

Scotty L. Kelly

From: Bob Moore <moore.peace@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 3:53 PM
To: Mike Miller; Holly Smith; Richard Johnson; John Henshaw; Laura J. DeBruce
Cc: Dana A. Souza; Scotty L. Kelly
Subject: COTI letter of support for CHR Riverview II project
Attachments: COTI CHR letter to Sanibel City Council copy mk edits copy.docx

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Dear City Council Members,
Please see attached a letter from the Committee of the Islands (COTI) Board of Directors regarding the CHR Riverview II project currently under review by the Council. This letter articulates the rationale for the Board's support of the project. It is signed by 10 of the 11 current Board members.

Thank you,
Bob Moore, President
Committee of the Islands



Dear Sanibel City Council,

We are writing to express our strong support for Community Housing and Resources' (CHR) efforts to expand workforce housing on Sanibel. In particular, there is a unique opportunity with the proposed Riverview II development to add a significant number of affordable housing units and come close to achieving the 3% affordable housing goal that has long been articulated in the Plan but never yet achieved. We urge you to approve and move this project forward.

The Sanibel Vision Statement clearly articulates the importance of an economically diverse community as part of our city's core values, and the Sanibel Plan describes the importance of below market rate housing in order to achieve that goal and ensure that housing is available for the people who live and work on the island.

With 70% of Sanibel's land held in conservation, limited housing stock has made affordable housing options increasingly scarce and difficult to acquire. The people who sustain this island—those working in restaurants, shops, healthcare, nonprofits, and essential services—simply do not have viable options to live here. This is not a future problem; it is a current and worsening crisis. The proposed Riverview II development represents a rare opportunity to address that crisis at a meaningful scale.

The proposed 39 units directly reflect CHR's existing waitlist, which is largely made up of single, working individuals. Reducing the project scope would not adequately address the need and would make the project financially unfeasible. Approximately \$9.75 million in critical funding is tied to this project moving forward at its current scale. Losing that level of investment would be a significant setback for the community and for any realistic effort to address workforce housing.

It is also important to recognize that all members of the Sanibel City Council previously expressed support for this project in communications to Lee County. Reversing course now would not only halt much-needed housing but would jeopardize future funding opportunities for Sanibel.

In voicing support for the necessary variance to approve the Riverview II project, COTI recognizes that decisions for the city are not always black and white and there are other aspects of the Sanibel Plan that this project pushes up against. For example, in the narrative of the Housing element of the Plan, it states:

“Sanibel's BMRH program deliberately breaks with many of the patterns established by public housing programs elsewhere. To underscore the fundamental equality of all citizens, BMRH units are constructed and landscaped to be virtually indistinguishable from the rest of

the community. That eliminates the stigma that is usually attached to being in public housing, ensures that such housing conforms to the, and thereby fosters a well-earned sense of civic pride.”

And in the policy section of the Housing element, Policy 3.7. seeks to ensure that BMRH units continue to be developed and maintained in a manner that is compatible with the character of the community.

COTI reasserts its belief in the above statement and the related policy in the Plan. It also recognizes that there are different perspectives on what is compatible with the character of the community. Given the importance of this project to finally achieving the 3% goal of affordable housing articulated in the Plan and the opportunity to receive funding to make that possible, the COTI Board believes that there is a strong rationale for granting the variances for this project, allowing it to move forward without making a permanent change to the Sanibel Plan.

We urge you to approve this project without further delay; this is an opportunity that will likely not return.

Sincerely,

The Committee of the Islands (COTI) Board of Directors (10 of 11 Board members)

Bob Moore – President

Paula Friedman – Vice President

Arielle Cohen – Secretary

Bud Reinhold – Treasurer

William Millar – Immediate Past President

Mitch Koppelman

Karen Pati

Lisa Ann Miller

Angi Semmler Welch

Paul Tritaik

From: Elizabeth Barton <thewaverlygroup@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 11:20 AM
To: Dana A. Souza <Dana.Souza@mysanibel.com>
Subject: CHR Support

Dear Council Member,

I am writing to respectfully advocate for your approval of the Riverview II affordable housing development sponsored by Community Housing & Resources (CHR).

While I am not a full-time resident of Sanibel, I have vacationed on the island nearly every year for the past fifty years. Sanibel holds deep personal meaning for me, and I care greatly about its long-term vitality and resilience.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ian in October 2022, I felt compelled to help but was unsure how to be most effective. I reached out to you as the City Manager and then-Mayor Holly Smith, who kindly directed me toward CHR, where there was a clear and urgent need aligned with my professional experience. Since that time, I have remained actively committed to supporting the island's economic recovery, working with CHR on a pro bono basis to help advance funding solutions that attract and retain a stable workforce.

