Thank you for writing to share your concerns. Please accept this email as acknowledgment that your message was received by the Board of County Commissioners and will be shared with staff of Building & Development Services and the County Attorney’s Office and included as public comment for this hearing.

As a quasi-judicial matter, commissioners must refrain from prejudging this project by discussing it outside of the public hearing setting. As well as your written correspondence you are welcome to attend the hearing, currently scheduled for **January 10, 2019**, to offer your comments and opinions.

On behalf of Chairman Jonsson and the other Commissioners, thank you for your interest and participation.

*Marianne Lopata*
Executive Administrative Assistant
Board of County Commissioners
Phone:  (941) 745-3707; Fax:  (941) 745-3790
E-mail:  marianne.lopata@mymanatee.org

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**From:** danielsilpa@verizon.net <danielsilpa@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 31, 2018 7:20 PM  
**To:** Priscilla WhisenantTrace <priscilla.whisenanttrace@mymanatee.org>; Stephen R Jonsson <steve.jonsson@mymanatee.org>; vanesa.baugh@mymanatee.org; Betsy Benac <betsy.benac@mymanatee.org>; Reggie Bellamy <reggie.bellamy@mymanatee.org>; Misty Servia <misty.servia@mymanatee.org>; Carol Whitmore <carol.whitmore@mymanatee.org>  
**Subject:** Florida International Tradeport

Dear Commissioners:

The Board will be meeting on January 10, 2019 to debate a zoning change approved by the Planning Commission on December 13, 2018 that will permit a change from R-3 to MU for the Benderson Development in Ellenton. We testified before the Board during the December 18 meeting indicating our objection to this development. We also proposed suggestions for The County to consider to mitigate this development's impact on our small but established residential and agricultural neighborhood.

Below is a letter that we have submitted to the County Building and Development Services outlining our suggestions. We ask that this letter be incorporated into the record for your consideration during this essentially final acceptance of the Benderson proposal that will come to the Board on January 10.
Thank you very much for your service to our County.

Felicia and Daniel Silpa
4124 29TH Street E
Palmetto, FL  34221-6704

December 31, 2018

Margaret C. Tusing
Public Hearing Section Manager
Building & Development Services Dept.
Manatee County Government

Dear Ms. Tusing:

Thank you for your study of the Benderson proposal for the Ellenton area (FL International Tradeport) and for your comments at the County Commissioners Meeting this past Dec. 18.

During the open Citizen response, we mentioned some proposals to mitigate the destruction of the residential character of our 29TH Street East, Palmetto neighborhood that the Benderson proposal will likely cause. We reiterate them below.

1. The Board of Commissioners should draft an ordinance to drop the speed limit from 30 to 25 MPH on the section of 29TH ST. E. from Ellenton-Gillette Road to the new access road through the Benderson property. This lower limit will help slow down (and perhaps become a disincentive for) the marked increase in traffic that we foresee due to the 800-plus jobs that the Benderson proposal is promising. 29TH ST will become a major short cut.

2. The Board of Commissioners should draft an ordinance and place appropriate signage to make it illegal for trucks to turn onto 29TH ST E from the proposed road through the Benderson property. Benderson states that the geography of this intersection will make it difficult for trucks to make this turn anyway. Hence, Benderson should not likely oppose this ordinance.

3. The Board of Commissioners should draft an ordinance and place appropriate signage to limit the weight of trucks entering 29TH ST E from Ellenton-Gillette Road. Both of these proposals will help cut truck traffic on this current residential and agricultural dead-end street. Less truck traffic will help in some small way to maintain some semblance of a residential character of our neighborhood, increase safety for pedestrians using 29TH ST E, and cut down on County (i.e. taxpayer) funded repairs that the heavy trucks will inflict on this current low volume country road.

4. Create a safe place for school children to wait for the school bus at the intersection of 29TH ST E and Ellenton-Gillette Road. Currently, the kids frequently are waiting during predawn hours. Visibility of these children is quite limited while these kids are frequently playing in the street while waiting for the bus. We are concerned that with the increase in traffic, there is an increase in risk to harm or death of these school children. A safe location will be a challenge since currently there is a barbed wire fence quite near the roadway. On the other side of the fence is an area that routinely floods even during a minor rain.

5. We ask that noise ordinances be enforced in the mixed use areas of the Benderson proposal. This enforcement will help preserve to some small extent the residential character of our neighborhood. This will help allow the residents of our neighborhood to sleep even when the warehouses will be operational, some of whose activities will be rather loud.

