



Raymond Road Farm aka Smith Property

November 1, 2023

Developer D.R. Horton, well known for building high-density housing, wants to build 171 units directly across from the Raymond Road boardwalk. This area (and the entire Celery Fields) is critical habitat to birds and wildlife and provides access to thousands of our county's annual visitors, our residents, and birdwatchers from around the world.

This property currently buffers the Celery Fields to the East and is juxtaposed by the Quad Parcels which buffer to the West.



Our position: A high-density residential development does not belong here. It will negate and undermine all the millions of dollars and planning invested by Sarasota County and its Stormwater Division. [Click Here for Details](#)

Sarasota Audubon Society has invested thousands of volunteer hours in maintenance and in environmental education for all ages at the Celery Fields.

- 120,000 visitors to the Nature Center since 2015
- 3000 volunteer hours per year since 2015, totaling over 25,000 hours
- 8,500 students since 2012 learning about watershed and bird identification
- 1,000 teachers and chaperones introduced to the wetland habitat
- \$1 million raised to build the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center and
- \$4 million target to be raised for ReWilding the Quad parcels in collaboration with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast.

Sarasota Audubon Society, with over 1,500 local members, does not want these huge investments to be negated or diminished by a housing development.

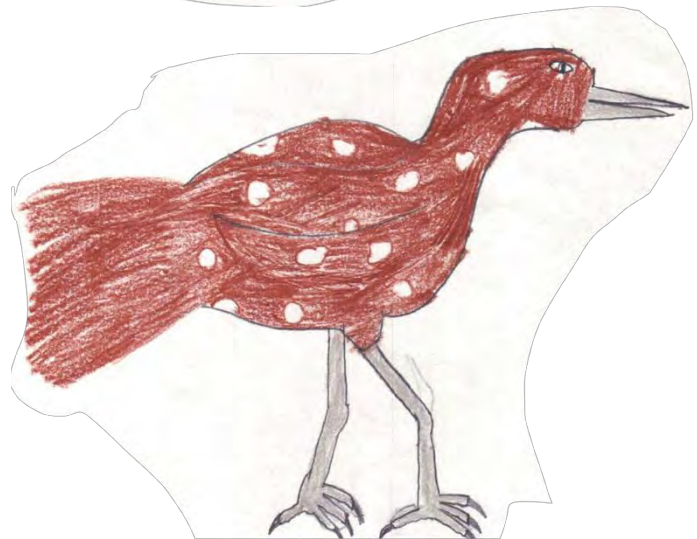
Current Status of the D.R. Horton Proposed Development of the Smith Property Farmland

The developer has submitted a rezone application (**Rezone Petition 23-30**) for the 49-acre property to the Planning Commission. The current application states a plan for D.H. Horton to put 171 residential units on roughly 26 acres. It is being reviewed by various committees who then send it to the Planning Commissioners for review.

What Happens Next:

- The Planning Commission will review all the material, including comments by the general public and other interested parties, and then submit their recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for the final vote on the rezone petition.
- At that point, the BCC will schedule a public hearing to review the application from D.R. Horton, and the recommendations of the Planning Commission, which are not binding.
- We do not yet know yet the exact timing of this process, but we anticipate that there will be a window of 4 weeks between the Planning Commission making its recommendation and the commission meeting to vote on it.
- We will notify everyone via eblast as soon as we know the date of the BCC public hearing and post it on social media as well.