Throughout my career, I have worked across the country with organizations focused on the planning, design, and development of affordable housing. I can say without hesitation that CHR is among the most ethical, mission-driven, and capable organizations I have encountered. I do not frequently volunteer my time, and this has been my longest-standing pro bono engagement—reflecting both the importance of this work and my confidence in CHR's leadership.

Riverview II, proposed for the Fish House property, is a well-conceived and compliant development that adheres to all applicable local and county regulations. The project was created in direct response to clearly documented housing needs, supported by State of Florida and Lee County feasibility studies, and thoughtfully tailored to reflect the unique environmental, architectural, and community characteristics that define Sanibel and its residents. Importantly, it directly addresses one of the island's most pressing housing gaps: providing attainable housing options for single-person households who live and work on the island. The availability of CDBG-DR funding further underscores the timeliness and strategic importance of this opportunity for both CHR and the City.

I would also encourage consideration of the cost of not moving forward with Riverview II. Without this development, the island risks prolonged constraints on affordable housing availability, which in turn limits the workforce needed to sustain local businesses. This can result in continued reduced operating hours, slower economic recovery, and an inability to meet peak tourism demand. Visitors may continue to come for the beach but leave without fully engaging in the island's shops and restaurants—ultimately impacting the local economy and tax base.

Riverview II represents not only a housing solution but a critical investment in Sanibel's recovery and future sustainability. I respectfully urge you to support its approval.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. If you have any additional questions regarding my investment and support, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Barton

TWG **The Waverly Group-MidWest**
Elizabeth Barton Ph.D. | President and Founder
19650 Harper Avenue #108
Grosse Pointe Woods MI 48236
(313) 590-3932

From: Randy Carson <rcarsonsan@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 11:19 AM
To: Dana A. Souza <Dana.Souza@mysanibel.com>
Subject: CHR

I'm writing in support of CHR's new Riverview project.

Sent from Gmail Mobile



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Clair Beckmann
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Bookkeeper/Housing Admin.

Becky Boyd
Deputy Director

Blake Donnelly
Facilities Manager

Mail and Office:

2340 Periwinkle Way,
Ste. K-2
Sanibel, FL 33957

Phone:

(239) 472-1189

Website:

sancapchr.org

To: Sanibel City Council Members

From: Randy Carson

Subject: Support for Riverview II Initiative

Date: March 26th, 2026

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you today on behalf of Community Housing & Resources (CHR) to formally express my support for the Riverview II initiative. As this project moves to its second reading on March 31, I ask you to recognize it not merely as a construction proposal, but as a defining step in the evolution of our community.

Fulfilling Sanibel's Promise

For four decades, CHR has served as a dedicated partner to the City of Sanibel, addressing the fundamental challenge of ensuring that the essential workforce—those who serve and protect our island—can actually afford to live here. Today, we stand at a historic crossroads. The Riverview II initiative represents the key to finally achieving our long-held strategic mandate: dedicating 3% of island residences to affordable housing. This is a pivotal moment to transform a decades-old goal into a reality.

Strategic Opportunity vs. Financial Reality

Securing appropriate, developable land on Sanibel remains a significant hurdle. The economic math of affordable housing is unyielding: when rents are capped at one-third of a resident's qualified income, those revenues simply cannot bridge the massive upfront costs of land acquisition and modern construction.

However, we currently possess a unique and time-sensitive window of opportunity with the Fish House property. By leveraging this rare land availability alongside secured CDBG-DR grant funding, we have the resources to succeed where previous attempts did not. We cannot afford to let this alignment of funding and location pass us by. It's important to note that this grant is tied to the number of



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residences constructed, and cutting that number would not proportionately reduce the construction costs.

Architectural Integrity and Construction Excellence

I wish to directly address concerns regarding the aesthetic impact of the project. The beauty of Sanibel lies in its architectural diversity, ranging from historic cottages to modern, resilient structures. While historic styles are cherished, they are often impractical to replicate under today's stringent environmental and safety codes.

Riverview II has been designed to be value-engineered and resilient, while remaining in full compliance with all setbacks, buffer zones, and fire department safety requirements. To preserve the character of our main corridor, the project is set back significantly from Periwinkle Way. Furthermore, the plan replaces the current, non-conforming Fish House structure with a modern commercial space built to the highest safety standards. With enhanced native vegetation, the elevated structure will be largely concealed from the street.

Our Neighbors and Residents

Affordable housing on Sanibel is not a handout; it is a privilege maintained through strict accountability. Every applicant undergoes a rigorous vetting process, including thorough background checks and verification of island employment, income, and asset limitations.

