

Public Comments

**Rita A. Linder
1216 Petronia Street
Key West, FL 33040**

May 7, 2014

Dear HARC Commissioners,

This letter is submitted for the record at the May 7th meeting and is not intended to be read out loud.

My name is Rita Linder and I am a full time resident of the Meadows. With respect to the Peary Court development, I respectfully urge this commission to follow its clearly stated guidelines to “protect the character and appearance” of the historic district of Key West” by leaving the existing fence along Angela Street intact, with no penetrations for pedestrian, bicycle or vehicular traffic.

This would accomplish three goals:

1. The existing fence would serve as a historical reminder of the saga and evolution of the Peary Court property – from a park to a military housing complex to a private residential subdivision with non-public streets and amenities.
2. The massive trees whose roots have grown around and through the fence for decades would be preserved and act as a vegetative buffer between quiet, quaint and historic Angela Street and the “backside” of densely proposed structures and mother-in-law units.
3. The City of Key West would show its sensitivity to the needs and concerns of those who reside in the Meadows

and, particularly, to the Angela Street residents who will bear the brunt of the demolition, ten plus year build-out and as yet unknown character of proposed non-historic community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dear HARC Commissioners,

Regardless of the eventual design and layout of Peary Court, it will not be a genuine expression of the Historic District. A single owner/developer cannot in ten years create what thousands of individuals do in pursuing their own ends on their individual properties over hundreds of years. The HARC guidebook acknowledges this reality and requires separation, not integration.

The City of Key West Comprehensive Plan Policy 1A-1.2.15 states:
"Traffic Flow Considerations. All future traffic studies that involve the Historic District shall have as their prerequisite to prevent the increase or redirection of traffic flow onto "local residential streets" within historic residential neighborhoods." How can this be interpreted to mean anything other than a mandate to NOT open up existing Old Town streets into new Peary Court?

The only way to maintain the integrity of our historic neighborhood is to keep the fence on Angela Street intact, no integration of roads into this Private Community, controlled by a Home Owners Association with private roads inaccessible to the citizens of Key West for parking or any other use. "They can park on our streets, but we can't park on theirs?" The homeowners will own the structure, but the developer will retain the land. It will NOT be an historic arrangement of individually owned lots that inevitably take on their respective owner's personalities. Instead, it will be a homogenous, "Owner Association" creation into perpetuity.

Judging by patterns in Key West real estate in the past thirty years, it is likely that new houses will be sold to investors who have no desire to live here long term or become a part of the greater Key West community. Or worse: will use them part time, rent them ("illegally short term, because it is more lucrative and is so difficult to enforce"), and/or flip them when the time is right. This will never be a "real" neighborhood with local inhabitants, historic or not.

Extending the "grid" from the Meadows and White Street corridor may make sense from a Planning perspective, but only if the City is the developer, laying out the streets and lots, and selling them individually. Then the logic would be to extend the existing streets all the way through Peary Court, from Angela to Palm/Eaton, and from White to Palm or Eisenhower, not end them inside Peary Court as currently proposed. But the city is NOT the developer and has very little control over what will be built in this private community, and a true old town grid is not being proposed nor is realistic.

Peary Court has been a separate enclave from Old Town for 150 years. It should remain that way. We urge you to address the issues of mass, density, scale and vegetative borders of this project. Above all, please maintain the Angela Street fence with no access.

We will not go away. We will follow along at every step of the process and we will talk to the deciders at every opportunity to stress our conviction that the way to do this project right is to keep the old separate from the new.

Thank you for confronting this enormous task with open minds,

Tharon Dunn

May 6, 2014

Dear Mr. Miller and fellow HARC Board members,

This letter is submitted for the record at the May 7th meeting and is not intended to be read out loud.

My name is Charles Newman and I live at 1408 Petronia Street in the Meadows along with my wife, Jane Dawkins. I am involved in the Peary Court Development process and am greatly concerned about preserving the historic integrity of my Meadows community, as well as the standards and character of Old Town as a whole.

I believe that the Peary Court development, based on the current plans from the developer, makes a mockery of the concept of historical preservation. I further believe that in large part the integrity of the Meadows historical community can be best preserved by leaving the current fence intact, allowing neither pedestrian nor vehicular traffic into or out of the Meadows.

- The proposed plan violates the City Comp plan Policy 1A-1.2.15 regarding traffic flow.
- The scale of the proposed housing is inconsistent with Historic Old Town, let alone the Meadows.
- Parking proposed in the current plan will further degrade the historic character of the Meadows.

