

From: [Marc L. Meisel](#)
To: [James Karch](#)
Cc: [peterebatty@gmail.com](#); [waynegarciacontr@bellsouth.net](#); [fvarela@historictours.com](#); [rwarrenusa@gmail.com](#); [Michael Browning](#); [Alex Wiggins](#); [gbwpa@bellsouth.net](#); [City Clerk External E-Mail](#); [planning-dept](#); [Mark Bibb](#); [Lori Thompson](#); [Richard McChesney](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: r feedback to March 27, 2025 Planning Board item 7, Major Development Plan and Landscape Waiver– 1321 - 1325 Simonton Street and 625 South Street (RE# 00035940-000000; RE# 00035950-000000; RE# 00038140-000000)
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2025 10:36:16 AM
Attachments: [Marc Meisel Email Correspondances to Elizabeth Neighbors.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

James,

Thank you for your email and for bringing your concerns forward. I genuinely appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts, and I want to assure you that I take your input as well as other neighbors, seriously.

I'm not certain whether you've had a chance to review the extensive email correspondence or received feedback from the meeting that was held at Maryanne Matters's home last Friday, or conveyed the information from the various phone calls I have had with Daryl Smith over the past few weeks. Much of the feedback from the Elizabeth Street community has come through Mr. Daryl Smith, with whom I've had several productive email exchanges and multiple phone conversations — including one yesterday afternoon.

Following the announcement of my plans being on the agenda for the upcoming Planning Board meeting, I emailed the same group of neighbors included in the prior neighborhood email discussions from 2022, replying to the original thread. I noticed your name was included in that chain, though I couldn't confirm whether your contact information had changed over time. In response to that email, several of your neighbors organized an in-person meeting this past Friday at Maryanne Matter's home, which my General Manager, Mark Bibb, attended to hear the group's concerns and provide clarification where possible. I understand that Karen, Jeff, Dan, Peter, Maryanne, and Daryl (via phone) participated in that discussion. I was informed that the information from that meeting, along with feedback from prior communications, was being shared among all Elizabeth Street neighbors. If you were inadvertently excluded from those conversations, please accept my sincere apologies — that was certainly never my intention.

Nevertheless, I've attached copies of my most recent email communications to the group and attachments contained in those emails (*attachments on letterhead and my communications are highlighted in orange; neighbor responses are highlighted in purple*), which

address in detail the concerns you mentioned in your note and more, including:

Commercial Activity: As part of the new plan, all commercial activity has been intentionally removed from Elizabeth Street. This includes the relocation of guest and staff access, deliveries, trash and laundry services, and any business-related operations away from the residential side of the property—further enhancing the quiet, residential character of the street and addressing longstanding neighborhood concerns

Landscaping: A comprehensive plan was developed with Keith Oropeza to ensure a lush, privacy-focused buffer along Elizabeth Street, far exceeding city requirements both in quantity and maturity of plantings.

Lighting: An intentional approach to lighting design to avoid spillover and ensure minimal impact on adjacent residences.

Noise & Music: Several architectural and operational measures have been thoughtfully incorporated to prevent music from reaching Elizabeth Street. These include the strategic design of the Topsy Rooster space, the broader hotel structure functioning as a sound barrier, the use of sound-absorbing materials, and deliberate speaker placement—all of which help ensure the music remains clear yet subdued within the patron area of the Topsy Rooster

Privacy: The building setback has been increased substantially to 80 feet compared to the current 10 feet, and no guest room windows face Elizabeth Street or neighboring yards — particularly addressing concerns shared by Peter Cone.

You'll see in the attached documents that we've taken considerable care and expense over many years to be good neighbors and to incorporate the community's feedback into our plans — going well beyond what is required, paying special attention to how the new design affects the neighbors.

Thank you again for your thoughtful note. I truly appreciate your neighborly concerns, your appreciation for the project, and the pleasant, constructive tone of your email. I wholeheartedly share your vision for a Key West that honors its unique heritage while embracing a thoughtful and vibrant future. Since the mid-1980s, my father and I have worked diligently to help preserve what makes Key West, Key West—and that commitment remains just as strong today.

Like you, I believe that through respectful dialogue, careful planning, and mutual understanding, we can ensure that the Southwinds project enhances not just our corner of town but contributes positively to the broader community.

Regards,

Marc L. Meisel



Marc L. Meisel, CEO

t: 301-881-5003 | e: mlm@meiselholdings.com

w: meiselholdings.com | w: meiselhms.com

6000 Executive Blvd., 7th Floor | Rockville, MD 20852

On Mar 26, 2025, at 9:31 PM, James Karch <kw.karch@hotmail.com> wrote:

As a longtime resident of Elizabeth Street, I'm writing to offer my thoughts on the proposed redevelopment of the Southwinds Motel, a property I know the City of Key West oversees with care. I genuinely admire Mr. Meisel's dedication to preserving the authentic character of Key West in this endeavor, a priority that aligns closely with the values of our community. That said, I'd like to raise a few concerns that, if addressed thoughtfully, could ensure this project enhances both the tranquility and vitality of our neighborhood.

First, the music from the Topsy Rooster—while a showcase for talented performers—carries into our homes in a way that is distracting. As I write this letter, the music from the Rooster has a monotone sound. For those of us nearby, it disrupts sleep and even makes our rental property less appealing to visitors (rental businesses). Through our traditional Old Florida jalousie windows and conch homes (with little insulation), the sound filters in, muffled yet persistent, disturbing the quiet we cherish. I'd urge you to explore redirecting this noise away from residential areas. If that proves challenging, I'd be happy to discuss practical solutions to mitigate these challenges.

Additionally, the removal of commercial activity from Elizabeth Street is greatly appreciated. I'd suggest keeping such operations within designated commercial zones, allowing our street to remain a haven for its residents. A well-designed landscaping buffer along Elizabeth Street could help, serving as both a visual and sound barrier to better integrate the redevelopment with its surroundings.

I believe we share a vision for a Key West that respects its heritage while embracing a thriving future, Mr. Meisel. By addressing these points—managing the music, limiting commercial encroachment, and adding thoughtful landscaping—I think we could build a strong partnership between the City of Key West, yourself, and Elizabeth Street residents. Together, we can ensure the Southwinds project not only succeeds but also enriches life in this special part of our town.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. I'd welcome the chance to work with you toward an outcome that reflects the best of our community.

James and Stephanie Karch
1315 Eliabeth Street, Key West, Florida