Once accepted, our residents are not "others". **THEY ARE US.** They are the neighbors we shop with, the colleagues we bicycle alongside, and the families who enjoy our beaches. There is no stigma here; instead, there is immense pride. CHR has received dozens of testimonials from residents describing their CHR home as a "dream come true". We must also dispel the misinformation currently circulating: receiving CDBG-DR funds does not alter our core mission. New applicants **must** work full-time on the islands, or have a 20-year history of island service, to qualify.

Safety and Livability

Riverview II provides a strategic benefit to the entire surrounding neighborhood. Beyond adding vital residences, it corrects a long-



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standing infrastructure flaw. By integrating the new site with the Harkey House at Riverview I apartments, we will establish a unified common drive. This plan finally resolves the hazardous ingress and egress issues that have posed safety risks at this location for years.

Upholding the Spirit of the Sanibel Plan

While some may focus on technicalities, the foundational facts remain clear:

- **Full Compliance:** Both the Planning Department and Planning Commission have confirmed this project meets the letter of the law.
- **Density for Diversity:** Our Land Development Code explicitly allows for increased density in Below Market Rate Housing because we recognize that socio-economic diversity is a core strength of our community.
- **The Big Picture:** The Sanibel Plan is an amazing, aspirational document that balances conservation with community needs. We must weigh minor technical criticisms against the significant benefit of providing homes for our teachers, hospitality workers, and first responders.

A Legacy of Inclusion

Riverview II is a test of our collective commitment to the vision of the Sanibel Plan. For forty years, we have advocated for the dignity of our workforce; we now have the land, the funding, and many endorsements to turn those words into windows and doors.

We are not merely building apartments—we are building the human infrastructure that allows our island to thrive. By approving this project, you are doing more than meeting a 3% metric; you are ensuring that those who work on Sanibel can truly belong to Sanibel. We urge the Council to embrace the transformative impact of this moment and help us finish the mission we started four decades ago.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Carson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

From: Carroll Wetzel <cwetzell1248@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 10:44 AM

To: Holly Smith <Holly.Smith@mysanibel.com>; Mike Miller <Mike.Miller@mysanibel.com>;

Dana A. Souza <Dana.Souza@mysanibel.com>; Richard Johnson

<richard.johnson@mysanibel.com>; Laura J. DeBruce <laura.debruce@mysanibel.com>; John

Henshaw <John.Henshaw@mysanibel.com>

Subject: Community Housing

Dear Council member,

This letter supports the Community Housing and Resources project. My wife and I have had a primary residence on Captiva for 26 years. At times, prior to Hurricane Ian, I have been actively involved in the community. Only now, three years after Hurricane Ian, are we able to move back in. So happy to be back.

During and after Ian Milton our community aides, fireman, EMS people, health volunteers, the police, and others, provided immeasurable service. Those are the people we most need to have living on the islands, to be here when we need them, to understand the community and its people. By and large the institutions that hire and pay those people, cannot raise prices, like a retail enterprise, to pay their employees more. Subsidized housing reduces the pressure on the public purse and will help keep the people we need most. The Community Housing project will help that happen. It is a small step in the right direction; to turn it down would be a leap in the wrong direction.

Thank you for your time,

Carroll R Wetzel,

past President of Captiva Shores Condominium Association

From: Jessica Bittner <jrbittner@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 10:16 AM
To: Dana A. Souza <Dana.Souza@mysanibel.com>
Subject: CHR Support

I am writing to express my strong support for Community Housing and Resources' (CHR) proposed Riverview II development at the Fish House property. I urge you to approve and move this project forward.

With 70% of Sanibel's land held in conservation, limited housing stock has made affordable housing options increasingly scarce and difficult to acquire. The people who sustain this island—those working in restaurants, shops, healthcare, nonprofits, and essential services—simply do not have viable options to live here. This is not a future problem; it is a current and worsening crisis. The proposed 39 units directly reflect CHR's existing waitlist, which is largely made up of single, working individuals. Reducing the project would not meaningfully address the need and would make the project financially unfeasible. Approximately \$9.75 million in critical funding is tied to this project moving forward at its current scale. Losing that level of investment would be a significant setback for the community and for any realistic effort to address workforce housing. It is also important to recognize that members of the Sanibel City Council previously expressed support for this project in communications to Lee County. Reversing course now would not only halt much-needed housing but would undermine the City's credibility with the County—jeopardizing future funding opportunities for Sanibel.

The choice is clear: either move forward with a viable solution for workforce housing or continue to allow the problem to worsen while risking the loss of both funding and trust. I urge you to approve this project without further delay; this is an opportunity that will not return.

