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March 31, 2023

What should be Midnight Pass plan?

Author: **John Morton**

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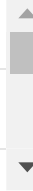
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With support now reaching the state level, county needs to decide on method of restoration

By John Morton

Shovels or pipes?

Now that Sarasota County commissioners are gearing up toward a commitment to improving water quality in Little Sarasota Bay, and well aware that the closing of Midnight Pass at the hands of their predecessors in the early 1980s is related to the issue, the question of how to restore the natural flow that once occurred between Siesta Key and Casey Key is front and center.

The county has asked for a \$1 million commitment toward the process from Florida lawmakers, who are in session in Tallahassee right now with state Sen. Joe Gruters and state Rep. Greg Steube leading the way. Locally, Sarasota County is pledging \$1.6 million toward planning and permitting toward whatever game plan is set in motion. Clearing up the bay is one of the commissioners' priorities for 2023, and new board members Mark Smith and Joe Neunder have been very vocal in support of the restoration of Midnight Pass. The commission, at its December retreat when goals set, acknowledged that the Midnight Pass

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Midnight Pass, prior to it being filled-in in the early 1980s. (submitted photo)

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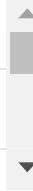
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beach. Meanwhile, Little Sarasota Bay has become stagnate as the closest inlets for water flow are about 7 miles in each direction, creating what Anderson called a “null zone.”

“Tidal circulation is one of the biggest concerns, and lack thereof,” he said, noting that the closing of the pass diminished water exchange between the gulf and bay from 74% to 27%, according to a Sarasota Bay Estuary Program report.

Before suggesting possible plans of attack, the board agreed that David Tomasko, director of that program, should give a presentation on his thoughts regarding the pass and its role in water quality.

As for the potential placement of pipes to do the job, Smith doubted they’d hold up and would require constant maintenance. He said restoring the pass to its natural state “would be my ideal situation.”

Ron Cutsinger, the commission chairman, agreed. “They would have ongoing issues, all the time,” he said of a pipe system.

While both the commission and the Midnight Pass Society II non-profit group fighting for the pass’ restoration have placed little emphasis on how an open pass could also be navigable for boaters, as it was back in the day, Custingner said that added benefit would “be amazing – we desperately need that.”

Currently, boaters in that region can only enter the Gulf of Mexico from Big Pass to the north and the Venice Inlet to the south. That’s a 14-mile inconvenience.

Speaking of Midnight Pass Society II, the group on March 16 held a Zoom meeting with supporters to once again request volunteer help. It is looking to attend festivals and hold events in order to spread the word, Jamie Miller, a lobbyist for the group, said. A letter-writing campaign to key lawmakers and agencies is also in the works.

He also thinks that engineering on the possible restoration could occur as soon as 2024, with actual work in the sand and water beginning in 2025.

“Gruters expects appropriations to come to fruition in the governor’s budget,” Miller said of the state senator’s current efforts in Tallahassee. “This is the first time in 40 years that we’ve had the county and the (county) delegation (made up of four state lawmakers representing Sarasota County) working in parallel. There’s more political synergy than ever before.”

Midnight Pass Society II is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, meaning donations to it are tax deductible. To learn more, visit restoremidnightpass.org.



Author: [John Morton](#)

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Fishing Forecast: April



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eNews Weekly

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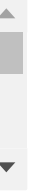
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Siesta Key CONDO Monthly Update 1/15 to 2/15

Summary: we are in season and people are going to contract. **Pendings** doubled from 19 to 43 but actives decreased by 1 to 95 so if more actives don't come on, the supply will get tight quickly. Speaking of supply, one fifth of actives have 1 bedroom and one fifth have 3 or more, both numbers higher than the actual market. Price drops are inching up slowly from 40% to 45% of listings, no surprise there. Sales were 24, 2 more than the previous month but 11 were in the new **TEN35** complex on the gulf where **Crescent Towers** once stood. The decrease is most likely a result of the limited activity during the holidays. Here are the numbers:

ACTIVE LISTINGS: 95 actives vs 96 last month. 31 are new listings. 44 are priced under 800k, 19 from 800 to 1.2mil and 32 over 1.2 mil. 17 have 1 bdrm, 59 have 2 bdrms and 19 have 3+.

DAYS ON MARKET: 50% have been on for less than 2 months, while 20% more than 5.

PRICE DROPS: increased to 43 from 40 the month before accounting for just over 45% of all actives. 10 have had 2 drops and 13 three or more.

PENDINGS: 43 vs 19 the previous month. 11 went pending within a week of being listed, that's one out of 10, down from a year ago but still respectable.

SOLDS: 24 vs 22 in the previous month but 11 of those were in TEN35. 18 were in 2 wk or less rental complexes. 7 sold for under 800k, 2 for 800 to 1.2k and 15 over 1.2m of which 11 were in TEN35.

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