I ask that you provide guidance to the developers in respect to retaining the unbroken fencing that now stands and require that they more clearly delineate the process by which future homeowners in the Peary Court development can choose their house as well as the options from which they may choose. This certainly is not clear at this point and will most definitely effect the overall compliance with Historic Old Town guidelines.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Newman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ralph Enderby** <rte1@bellsouth.net>

Date: Tue, May 6, 2014 at 10:30 PM

Subject: HARC MEETING OF 5/7/2014

To: etorregr@keywestcity.com

Cc: tharon dunn <tsdunn@comcast.net>

Dear HARC Commissioners,

Add my **NO** vote to the presently conceived Peary Court project. I own the house at the corner of Florida and Angela Streets and believe the Peary Court project will not benefit the City of Key West and only serves the purpose of the developers to make them money. It will ruin the charm of our neighborhood, the Meadows, with their faux Key West, cookie cutter houses. It will add parking and traffic problems to our streets and keep us from parking on their private roads.

Please keep the fence up along Angela Street and allow no access to our streets from Peary Court.

Sincerely,

Ralph Enderby

702 Florida Street

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <SHMOFEL@aol.com>

Date: Tue, May 6, 2014 at 8:33 PM

Subject: May 7th HARC/Peary Court

To: etorregr@keywestcity.com

Enid,

This letter is simply to state my opinion for the record and is not to be read aloud before the HARC meeting on May 7th.

To the HARC Commissioners,

Please think carefully before approving any changes that will drastically alter the fabric of the Meadows forever.

There have never been streets that accessed Peary Court from Angela St. Florida St and Pearl St are simply too narrow to provide safe access to Peary Court. Intentionally directing traffic into historic neighborhoods is forbidden by the Comprehensive Plan.

Widening streets and adding parking is against the guidelines of the US Sec of the Interior's rehabilitation guide that HARC follows.

There is no way you can know what the layout of the homes will be on Angela St. All you can know is that they are the large lots that can accommodate the largest style houses - 10 of which can have guest cottages behind them. All the houses will dwarf their historical neighbors.

Angela St is one of the few streets left in Key West that still has the charm of the past. It is one of the few quiet streets. It is a street with little traffic because it goes nowhere.

By keeping the fence along Angela intact you will be saving unique piece of Key West history.

Thank you,
donna feldman
1420 Angela St

Dear HARC Commissioners,

This letter is submitted for the record at the May 7th meeting and is not intended to be read out loud.

My name is Linda Shield and I live on Angela Street in the Meadows. I have been intimately involved in the Peary Court development process and intend to stand strong as long as it takes to “protect the character and appearance of our historic district of Key West” as is boldly stated in paragraph 1 of the HARC Guidelines.

Based on previous meetings, here is what we know now:

- On March 10th the developers were given the directive by HARC to allow for vehicular and pedestrian access between the Meadows and Peary Court.
- With this directive, city streets, for the very first time in history, would flow in and out of Peary Court through the Meadows, thus destroying the historic fabric of Angela Street, Pearl Street, and Florida Street, and further spilling over onto Georgia, Newton, Petronia, Pine, Olivia and Albury Streets. If this is allowed, the authenticity of the historic Meadows would be forever lost.
- The directive completely defies “Policy 1A-1.2.15: Traffic Flow Considerations outlined in the Comp Plan for the City of Key West which clearly states: ***“All future traffic studies that involve the Historic District shall have as their prerequisite to prevent the increase or redirection of traffic flow onto ‘local residential streets’ within historic residential neighborhoods.”***”
- It has also prompted the developers to propose 47 new parking spaces on historic White Street and historic Angela Street to accommodate the non-historic Peary Court, which according to the developers renderings, completely eliminates parking in front of the existing homes of the current Angela Street residents. This is parking on public city streets for residents of the private Peary Court.
- There are now seven (7) connectors on Angela Street, 5 pedestrian and 2 vehicular. There is no question that access to the 24.18 acre Peary Court enclave will be taken through the Meadows, mostly along the 4-block perimeter on the lane-like Angela street.

Based on the plans submitted with the current Application, here is what we don’t know, specifically, as it relates to Angela Street where the majority of the changes are being proposed:

- It cannot be determined what model an owner may choose or where the large vs. medium structures will actually be built.
- It cannot be determined whether an owner will choose a “guest cottage” with their home or opt for a pool or fence in their back yard.
- It has not been documented or determined what the conceptual landscape plan will be along Angela Street and which of the historic trees will remain and what will be destroyed.
- What it does indicate is that 14 of the 18 homes proposed along the 4-block, lane-like Angela Street will be the largest homes available within Peary Court, ten of which may include two

separate structures on the lots, while medium sized homes and cottages are proposed for the longer and much wider thoroughfare on White Street.

These points are critical unknown variables that cannot be determined at this time, nor will they be determined by your vote, whether for or against this Application, tonight.

