

Kelly Churney

From: Antonette Fabrizi on behalf of Town Council
Sent: Monday, September 09, 2019 9:25 AM
To: Danielle Hickox Moore; Margaret Zeidman; Bobbie Lindsay; Julie Araskog; Lew Crampton
Cc: Kelly Churney; Public Comment
Subject: FW: Sea Streets Historic District
Attachments: PICT0091 copy.JPG; PICT0099 copy.JPG; PICT0095 copy.JPG

From: Carol LeCates <clecates@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, September 06, 2019 3:09 PM
To: Gail Coniglio <GConiglio@TownofPalmBeach.com>; Town Council <TCouncil@TownofPalmBeach.com>
Cc: Kirk Blouin <KBlouin@TownofPalmBeach.com>; Joshua Martin <jmartin@TownOfPalmBeach.com>; Wayne Bergman <wbergman@TownOfPalmBeach.com>
Subject: Sea Streets Historic District

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing in opposition to the pursuit of historic district designation of the Sea Streets. We find it most unfortunate, and deeply aggravating, that the Sea streets are the repeated target of the good intentions of so many people who do not live on them. Barely a few years can go by without one controversy or another intruding itself without welcome into the lives of those who own residences in this neighborhood. In the 16 years that we have been Seabreeze owners we have had to deal with parking prohibitions on the ocean blocks, zoning ordinance experiments, proposed changes to setbacks (twice), an over-sized nightclub on our doorstep resulting in permit only parking, and two attempts to designate a historic district. The stress and anxiety of dealing with these issues as residents seems to be seriously underestimated by those who propose them. Frankly, it is exhausting.

The historic district topic was pursued in depth in 2003, when it was strongly opposed by the neighborhood and deemed impractical by the Council. We cannot fathom why it is coming to the fore once again, especially when demolitions are occurring elsewhere in town in much greater numbers than they are in midtown. While we are in favor of the individual landmarking of worthy properties, we believe it would be a mistake to designate this entire neighborhood, for the following reasons:

- Previous attempts at corrective zoning measures have been misguided or aborted, particularly with regard to standards for non-conforming demolition. (Please see previous e-mail on that topic.) While many think the new homes are too large, little attempt has been made to reduce the maximum cubic

content in the zone either. Modification of these two aspects alone would do as much, or more, than the proposed designation.

- Some of the homes are not worthy of preservation due to poor condition or lack of meaningful architectural value.
- Many of the homes are in a FEMA flood district.
- Close to half of the homes on the middle block of Seabreeze have been built in the past 20 years and there are several remaining old homes that could be replaced. We hesitated to buy on this block in 2003 due to its somewhat blighted appearance, which we were concerned might not change. Most on the block think there has been a spectacular turn-around in the past 15 years.
- The majority of homes in the neighborhood have been renovated or replaced tastefully at this point in time (with very few that disappoint). The area arguably has never looked better, without historic designation and despite the counterproductive threshold for non-conforming demolition.

We believe there is ample potential for modification within the zoning ordinance to discourage demolitions and over-building in all parts of town, including the Sea streets, and do not think it would be productive to have further studies done on historic districting. At just over a hundred years old, Palm Beach does not have the weighty historic role of a Savannah or Charleston and hence most landmarks are named primarily on the basis of aesthetics/architecture. (It is not clear to us at all why the Sea streets should be singled out for landmarking/districting when in fact the Estate section has far more magnificent examples of worthy architecture.) In this case, imposing the restrictions and burdens of a historic district on homeowners who do not want it seems most unwarranted. Furthermore, we believe the owners of this part of town deserve not to be repeatedly beset with proposals to restrict their property values/rights to a greater degree than those who live in other parts of the town.

Sincerely,

Carol and Frank LeCates

212 Seabreeze Ave.

N.B. Attached are photos of the previous homes at 212 Seabreeze and 200 S. County Rd.





