

*John David Corey
426 Australian Avenue
Palm Beach, FL 33480*

March 8th, 2023

Dear Palm Beach Mayor and Town Council Members:

I am looking forward to a refreshed Chesterfield (Vineta) Hotel that can serve as a boutique, quiet, and sophisticated establishment here in Palm Beach. However, the matter at hand are variances and special exceptions which would increase non-conforming uses and affect the quality of life within the residential neighborhood. I would like to take a moment and present a path forward for the applicant, town staff and town residents:

Variance #1: Increases the public restaurant from 113 to 189 seats (60% increase) – **Deny or (better yet) withdrawn by the applicant.** By expanding the non-confirming use, this variance violates our Comprehensive Plan, would adversely affect the residential character of the area, is contrary to the public interest, and would cause undue demand on town parking resources. There is no justification for this variance and town staff has confirmed that the hotel is licensed for 113 seats (be them inside or out). Any increase would trigger a variance in a time when we are amid a town wide zoning review, resident zoning charrettes, a town-wide traffic study, and Mayor Moore's Strategic Committee undertaking. Please hold the line at 113 and support the residents.

Variance #4 and #5: 9' high air conditioning units and 7' high restaurant scrubber.

Defer – These elements could be incorporated into the hotel existing rooftop addition and avoid impacting the views of adjacent condo buildings. At the Landmarks Commission approval hearing, the motion clearly states that staff is charged with assessing the visibility of any new roof top additions and this process must be allowed to proceed with temporary wood mockups (2' by 4' frames) painted orange to clearly understand the visual impact. The visibility sketches provided by the applicant are not sufficient and only show very up-close locations at grade next to the hotel. Also, the scrubber variance may be unnecessary with holding the restaurant seat count at 113.

Site Plan Review: - **DEFER** – While continued use as a hotel, restaurant, nightclub, and swimming pool seems to be grandfathered in, a full review of the site plan and operations are needed. Site plan must show all trash and back of house storage **INSIDE** the building envelope and not outside. Current plan shows a trash area visible along Australian Avenue and the recycling area adjacent to the townhouses to the south. Landscaping screening must improve, especially to the south. This location is unique in town as the hotel is surrounded on all four sides by private residences.

Special Exception 1: Restaurant - **DEFER** with same number of seats (113) to study a tight operating agreement with all pool and rear areas accessible to hotel guests only as was the historical practice at this location and is consistent with the nearby Brazilian Court.

Special Exception 2: Outdoor Cafe seating - **DEFER** to study a tight Operating Agreement with outdoor café seating regulated to the front courtyard as was the existing condition. Outdoor pool dining area should be prohibited to reduce noise spillover into adjacent residences.

The elephant in the room is the parking. With only 4 on-site parking spaces, the applicant must find a way to solve their parking demands. The current valet system does not work and is very disruptive to the residential neighborhood. The applicants own traffic study is flawed and cannot be relied on as it advocates for unsafe U-turns, lacks the actual valet parking space locations/distances, and incorrectly categorizes all seats as "Fine Dining" when the current proposal includes a mix of casual dining, nightclub, and bar patrons. Private off-street parking spaces for all the hotel demands must be found for the applicant to move forward and not continue to scatter vehicles throughout the residential neighborhood. Please remember, that the newly expanded Marina has also created additional parking demands and most 2 hour spaces in the area are occupied by crew and maintenance vehicles. The applicant has not provided a parking plan that accounts for all staff, guests, and restaurant parking demands for 41 hotel rooms, 113 seats and employees.

Thank you very much for protecting your fellow residents against undue and substantial quality of life impacts.

Sincerely,



John David Corey