We invite your staff and you to also come up with proposals that will help to preserve the residential and agricultural character of our neighborhood rather than see that this established neighborhood be dwarfed by the industrial expansion of the Florida Tradeport.

We also wish to lightly criticize the Planning Department’s study of the Benderson proposal. The County study states that there are no endangered indigo snakes on the Benderson property. Yet we have seen them on our property which is essentially across the street. The County study states that there is no Bald Eagle activity on the Benderson property. However we have these magnificent birds perching on our neighbor's roof and hunting on our property, again essentially across the street from the Benderson property.

We are concerned about adversity to the hydrology of the area. Our land can get pretty soaked during the Summer rainy
season. We are worried that construction on 29TH ST E to dig in water lines and sewer lines to the Benderson property will potentiate flooding of our neighborhood. Water from the E-Lakes section flows naturally through this 29TH Street area into a seasonal wetland that was initially documented by a land survey by Reid in 1843.

We are even more concerned that future development of the land west of the Benderson property will pose a worse challenge to our land drainage during a severe storm or series of storms. We are concerned that this future development will also threaten to flood and further damage the Gamble Mill, part of the Gamble Plantation State Historical Park.

As the Archaeologist for the Gamble Plantation Preservation Alliance, Felicia feels very strongly that once the Benderson and surrounding land are disrupted for construction, then a substantial opportunity for understanding the History of the Gamble Plantation will be lost. Only three documents left by Robert Gamble yield but limited insight into the lives of the enslaved people. It is imperative that during planning in the Ellenton region the Commissioners and Planning Staff recall that Gamble's property was 3,450 non-contiguous acres. The Ellenton region may demonstrate artifacts from the Plantation era up to the present. Artifacts may give us important clues into the lives of the residents of the Gamble Plantation and surrounding area. For example, an area on Franklin Avenue was deemed not requiring Archaeological investigation, yet when Felicia walked on the street by the construction site, she observed ceramic artifacts dating back to the early and mid 19th Century in the disrupted dirt.

The County Planning study refers to an Archeology study from 1990 that declares that the Benderson land has no potential historical value. Archaeological techniques, such as ground-penetrating radar, have improved substantially since 1990. Benderson verbally states that they have done an Archeological survey, but this document has not yet been presented to the County Board of Commissioners. A thorough Cultural Resource Management study would be useful before the Benderson land is dug up for the warehouses and their supporting infrastructure. This will help preserve our understanding of the History of this part of Manatee County. Once the land is disrupted, this study will become near impossible. Contractors and Heavy Equipment Operators, while required under Federal law to stop for skeletal remains, may not recognize artifacts and building ruins such as Gamble Plantation cisterns and slave quarters.

We readily admit that we remain opposed to the proposal of light industrial structures and activity in this land that the County is changing from Residential-3 zoning to Mixed Use zoning. We had assumed prior to our own construction that the County would authorize only Residential development in this land. We see the new development will create a dramatic challenge to our lifestyle and to the traffic and pedestrian safety of our little street. We believe that the light industrial development will cause a marked reduction in our neighbors and our property value but without any compensation.

We are realistic in that we perceive that the Florida Tradeport will be built essentially as currently proposed. We simply ask that the County and Benderson try to help preserve our residential and agricultural lifestyle, vehicular and pedestrian safety, minimize potential flooding, and to help promote the heritage of this section of Manatee County.

Daniel and Felicia Silpa
4124 29TH ST E
Palmetto, FL 34221-6704
For public comment on site plan approval

Margaret C. Tusing – Public Hearing Section Manager
Building and Development Services Department
1112 Manatee Avenue West, 4th Floor
Bradenton, Florida 34205
941-748-4501 x6828
Margaret.tusing@mymanatee.org

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Carol Whitmore <carol.whitmore@mymanatee.org>
Date: December 17, 2018 at 1:34:56 PM EST
To: "danielsilpa@verizon.net" <danielsilpa@verizon.net>, "Priscilla WhisenantTrace" <priscilla.whisenanttrace@mymanatee.org>, "toddmathes@benderson.com" <toddmathes@benderson.com>, "kevin.kiser@dep.state.fl.us" <kevin.kiser@dep.state.fl.us>
Cc: Sarah Brown <sarah.brown@mymanatee.org>
Subject: RE: Florida International Tradeport

EXTERNAL: Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Felicia,

We cannot respond to this per our ordinances. Thanks for the email. Have a good holiday and give Dr. Silpa my and Andre’s best also.

