

FW: Records Request for Magic Beach Motel-CRRB

From Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/24/2025 4:24 PM

To Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

FYI-

I uploaded to the 50 Vilano Rd. demo permit: the 3rd submittal CRMP, 2nd submittal HABS and updated photo doc of the structure as they are considered finalized, with the applicant submitting it just this morning.

Megan, we can send these documents over the CRRB by tomorrow or end of the week, to follow up if we get any other agenda topics.

From: Georgia Katz <galeekatz@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 4:04 PM
To: Loni M. Silvestris <lmsilvestris@sjcfl.us>; Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Re: Records Request for Magic Beach Motel-CRRB

Got them, thanks! Loni and Ryan!

On Mon, Mar 24, 2025 at 3:53 PM Loni M. Silvestris <lmsilvestris@sjcfl.us> wrote:

Hi Georgia,

Please access the links below for the Demo Permit Application **N2025-0256** file. Ryan just uploaded the Photos, Mitigation Plan and the HABS Survey.

EXPIRES 4/24/2025

- [Permit File - Demo Permit Application](#)
- [Plans - 2012 Rehabilitation Plans](#)
- [Supporting Documents - Photos of structure submitted by applicant](#)
- [Supporting Documents - Mitigation Plan- 3rd submittal \(sent 3-24-25\)](#)
- [Supporting Documents - HABS- 2nd Submittal \(sent 3-18-25\)](#)



Loni M. Silvestris, RMLO, FCRM
Records Management, Senior Team Member
The Permit Center-Building Department/Growth Management
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
[4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084](#)
   904-209-0706 |
publicrecordsbldg@sjcfl.us | www.sjcfl.us

From: Loni M. Silvestris
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:29 PM
To: galeekatz@gmail.com

Subject: Records Request for Magic Beach Motel-CRRB

Importance: High

Hi Georgia,

Per your request for **Magic Beach CRRB** records, please see the FTP link below. I located 10/4/2021 and 2/10/2025 CRRB Meetings that pertained to Magic Beach. There may be more, but it will have to wait until Monday when staff/ Megan Wright is back in the office. You will also notice there is another file MB 12/26/21 from a different request already on the FTP. I will leave it there until 4/4/25. I wanted you to have something to start with so here you go....

FTP

<https://ftp.sjcfi.us>

User: **devplan1anon**

Password: **devplan1**

See Zip file: **Magic Beach Motel-CRRB**

*Check Box on Left, access 3 dots on right, then Use Download Button *

****LINK EXPIRES 4/4/2025****

Have a great weekend!



Loni M. Silvestris, RMLO, FCRM

Records Management, Senior Team Member

The Permit Center-Building Department/Growth Management

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

[4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084](https://www.sjcfi.us)



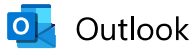
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PLEASE NOTE: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners and employees regarding public business are public records available to the public and media through a request. Your e-mail communications may be subject to public disclosure.

If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

Note, requests are at a high volume and processed in the order in which they are received. Please allow staff sufficient/ extra time to process your request.



County Cultural Resource Review Board

From Stuart Korfhage <skorfhage@bizjournals.com>

Date Thu 3/20/2025 1:11 PM

To mwright@sjcfl.us <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Hello, I am looking at something that is going before the County Cultural Resource Review Board in the future.

What does the board do? Does it have any power or is it just advisory?

Thank you.

Stuart Korfhage

Managing Editor • Jacksonville Business Journal

(904) 265-2218 (o) • (904) 377-4629 (c)

Fwd: ?? Chose collapsed buildings or allow demolition/revitalization by developer ??

From Rick Johnston <rjohnston.mec@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/18/2025 2:36 PM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>; Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carol Ann Sacha Martin** <sachamartin@msn.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 16, 2025 at 11:08 PM

Subject: ?? Chose collapsed buildings or allow demolition/revitalization by developer ??