Further, HARC must take care when issuing directives that drastically alter the historic fabric of surrounding neighborhoods, especially when there is no solid basis as to what the final outcome of these streetscapes will be.

It has become clear during this process that, regardless of the eventual design and layout of Peary Court, it cannot be a genuine expression of the Historic District. For this reason, I appeal to you to keep Peary Court a separate, buffered development not integrated with the surrounding historic neighborhoods by way of vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Maintain the Angela Street fence with no breaks for access, in an effort to avoid the inevitable loss of historic integrity to this neighborhood.

With the fence and vegetation buffer intact, and all new homes facing the interior of Peary Court with their backyards and foliage buffers providing a clear distinction between the two neighborhoods, this will then allow the city and the developers to proceed in addressing the many issues of this new community, as it relates to mass, density, scale, and proportion, without destroying history in the process.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Shield

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Heidi C Glasser** <hhouse33@aol.com>

Date: Tue, May 6, 2014 at 11:05 AM

Subject: HARC meeting 5/7/2014

To: etorregr@keywestcity.com

Dear HARC Commissioners,

I write this letter with hope that your views and desire to protect and preserve our beautiful and special historic Key West are the same as your fellow commissioners who originally set up this board to do just that.

Four and a half years ago my husband and I purchased a very run down piece of this city's special history. We poured over the guidelines which as you know are quite extensive. When we submitted our application we took utmost care to make sure our home would add to this city's rich historical pride. We followed the HARC guidelines as both a model and a way to maintain such a rare piece of our country's history.

I am saddened that our very small and special little corner of this history is in jeopardy of being overtaken by a new development. What confuses me is the guidelines clearly state that the new must be set apart from the old. Yet the City Planners are adamant in combining the historic neighborhood know as the "Meadows" with the new privately owned Peary Court. I can not understand why anyone would want to change such a wonderful and unique street as Angela. There are so few spots in this city with such a special feel to it.

The City Planners say integration is the wave of the future. Forgive me if I am wrong but I thought the reason HARC exists is to protect our Historic city from these very views.

Please know I believe a new development can be done in a way that can incorporate some old world charm with new technology. But it can not and should not be done in any way that harms the very fragile environment of our historic neighborhood. Why would anyone want to hurt such a special small piece of history. Our new neighbors would not want to know that there gain come as the result of their neighbors loss.

Sincerely Heidi Glasser

Patricia Mastrobuono

1108 Curry Lane

Key West, Fl. 33040

May 5, 2014

Ms. Enid Torregrosa

Preservation Planner

City of Key West

Key West, Fl. 33040

RE: Perry Court

Dear Ms. Torregrosa:

I understand that the Historic Architectural Review Committee will be holding a special meeting related to the development of Perry Court on May 7, 2014.

I would appreciate it if you would alert the committee members of my concern regarding the lack of an architectural model for this large development.

For a development of this scope, I believe that it is a necessity to have available to the committee, the city planners and the public a 3-D depiction of the development so that all can visualize and understand the design aspects and its impact on the surrounding neighborhood. There are many in the community who cannot visualize a 3-dimensional project from the 2-dimensional design that has been- and is currently being- presented.

I understand that there would be a requirement for the developers to hire a professional architectural model maker, but I think that this expenditure on their part is necessary and should be mandated. It would be costly to the historic fabric of the City to wait until the development commenced before we saw any fundamental flaws in the overall design.

Some of the aspects of the Perry Court design that a 3-D model would help answer would be:

- the new development's relationship to the existing surroundings-including existing streets and sidewalks

- the landscaping designs which would include plantings, fences, gates, walls, etc.

- the scale of the buildings in relation to pedestrians

- the location of parking for vehicles, etc.

Also, of great importance, is how the design coordinates with the sustainability action plan of the City.

I urge you to require that the Perry Court developers provide an architectural model that will be used to evaluate potential positive and negative impact upon the neighborhood and the city and that this requirement be met before any approval is given for development.

Sincerely,

Patricia Mastrobuono

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pat Cummings** <blollywoodkw@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 5, 2014 at 2:25 PM

Subject: Public Comment - Peary Court May 7th meeting

To: Enid Torregrosa <etorregr@keywestcity.com>, dcraig@keywestcity.com,
jweekley@keywestcity.com

As a resident/owner in The Meadows, I continue to have an interest in this project and have studied the plans on Legistar.

To reiterate the main points in my previous comments (published in the 4/20 Citizen and sent to Mr. Craig & Mr. Weekley):

(1) Roads need to be public, not private, and with maximum public street parking in addition to private off-street parking;

(2) Connections to Angela need to be bike/pedestrian, only.