Jessica Bittner

From: Avery Renshaw <playinitcool128@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 7:12 AM
To: Dana A. Souza <Dana.Souza@mysanibel.com>
Subject: Approve CHR Riverview II

Dear Sanibel City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Community Housing and Resources' (CHR) proposed Riverview II development at the Fish House property. I urge you to approve and move this project forward.

With 70% of Sanibel's land held in conservation, limited housing stock has made affordable housing options increasingly scarce and difficult to acquire. The people who sustain this island—those working in restaurants, shops, healthcare, nonprofits, and essential services—simply do not have viable options to live here. This is not a future problem; it is a current and worsening crisis. The proposed 39 units directly reflect CHR's existing waitlist, which is largely made up of single, working individuals. Reducing the project would not meaningfully address the need and would make the project financially unfeasible. Approximately \$9.75 million in critical funding is tied to this project moving forward at its current scale. Losing that level of investment would be a significant setback for the community and for any realistic effort to address workforce housing. It is also important to recognize that members of the Sanibel City Council previously expressed support for this project in communications to Lee County. Reversing course now would not only halt much-needed housing but would undermine the City's credibility with the County—jeopardizing future funding opportunities for Sanibel.

The choice is clear: either move forward with a viable solution for workforce housing or continue to allow the problem to worsen while risking the loss of both funding and trust. I urge you to approve this project without further delay; this is an opportunity that will not return.

Sincerely,

Avery Renshaw

From: WILLIAM LARSON <williamandrewlarson@gmail.com>

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 4:57 PM

To: Mike Miller <Mike.Miller@mysanibel.com>

Subject: CHR Riverview II

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Mayor Miller

Mike,

I'm writing to express my strong support for CHR's proposed Riverview II development on the former Fish House property and add my thoughts to those conveyed in the collective letter you received from the CHR Board earlier this week.

First, thank you for your support of the CHR mission and affordable housing for our essential workers on Sanibel. Thank you also for working to preserve the small-town look and feel of our commercial district. I share your desire to maintain that appearance and ambiance.

Some Council Members have expressed valid concerns and raised excellent questions about the Riverview II project. I believe Rachel Bielert or Nicole has addressed them to some degree, but I want to emphasize a couple of points. CHR has worked hard to find affordable, buildable sites upon which to build toward the number of units required to meet our goal for affordable workforce residences on Sanibel. At least four parcels have been considered during my two-year tenure but were deemed infeasible for one reason or another. Two coinciding opportunities have now appeared – the availability of CBDG-DR funds and availability of the (former) Fish House property.

When those two opportunities began to emerge last summer, CHR representatives started working with the Planning Department to determine feasibility, conduct surveys, and develop concept plans for Riverview II on the Fish House property. Those efforts intensified over the fall and early this year as property acquisition became a reality. The proposed 39 units directly reflect CHR's existing waitlist, which is largely made up of single, working individuals. Certainly, we want to attract young families as well, and they can be accommodated in CHR's other, larger rental units.

The Riverview II design complies with setback and other siting requirements, creates space for an eventual commercial enterprise, on the street side, and can accommodate higher density, more mature screening vegetation. Further, Rachel's team is working to open the end walls and give stairways and walkways a more open, airy appearance. Further, an exterior color change is being considered – instead of the stark white, to something that blends more smoothly into the environment, such as beige, or gray.

The people who sustain this island - workers in restaurants, shops, healthcare, nonprofits, and essential services—simply do not have viable options to live here. Yet full recovery of our Island

– restoration of residential and tourist accommodations and additional restaurants, retailers, and commercial services – is dependent upon availability of a reliable work force. Affordable housing makes Sanibel very attractive to potential employees.

Reducing building size would preclude us from meeting our affordable housing unit goal and further delay will jeopardize the planning and construction deadlines for receipt of the CBDG-DR funding, without which the project will be delayed for years. Loss of this opportunity would be a significant setback for the community. I, like you, live here and want to preserve the unique nature of our Island, but also realize the urgent need for affordable workforce housing and the one-time availability of the CBDG-DR funds. I believe minor adjustments, without major delay, can accommodate Council concerns.

I urge you to approve the Riverview II project on March 31 and move this project forward.

Thank you, Mike, for considering my views.

Bill Larson
4597 Bowen Bayou Road
Member, CHR Board of Directors

From: whitecapper1@comcast.net <whitecapper1@comcast.net>

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 4:18 PM

To: Mike Miller <Mike.Miller@mysanibel.com>, Mihail Campian <m.campian@yahoo.com>

Subject: CHR

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Please support CHR for phase 2 or Riverview development. Thank you...Lynne and George
Campean 4576 Buck Key, Sanibel