To: Rick Johnston Colonia <rjohnston.mec@gmail.com>

Cc: Michelle Murphy <michelle_murphy@vilanobeachfl.com>, Linda La Cerva

<linda_lacerva@vilanobeachfl.com>, Mike Cunningham <michael_cunningham@vilanobeachfl.com>, Jennifer Watkins <jennifer_watkins@vilanobeachfl.com>

Hi Rick.

This is my individual report — which suggests the only real hope for the Magic Beach property is through demolition and encouraging the developer to preserve the sense of place and at the same time calming the emotions.

Thank you for your above and beyond perseverance and caring to become a valued member of our community.

I look forward to your preservation on Wednesday.

Gratefully, Sacha Martin

To interested parties. From Sacha Martin, sachamartin@msn.com, 03/16/25

Will you choose collapsed buildings or allow demolition/revitalization by developer?

Attend the Vilano Beach Main Street Community Meeting * Wednesday March 19 * 4 pm at Vilano Beach Pavilion/Ocean Amphitheatre for transparency of plans and feedback opportunity.

I believe the only hope may be through demolition and what follows

I don't like the word demolition. It's not just the loss of a remarkable building but a loss of memories. For Magic Beach Motel, formerly known as Vilano Beach Motel, the collapse of the restaurant ceiling last September was a signal for the beginning of the end. If no demolition then collapsed abandoned buildings could be the only choice.

After purchasing Magic Beach in 2010 from a bank under foreclosure, then putting in more than a million dollars of restoration and renovation investment, enthusiasm, and love for many months of restoration and additional Art Deco design improvements along the way, the previous owners, the Jensens, admit they sold the property because they were not able to continue the ongoing, time consuming, expensive maintenance. Having a profitable, sustainable business became questionable.

All windows had to be replaced. The iron-pipe plumbing is inadequate and failing. A fire caused by a neon transformer resulted in months of repair and the Magic rabbits marquee sat at the owners' residence for months. The original

restoration contractor missed some big items, like water pressure equipment to the second floor and drainage pipes along the front of the property.

Although all electrical had been replaced, at the time of ceiling collapse during Hurricane Helene last September it required months of cleanup. The Beachside Caffe could not plug in more than one appliance at a time. The fear of additional unplanned collapsing is still there. The neon lighting is rapidly failing, if you can even find neon repair. There has been minimal maintenance since last summer. One person posting to NextDoor said “We stayed at Magic Beach a year ago. It was very dirty and run down with roaches. We packed up and checked out as quickly as we could.”

Discovery of Facts vs. Mis-Information

For many people, the loss and the thought of demolition is every emotional and they don't want to let go and efforts were successful in 2021-2022. Last time, there were 7,000 petition signatures and Save Magic Beach signs on A1A. This time there were 63 postings to NextDoor in one week asking to Save Magic Beach, so the emotions and memories are still there.

Because of my 28 year civic memberships in the community, I was asked by several people individually to determine a direction to go in. One sent me a copy of the demolition application which I had not seen. Importantly, in an effort to discover facts vs. mis-information, I arranged a meeting with the previous owners of Magic Beach to try to determine the physical integrity of the buildings and the history of maintenance. I then interviewed the owners of the Beachside Caffe restaurant for their experience with the collapsed ceiling. The findings uncovered numerous disturbing physical and operational weaknesses.

I must also concur at the same time with the Vilano Beach Main Street organization which has a mission of preservation. The Town Center Guidelines gives the “Vision to create a downtown that celebrates the area's history and maintains a sense of place, while incorporating innovative developments that encourage economic redevelopment, sustainability, and new urbanists design.”

VBMS supports revitalization, but needs to remain neutral to the outcome and hope for a win-win outcome. They are providing an opportunity for the developer to publicly present plans and to actively get feedback to those plans which still could change as a result before the cultural review on April 14. The North Beach Community Alliance (NBCA) is tagging along with Main Street. NBCA's mission is “to preserve a healthy quality of life through comprehensive planning, development and infrastructure.”