Specific to this revised proposal:

Road layout – with a little effort, it seems that Southard could have continued through to the Palm Avenue gate; I assume there are no plans to eliminate that traffic light.

Distribution – too many “large” units generally; percentage of houses 2000 sq.ft and more is too great. This may be good for the developer’s profit, but bad for our community. To match the “character” of historic neighbors, the mix should

have more “medium” houses, especially since some of the “medium” houses are larger than the “large” (I assume the classifications refer to lot size designations).

“Guest Houses” – How many will be allowed ...24 or up to 62? They can be seen as adding sq. ft. to the larger houses or *as illegal separate dwelling units - bringing the actual dwelling unit count to at least 232*. (Remember, the current number of extant units is 160, none as large as the proposed medium and large houses.) Either way, they add to the potential number of car-driving occupants in the community and occupant density. These “guest houses” are a very troubling element in the plan.

Parking – although 1.5 spots per residential unit may be accepted in planning circles, it has proven to be grossly inadequate except in areas with superior public transportation options. Add to that the “guest houses” that are in addition to the 208 “unit” count that is already an increase over current numbers, and you really have a problem. One solution would be to require an additional parking space for every house with more than 2 bedrooms or a guest house.

Overall Design – not varied enough. For detached units, there are two cottages, 3 medium and 3 large house designs with minor façade variations. As a result, it still has that banal, uniform “sub-division” look (which, of course, it is). The designers worked with a limited menu of vaguely historic forms and design details. It is not HARC’s job to dictate taste; nonetheless, there is room for improvement.

Most of the City grew through individuals purchasing lots and building what they wanted over an extended period of time, resulting in a richer street scene. For financial and regulatory reasons, that will not happen with this parcel. Could they add a detached unit in the 1200-1500 sq. ft range; maybe referencing another historic style from a later era, such as an arts & crafts bungalow? Could the 2000

sq. ft. “medium” be modified to reference an American foursquare? Adopt a broader color palette? Dare I say it....modern or contemporary design?

Despite the vaguely faux historical appearance, I trust these will be constructed of durable modern materials – avoiding modern lumber that can rot or be termite-riddled within a decade as we have seen in other subdivisions constructed in the last two decades. (We do have newly introduced species of termites.) Absolute no reason for wooden windows, siding, shutters or trim in new construction.

A final suggestion: by cutting down on the number of lots that could contain a large house plus a guest house, the occupant density could be better controlled and there may be more room for parking – both off and on-street; maybe on rear alleyways. It is the parking issue that is pushing a lot of my neighbors’ buttons. Their protest could be addressed in a way that does not create a permanent, private enclave at the Court to the detriment of the community as a whole.

Pat Cummings

May 3, 2014

Dear HARC commissioners,

This is for the record and not to be read aloud.

We live at 1215 Newton Street on the corner of Gonzalez Lane. We have been very concerned about the development that is in the works at Peary Court and for the last few years have been closely following the planning progress through community meetings between Meadows neighbors and the developer.

On March 10, we attended a special HARC meeting at which the developer presented plans to HARC. Members of the community were offered a chance to voice concerns, the Planning Department offered its position and the HARC commission voiced its opinions, unable to take a vote of approval on the plans as presented.

We strongly believe that the fence along Angela Street should remain intact. The developer had agreed to this. As the plans stand now, the development will be packed with houses offering options for a few different sizes and within each size there will be a few slight style variations on a theme. We are of the opinion that this style of architecture and mass building is not integral with Old Town Key West. It is something separate and distinct. We strongly oppose gated communities in Key West (and everywhere else). But we don't think integrating the new, cookie-cutter housing designed and built to maximize profits for the few partners in the developer corporation should be given carte blanche to destroy, conceivably, the most charming and quietest neighborhood in old Key West.

By maintaining the separateness through leaving the iron fence is not to say that it will be a gated community. The plans show the grid remaining on the streets crossing White St. which is a broad enough avenue that it can sustain the massive differences between the old and the new. The street itself is the dividing zone offering a natural transition. Using Angela as a transition zone makes no sense from any perspective nor does continuing the grids running narrow Meadows cross streets into the new development. Let the grid penetrate but where it makes the most sense coming in from Palm Ave. and White Streets.

There Is no sentiment of snobbery, elitism, not-in-my-backyard or anything else the community was accused of at the special HARC meeting. There is simply the desire to save this authentic little neighborhood, which has historically always been an enclave, from some misguided planning department's flavor of the month planning concept which, if accepted, will inevitably go as much toward destruction as any of the misguided planning concepts of the past which gave us urban renewal, gated communities, housing projects and high rise buildings. Let's plan but let's plan with sensitivity and not by the book, imposing concepts where they don't necessarily work.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Derven and Stephen MacDonald