Action Items → What YOU Can Do



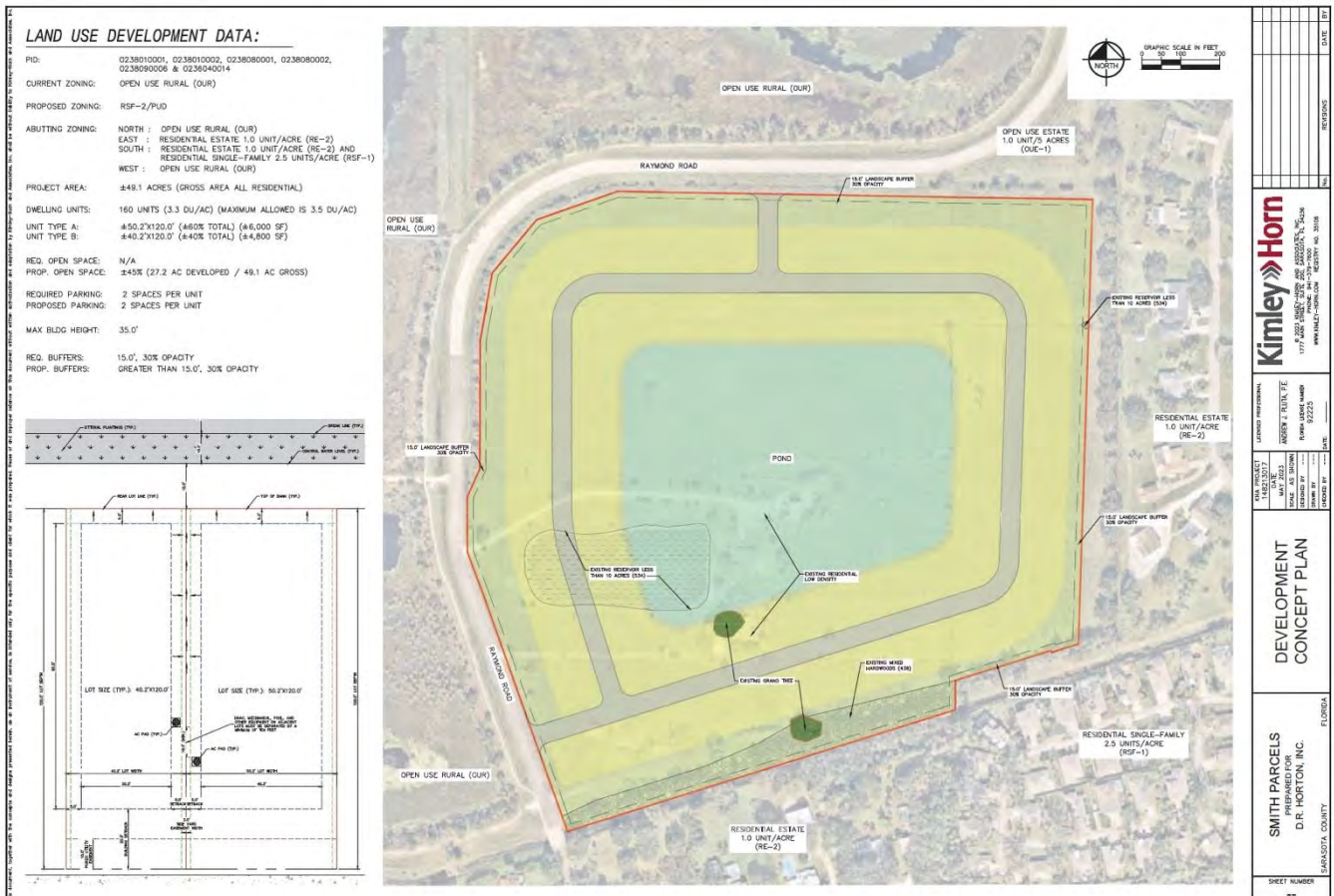
→ Write to your Sarasota County Commissioner

- a. [Your District Click Here](#)
- b. [Commissioners by District Click Here](#)

If you are not a Sarasota County Resident, but use the Celery Fields as a destination, simply write to all of the commissioners as indicated in a. below, and let them know how you use the Celery Fields and how it benefits you.

1. [Talking Points for your Letter Click Here](#)
2. Subject: **Rezone Petition 23-30**
3. In your email please CC: the following
 - a. All Sarasota County Commissioners commissioners@scgov.net
 - b. Sarasota County Planning Commission planner@scgov.net
 - c. Head of planning: Matt Osterhoudt: mosterho@scgov.net
 - d. Head of Parks: Nicole Rissler: nrissler@scgov.net
 - e. Sarasota Audubon info@sarasotaudubon.org

→ Plan to Attend the Sarasota County Commission meeting (Date TBD)



We will alert you via email when the Commission Meeting date is determined.

Please join us and stand up for the birds and wildlife at the Celery Fields.
Write to the County Commission today. Be a part of the solution!

With Sincere Thanks,

The Sarasota Audubon Board of Directors

www.SarasotaAudubon.org