

From: [Deborah Jones](#) on behalf of [Town Council](#)
Subject: FW: Vineta Hotel Project
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:27:36 PM

Hello,

Please see the email below from Cristina Kepner.

Bcc: M&TC, All Town Managers, Wayne, Antonette, James, Kelly, Pat, Public Comment

Sincerely,
Deb

From: Cristina Kepner <cristinakepner@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Town Council <TCouncil@TownofPalmBeach.com>
Subject: Vineta Hotel Project

*****Note: This email was sent from a source external to the Town of Palm Beach. Links or attachments should not be accessed unless expected from a trusted source. Additionally, all requests for information or changes to Town records should be verified for authenticity.*****

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing in strong support of the proposed Vineta Hotel project. Like many local residents, I was initially concerned as I tried to filter through the perceived issues versus the factual reality of the project. The facts:

- They have committed to removing guest and staff parking from our streets – potentially 60+ cars at a time. I live at 369 S. Lake Drive. Our parking lot runs between Australian and Chilean. The staff and valets of the Chesterfield routinely cut through our parking lot – both a danger and a nuisance to our residents. Leopard Lounge patrons parked all along our streets. The removal of street parking alone justifies a resounding endorsement of the project, including realistic seating capacity.
- The Chesterfield is simply an eyesore. The elegant preservation of this iconic Palm Beach building will enhance the neighborhood and town and, I am convinced, positively affect neighboring property values.
- The 113 seating number is fiction and pertained to only the dining and Leopard Lounge. The Chesterfield's seating capacity was effectively and historically well in excess of 200, the proposed 177 a significant reduction. Further reducing capacity is

the reduction in room count from 57 to 41. Compare these low numbers to the Brazilian Court. The new owners are making a significant investment in the property and should be permitted to have a reasonable rate of return on their investment – don't create obstacles to their success. Their success is the neighborhood's success.

- Reducing the seat count will limit accessibility to dining by hotel neighbors and Palm Beach residents, where securing dining reservations is already a challenge. Assuming two guests per room, the dining room could be substantially filled with hotel guests and their guests. A low seat count creates a hurdle to neighbors wishing to enjoy their new local restaurant.

I have spoken to many about the project and I can assure you that most support the Vineta, but like the usual silent majority, don't make the effort to make their views known. I urge you to approve the project with the requested seating – don't undermine a great addition to the neighborhood by impeding their ability to get a reasonable return on the millions that they are investing in our neighborhood. The Oetker group has demonstrated their commitment to insuring that the hotel will actually reduce the burden on the neighborhood by sensitivity to local street parking, state-of-the-art management of valets and the reduction in the historic seat capacity. I am confident, based on their reputation and their response to local concerns, that the neighbors will ultimately breathe a sigh of relief when they experience the differential over the Chesterfield experience. I urge the Town Council to give them the opportunity to demonstrate what good operators they are by not handcuffing them with reduced, uneconomic, seating and too many restrictions. The 113 seat count is unrealistically low for the property and the resultant reduction in profitability could translate into reduced investment in the property. How lucky are we to have attracted The Oetker Collection, whose reputation and expertise is world renown, to revitalize with care and sensitivity our derelict neighborhood hotel. Give them the opportunity to bring back the hotel to its historic Palm Beach standards and provide them with the 177 seats necessary to both support a viable, strong enterprise and provide enough capacity so that the neighbors can enjoy dining there as well.

My husband, David, is equally strong in his support.

Sincerely,

Cristina Hunter Kepner
369 South Lake Drive
Palm Beach, FL 33480