uh, If you can improve the floodplain for your neighbor please do so. Uh, he said, yeah” – unknown male voice (County)

Crosstalk, laughing

“No. No. No... No. Shrink the flood plain so it doesn’t extend onto your neighbor’s property because everybody up there is in some kind of flood plain.” – unknown male voice (county)

“Oh, change the flood plain!” – unknown female voice

“Change the flood plain maps because...” – unknown male voice

Cross talk. More laughing.

“I’m sure these folks out there would really appreciate that. (laughter)” – unknown female voice

“Well...and... Now to be fair, in this area we have a couple of residences, well, probably more than a couple, who come in every other year saying, ‘Is my flood plain map has changed? So I’m not in the flood plain anymore’ That way they don’t submit their letter of map amendment to FEMA every time the new FEMA maps come out or every time they make a small change, uh, and we have to tell them, ‘No, we can’t do that because your development was never intended to be out of the flood plain.’ Um, so if you could make the flood plain lower please do so, uh, it will help everybody, everybody’s insurance rates out there. (Pause) but no, he wrote, he wrote, I didn’t write this, Randy did, but he said, ‘to the extent possible, provide improvements’, and that’s, that’s actually a requirement of the code too, is you know to do as much as you can to improve existing residences

16)

“The next one deals with the transfer of residential units. And we understand currently there were a couple of places on the, in the, on the golf course which currently have residential designations and have a hold over from the original Master Plan and have density available and that’s that little... island thing. So our client would like the opportuni- that little island thing we mentioned, the residential developed units are located today... um, is going to be part of the Mitigation Bank, and therefore they would like the opportunity to move in the future. And what we’d like to work on is a path, and we can get together maybe outside of this... ah what that path is, so I know it would be an amendment to the development plan and such but what our suggestion is now is we would carve out those residential areas where there’s a potential for future residential development, and that would be excluded from the site plan application and process but... I want, before we zip in and go all the way through the process we just want to be sure we have a clear path for in the future if our client desires to build some of the homes on the upland areas which are available. It may require a map amendment, and we appreciate that. You, we just want to be ‘shh-shh’ clear on that process. We don’t have to take the time this morning to do that but I think that’s like.. an important question.” – Katie Cole, Atty for Brooker Creek Wetland Mitigation Project

Cross talk

“We can discuss afterwards but its yeah, you would be looking at a rapid minimum master plan..”

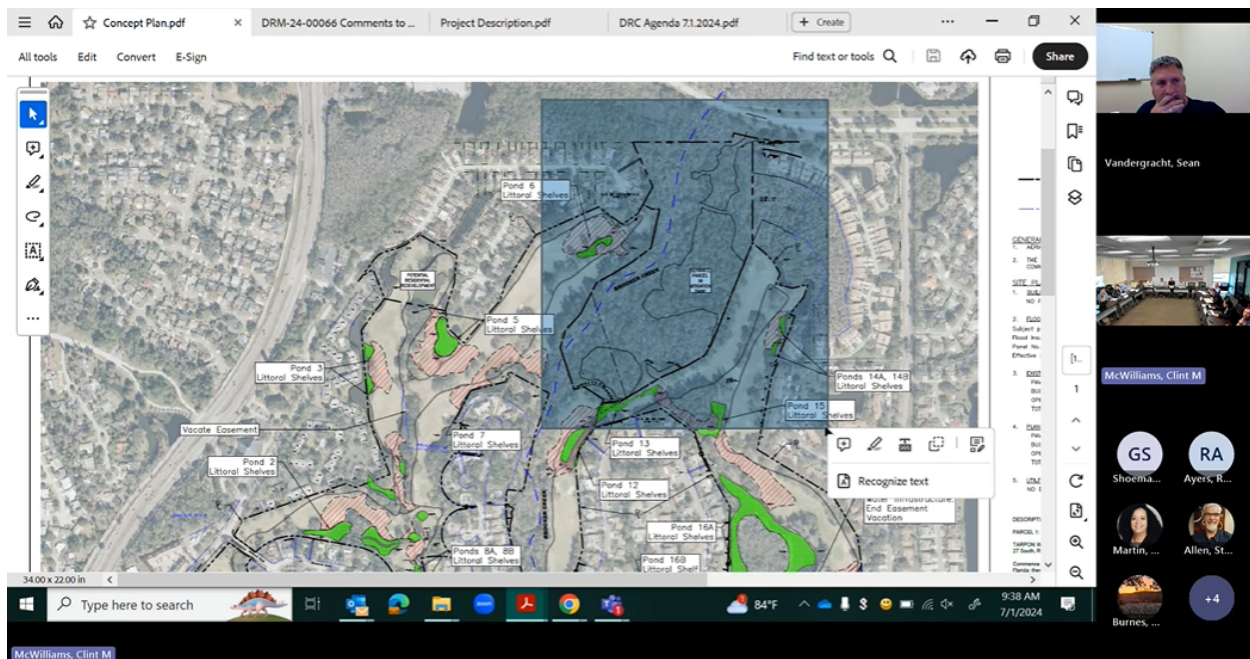
“Right” – Katie Cole

“... amendment. Future land use map amendment. Everything’s RBD so its all covered by the master plan out there. Um... but yeah, those are the... things...”

“Okay, but for example we wouldn’t want to change everything with an administrative adjustment to preservation and remove those residential designations. We, we would most likely want to do the residential map amendment and the preservation adjustment all at once? And so we can show... you know... where all that is happening. So I, from a timing standpoint (garbled) to

your question why would we wait? I think from our client's perspective it would be important to them to know that they are preserving the potential in that residential development. There's no way from a land area standpoint the amount of development that permitted out there could ever actually happen I don't think, there's not gonna be enough upland residential area left to do it? But there's at least some, so we would just want to walk you through that process and do it all at once." – Katie Cole

Pinellas County Development Review Committee Meeting on Brooker Creek Mitigation Bank Project held on 07/01/2024, time stamps 25:52 -28:38 <https://player.vimeo.com/video/997208128?h=aa38acd0c4>



"The undeveloped tree farm looking thing" – Katie Cole while the shared screen highlights the area that has "residential density per the master plan"

Pinellas County Development Review Committee Meeting on Brooker Creek Mitigation Bank Project held on 07/01/2024, 28:56 - <https://player.vimeo.com/video/997208128?h=aa38acd0c4>