

**Action Alert!**  
**The Celery Fields need your help!**

**Please email the Sarasota County Planning Commission  
and ask that they recommend denial of RZ 23-30**

If you care about the Celery Fields and its wildlife, we need you to let the Sarasota County Planning Commission know that you oppose rezone petition RZ 23-30 that will allow 170 homes on the Smith Farm property along Raymond Road next to the South Cell and across from the Raymond Road Boardwalk.

The Planning Commission hearing will be on Nov. 21, 2024 and your email must be sent to [planner@scgov.net](mailto:planner@scgov.net) before noon on Wed., Nov. 13th for the emails to be distributed to Planning Commissioners prior to the hearing. We encourage you to also attend the Nov. 21st Planning Commission public hearing starting at 5:00 PM at the R.L. Anderson Administration Building, 4000 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice.

Rezone 23-30 is a request by D.R. Horton, a developer known for building high-density housing, to rezone the property to allow 170 houses on the Smith Farm property. The existing zoning would permit only 5 houses, so this rezone request asks for a 3,300% increase over what is allowed under the existing zoning.

Below is an example of what you might include in your email. You can simply send an email saying you are opposed to RZ 23-30 and ask the Planning Commission to recommend denial of RZ 23-30. Or you can add language from the example below. Please change the language to reflect your circumstances and how the Celery Fields and its wildlife are important to you. Feel free to copy/edit/cut/paste and please add your own facts.

## SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL

TO: [planner@scgov.net](mailto:planner@scgov.net)

Subject: Opposed to RZ 23-30 - Smith Farm Property

Dear Planning Commissioners: I am opposed to the rezone of the Smith Farm Property, Rezone 23-30. I am asking you to recommend denial of RZ 23-30 because the proposed development is not compatible with surrounding residential areas and is incompatible with the adjacent Celery Fields.

*[For this paragraph, please delete the italicized text and insert a description of what Celery Fields means to you. For example, how many years you have visited CF, how often do you go, do you go for birdwatching, exercise, nature or other reasons? Do you take visitors there?*

*This is important to show why you care about the Celery Fields.]*

The Celery Fields provide critical habitat for birds and wildlife and have become a renowned ecotourism site for national and international visitors. Many millions of public and non-profit dollars have been invested in Celery Fields to preserve and enhance the Celery Fields as not just a stormwater facility but also valuable wildlife habitat and recreation area. A high-density residential development that juts into the most vulnerable part of the Celery Fields will cause permanent harm and will undermine the public benefits from these investments.

Some of the many reasons why this rezone should be denied include:

- the development that would be allowed by this rezone is incompatible with the existing wildlife preserve and recreational uses of the Celery Fields,
- the proposed development is incompatible with existing residential development in the area of Celery Fields and Smith Farm,
- it will increase traffic on Raymond Road and Palmer Boulevard and decrease public safety,

- it will increase traffic conflicts with pedestrian and vehicle access to the critical Raymond Road bird viewing boardwalk,
- it will cause safety issues for children at school bus drop offs and those participating in Audubon educational activities, and
- a majority of the property is in the floodplain and its development raises significant concerns about property and structure flooding in surrounding area

Please recommend denial of RZ 23-30 to the Board of County Commissioners. I ask that this email be included in the official record of the Nov. 21, 2024 public hearing before the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

*[Insert Your Name]*

*Address*