A first failed application to demolish Magic Beach resulted in designation as a County Significant Cultural Resource in 2022. Also it is listed in the State Route A1A Historic Resources Survey.

Please drive by 165 Vilano Road -- the old Barrancotto's /new Snappers restaurant. When a remarkable renovation begins there it should become a new Art Deco creation our residents will be proud of. The current deplorable state is what Magic Beach will look like. The April 14 meeting of the county Cultural Resource Review Board will decide whether Magic Beach can be demolished.

Encourage Colonia to incorporate emotions and spirit in design of replacement buildings

Let's encourage Colonia to have foresight and initiative in creating a new Art Deco transformation, like the one for Snappers, incorporating recognizable and remarkable features of the old Magic Beach which could also result in unique marketing opportunities for them. Such as “I live in the magic rabbit building near the ocean.” Change, transition, evolution is often frightening, but sometimes necessary. Let's ask them to help keep our unique sense of place in an important and unique way.

Perhaps duplicating and incorporating into the façade in some inventive way. The façade has been used as a backdrop to one TV show, a couple of gangster movies, a Netflix program, backdrop for memorable wedding and special event celebrations.

Possibly: * a new version of Art Deco architecture. * Adopting Art Deco lighting using LED. * Using tropical flamingos as a design element * Capturing the magic of rabbits leaping over stars out of a magician's hat. * Duplicating the wall murals by local artists for public art in a gallery display on a public walkway.

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<linda_lacerva@vilanobeachfl.com>, Mike Cunningham <michael_cunningham@vilanobeachfl.com>,

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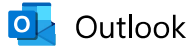
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FW: Please save the Magic Beach Hotel

From Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/10/2025 3:56 PM

To Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>; Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

I have responded to Commissioner Joseph, but another Magic Beach email is below for CRRB.



Michael Lagassé
Environmental Division Manager
Growth Management Department
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0617 | www.sjcfl.us



From: Mike Roberson <mroberson@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:36 PM
To: Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>
Subject: RE: Please save the Magic Beach Hotel

From: Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:13 PM
To: Mike Roberson <mroberson@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: Please save the Magic Beach Hotel

Dear Mike,
This is one of many. Thoughts? Any way to keep part of it for historical or loving value of the community?
Thanks,
Krista

From: Vanessa Carbia <vcarbia@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 6:02 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Please save the Magic Beach Hotel

Please save the Magic Beach Hotel; please DO NOT demolish it; thanks!

Vanessa Carbia

Gainesville, FL

FW: New submission from Contact Us

From Jennifer Gutt <jgutt@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/10/2025 7:23 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Response to Inquiry

From Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Date Mon 3/10/2025 1:09 PM

To jshonwise@gmail.com <jshonwise@gmail.com>

Bcc Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>; Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Good afternoon Jessica,

My name is Megan Wright and I am the County staff liaison for the Cultural Resource Review Board (CRRB). We received your comment : "Hello, I am writing today to ask you to please consider making the magic beach hotel a historical landmark. It not only has weathered the test of time and many storms, but it offers a nod to a time passed. After all, isn't that what makes St. Augustine great. Tourist and locals alike can appreciate the history of such a building. Let's preserve it and honor it the way it deserves."

We will bring this comment to the CRRB members. Our next meeting will be Monday, April 14th at 1:30 pm. This regular public meeting will be held at 4040 Lewis Speedway, Conference Room 1. Magic Beach Motel will be discussed at this meeting and the public is welcome. Here is the CRRB's webpage link: [Cultural Resource Review Board - St. Johns County](https://www.sjcfl.us/crrb)

Thank you for sending this our way. Let me know if you have any questions or comments,



Megan Wright

Environmental Specialist

Growth Management Department

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0623 | www.sjcfl.us



Hi there – I believe Magic Beach is for you correct?



