

Proposed Leesburg Ordinance Supports Villages of West Lake

The planned age-restricted community would not harm naval research at Bugg Spring.

By DAVID R. CORDER
Daily Sun Senior Writer

LEESBURG

The Villages of West Lake has earned a strong endorsement.

Nothing suggests future development of the 2,000-acre, mixed-use residential project would interfere with the research conducted at the neighboring Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Bugg Spring east of Florida's Turnpike and north of County Road 470.

City commissioners heard that assessment Tuesday evening during the first reading of a proposed ordinance to amend the city's master plan to establish a future land use overlay area that governs development around the Navy's

underwater research center at Okahumpka.

"The overall effect of this ordinance is increased cooperation between the city of Leesburg and the U.S. Navy in regard to development in

the area, to help preserve the important Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Bugg Spring and to allow The Villages to proceed with residential and commercial development within the city of Leesburg," Dan Miller, the city's planning and zoning manager, wrote in a memo distributed Tuesday to the commissioners.

In May 2017, The Villages entered into a purchase agreement with the city commission to buy the 2,000 acres

of surplus city-owned land along the turnpike at CR 470 to develop an age-restricted community.

Over the past year, the commission adopted a range of land use and zoning ordinances that created entitlements necessary for The Villages Developer to proceed with a due-diligence review prior to closing on the pending sale of the property.

In addition to the Navy, the proposed Leesburg

ordinance also has the backing of the Leesburg Planning Commission.

Members of the planning commission voted 5-1 in favor of the proposed ordinance at their Thursday regular meeting.

This ordinance proposes the creation of three concentric buffer zones around this underwater testing facility where naval personnel calibrate equipment used on seagoing military vessels.

Buffer zones 1 and 2 are the most sensitive and would apply the most severe restrictions on development, according to the proposed ordinance. However, Zone 3 would pose the least impact on research operations.

"The Villages development lies only within zone 3, which the Navy has indicated that typical development as proposed by The Villages does not interfere with their operations," Miller stated in the memo.

'Hear My Songs' An Evening of Pure Music

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Senior Writer

"Hear my song, it'll help you believe in tomorrow," go the lyrics of celebrated composer Jason Robert Brown's "Hear My Song."

The show, "Hear My Songs," put together by friends of Brown exclusively to premiere at Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol gave a similar message of happiness and hope.

Under colorful changing lights and the musical direction of Brown's friend, Randy Redd, four talented and experienced singers sang the songs of Brown — from his album, "Wearing Someone Else's Clothes" to his renowned musical, "The Last Five Years."

Brown also is known for composing the music for "13," "Parade," "Songs for a New World," "Honeymoon in Vegas" and "The Bridges of Madison County."

Vocalists Cole Burden, Cameron Anika Hill, Vince Oddo and Kalli Siringas were joined by the Studio's live band, making for a night that was all about the music.

The singers performed solos, duets and group numbers, singing songs such as "And I Will Follow," "It All Fades Away," "Bad Bad News" and "Someone to Fall Back On."

The vocals and the instrumentals were top notch as always, and "Hear My Songs" successfully showcased the genius and mastery of Brown's compositions and ability to tell a story through song.

"Jason has been hailed as one of the smartest and most sophisticated composers on Broadway since Stephen Sondheim," Burden said at the beginning of the show.

Ron and Vivian Badami, of the Village of Mallory Square, came to the show to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

They were joined by friends Joyce and Jim Knowles, of the Village of Ashland.

Vivian said that before the show, she wasn't very familiar with Brown's music, so she wasn't sure what to expect.

"They were so talented, each and every one of them," Vivian said. "I was really very surprised and it was a very enjoyable evening."

"I thought it was great," Joyce said. "I loved the intimacy. You got to feel like they were playing just for you, which was so nice."

Tickets still are available for the final show of "Hear My Songs" at 7 p.m. today at Studio Theatre.

Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased online at thesharonstudio.com or at any Villages box office location.

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