Carol
We are writing Commissioner Trace as our district representative and Commissioner Whitmore as our at large representative and as a friend whom we have known for over two decades.

On Tuesday, Dec. 18, the County Commission will be asked to give Benderson Development permission to develop a large plot of land in the Palmetto/Ellenton area as a light industrial, mixed-use project. Once the Commission grants approval to the Florida International Tradeport, it is logical to assume that surrounding tracts of undeveloped land will be sought for similar but nonresidential uses. The proposed project and the likely ones that will follow will set up the isolation of our neighborhood of single family houses and small agricultural businesses along the north side of 29th ST E. Our established neighborhood will lose its residential character permanently.

Property values of our neighborhood will diminish and possibly plummet since few prospective buyers would wish to purchase a house or small ranch located in the midst of a light industrial/mixed use area.

We have invested about $1 million in our property with the intent this this ranch will ultimately be our retirement home. The diminution of our property value without any compensation simply by becoming adjacent to the new mixed use, light industrial project will disrupt our physical and financial future. We suspect our neighbors may have the same concerns.

However we anticipate that the Commission will be won over by the promise of 600 new jobs in this one commercial project alone plus the increase in property tax base from the new development. We understand that this project is fabulous growth for the County; it just is terrible for our neighbors and us.

Since we anticipate County approval, let us try to do something about our concern of traffic and pedestrian safety and try to maintain some semblance of a residential character of the current neighborhood. After the new road opens connecting 29th St E through the Benderson development directly to US 301, we anticipate that traffic on 29th will dramatically increase. 29th is currently a dead end with minimal traffic. There are school children and other pedestrians walking to and from the school bus stop at Ellenton-Gillette road. We need to keep these stakeholders safe.

1. Pass an ordinance to lower the speed limit to 25 MPH from Ellenton-Gillette to the new proposed road. Encourage the Sheriff Dept. to enforce this limit. The current limit of 30 MPH could be maintained east of the intersection of this new roadway to the end of 29TH St E.
2. Place an ordinance and signage that prohibits trucks that are using the new road through the development from turning onto 29th St E.
3. Place a sign at the entrance of 29TH Street from Ellenton-Gillette Road that restricts the weight of trucks using 29TH Street. This will help retard truck traffic on this small road and will also help cut down on County funded repairs due to damage that heavy trucks will inflict on 29TH Street.
4. Create a safe place for school children to wait for the school bus at Ellenton-Gillette Road and 29th ST. Currently, the kids tend to wait in the street. This presents a very dangerous potential for harm to these kids especially in the early morning hours before dawn.

Noise ordinances would need to be enforced in these industrial areas. Again, we are a residential area. We residents do need to try to sleep while the businesses pursue their activities some of which might be rather loud. The Developer has promised to situate the warehouses such that the trucks that service the buildings will be on the interior of the project; thus, the buildings themselves will help filter out the noise. The Developer has promised to maintain a generous landscaped area south of 29TH ST also in part to help cut down noise from the project. These are aspects to be commended and fostered by the County.

We are concerned about the natural flow of water from the adjacent E-lakes region. Road and sewer construction to support the Benderson project and the increase of traffic may affect the flood waters flow south of 29TH Street toward the Manatee River. The historic, State-owned Gamble Mill and its visitor acreage may be adversely affected. We hope that the Developer and the County will work with the State Parks to mitigate any potential damage to the Mill.
Much of the area to be developed is part of the original mid-nineteenth century Gamble Plantation. Development has potential to destroy the Archeological record of these areas. The County should insist the Developer perform an Archeological review of the new expansion before the land is permanently altered.

This review may reveal artifacts. These artifacts belong to the owners of the property, i.e. Benderson. Artifacts tell the historical story that is often left out of the recorded history. Benderson, as owners of these artifacts, may loan them for study to the State owned museum at the Gamble Plantation. Florida history is made alive when people see what was utilized during early Southern Florida expansion and development. This understanding allows the public to become intimate with our history. Our community will benefit from any insights obtained from the artifacts. Benderson, as a stakeholder in the community, would get the public acknowledgement for encouraging Florida resource management.

We do protest the introduction of a light industrial, mixed-use project into a residential and agrarian neighborhood. We feel rather powerless to do much to stop it. At least we hope to encourage the County to effect restrictions that will help preserve some of the residential character of our area, mitigate potential safety concerns due to increased traffic, and help preserve record of Florida heritage.

Thank you.

Felicia and Daniel Silpa
4124 29TH ST E
Palmetto, FL 34221-6704