
Carousel objection (St. Armands)

St Armands Residents Association <st.armands.residents.assn@gmail.com>
To: Commissioners@sarasotafl.gov

Thu, Jun 3, 2021 at 11:56 AM



Dear City Commissioners,

(I'm copying the public and members of the press)

On February 10, I sent you the email copied below stating that the St. Armands Residents Association does not support the idea of a Carousel attraction at the St. Armands Circle Park. This after soliciting resident feedback, announcing that we would be discussing the issue at our monthly meeting, and the subsequent discussion.

While we appreciated that the concept was family-oriented and could attract more visitors to Circle businesses with whom we share St. Armands, there were significant traffic and safety concerns, and it was our understanding that this was not going to be a stand-alone carousel: it was going to be in a fenced-off area with swings, see-saws, selfie stand-ins and an electric train. To be fair, some of our members thought that this could be a good idea. But, a majority of the feedback we received indicated that a year-round, carnival-like attraction would be inconsistent with both the neighborhood and the Circle's businesses.

Plus there is the City's existing Special Events Ordinance which restricts high-attendance attractions like this in the Circle Park during the busiest months. Why? Because of traffic and safety issues.

Now, close to four months later, it has been relayed to me that City Management or Staff have recently asked the proposer of this Carousel concept, a Mr. Koffman, to conduct a community meeting to gather input and to listen and dialog with the community about their concerns. I've learned that such a meeting will take place at the St. Armands Key Lutheran Church this coming Tuesday, May 8.

What disturbs me, and what should disturb anyone regardless of how you feel about this issue, is that our Association, which represents close to two thirds of the households on St. Armands, has not been asked to invite our members to this meeting.

Who then is being invited? I've been forwarded the attached informational flyer from residents of two different (albeit nearby) neighborhoods. What's going on here? To me it seems that non-residents are going to be asked their opinion about what should or should not go into someone else's neighborhood. And, by holding the meeting on St. Armands, give the appearance that the collected feedback is coming from the people who live there, when in fact it does not. And they're doing it during the summer months, without the ability to participate remotely, which will further bias whatever feedback is collected.

I ask you to be aware that any "public feedback" you receive from the Carousel promoter may at best not represent what has already been collected and discussed by our Association, and may at worst be extremely misleading in terms of how it was collected and how it will be represented to you.

Sincerely,

Chris Goglia, President
St. Armands Residents Association

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

From: **St Armands Residents Association** <st.armands.residents.assn@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 1:14 PM

Subject: Residents say NO to Carousel on St. Armands

To: Jerry Fogle, Hagen Brody, Liz Alpert, Jen Ahearn-Koch, Erik Arroyo, Kyle Battie, Marlon Brown, Pat Robinson

Dear City Commission, City Manager, and Director of Parks and Recreation,

Yesterday, the Board of the St. Armands Residents Association voted unanimously to NOT support the idea of a Carousel at the St. Armands Circle Park.

If you had not previously heard of this proposal, it may come before you in the near future.

We solicited member feedback via email and discussed this issue at length at our regular monthly meeting yesterday. We discussed concerns about traffic, safety, and various other possible detrimental effects to our community.

We also discussed the City's Special Events Ordinance which our Association had worked hard to get implemented several years ago and which controls the frequency and intensity of events allowed at the Circle Park. Even if the Carousel is considered a "fixed attraction" and not a "special event," it was felt that it would have the same impact as a special event would have here, and that it would be in place every week of the year.

Further, we would expect our neighbors on Longboat Key to have significant objections about the potential impact on traffic and safety from hundreds of incremental people per day crossing the road to get on and off of the Circle Park.

For all of the above reasons, we do not support the idea of a Carousel at the St. Armands Circle Park.

Sincerely,

Chris Goglia, President
St. Armands Residents Association

 2021-05 SAC Carousel Meeting Flyer.pdf
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