Jen Gutt

Planning Coordinator

Growth Management Department

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0663 | www.sjcf.us



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From: Cheri Ng <chering@sjcf.us>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 1:37 PM
To: Jennifer Gutt <jgutt@sjcf.us>
Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Please respond to Jessica Showise directly or forward to planner. Thanks.



Regards,

Cheri Ng

Administrative Coordinator

Growth Management

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0579 | www.sjcf.us



From: Olivia Willis <owillis@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 1:30 PM
To: Cheri Ng <chering@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: New submission from Contact Us

Good day,

County Administration is in receipt of the email below. In a review of the email, it appears your department was the intended recipient. Please respond directly to the requestor.

If I can do anything to assist, please let me know.

Thank you,

-



Olivia Willis

Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Office of the County Administrator
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine FL 32084
904-209-0583 | www.sjcfl.us



From: St. Johns County, Florida <noreply@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 11:56 AM
To: INFO <INFO@sjcfl.us>
Subject: New submission from Contact Us

Name

Jessica Shonwise

Email

jshonwise@gmail.com

Phone

(904) 885-6937

Message

Hello, I am writing today to ask you to please consider making the magic beach hotel a historical landmark. It not only has weathered the test of time and many storms, but it offers a nod to a time passed. After all, isn't that what makes St. Augustine great. Tourist and locals alike can appreciate the history of such a building. Let's preserve it and honor it the way it deserves.

FW: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach

From Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>

Date Thu 2/20/2025 8:30 AM

To Megan Wright <mwright@sjcfl.us>

Cc Ryan Mauch <rmauch@sjcfl.us>

Megan,

Please draft a response to the email below and get with me and/or Ryan before replying. If possible, please prioritize for this morning. Ryan will be back lunch time-ish.



Michael Lagassé

Environmental Division Manager

Growth Management Department

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine FL 32084

904-209-0617 | www.sjcfl.us



From: Mike Roberson <mroberson@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 8:26 AM
To: Michael Lagasse <mlagasse@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach
Importance: High

Please have someone draft me a response.

Thanks,
Mike

From: Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 9:33 PM
To: Mike Roberson <mroberson@sjcfl.us>
Subject: FW: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach
Importance: High

Hi Mike,

Can you please give me an update on this project? I am receiving many emails and phone calls about this.

Thank you,

Ann

From: Cindy Campbell-Taylor <cindycampbelltaylor2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 5:30 PM
To: Commissioner Christian Whitehurst <bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Sarah Arnold <bcc2sarnold@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Clay Murphy <cmurphy@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Krista Joseph <bcc4kjoseph@sjcfl.us>; Commissioner Ann Taylor <ataylor@sjcfl.us>
Subject: Demolition of Magic Beach and Vilano Beach
Importance: High

St. Johns County Commissioners

St. Johns County Administration Building
500 San Sebastian View
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Members of the St. Johns County Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the potential demolition of the Magic Beach Motel in Vilano Beach. The Magic Beach Motel is not only a culturally significant landmark but also a vital part of the unique “beach vibe” that Vilano Beach and St. Augustine are known for. This vibrant, coastal atmosphere is an essential part of what makes our area so special, and it must be preserved at all costs.

While I recognize that Anastasia Island and St. Johns County are growing, we must be cautious about the kind of development that takes place. The continuous construction of 2- and 3-story buildings and commercial developments is beginning to compromise the character of our beloved beach communities. St. Augustine has built its reputation on its historic charm and coastal beauty, and Vilano Beach should not be transformed into just another stretch of high-rise developments that lack the unique appeal that currently draws visitors and residents alike.

The Magic Beach Motel stands as a reminder of a time when Vilano Beach was a more intimate and relaxed coastal destination. Allowing its demolition to make way for more 2- and 3-story condos and a large commercial building will only further erode the beach vibe that makes this area so unique. It is critical that we do not allow Vilano Beach to follow the same development pattern that has overtaken other parts of the island. If you visit other small beach towns there are moratoriums on height – keeping them one level with very strict guidelines. Why can't this be instituted in St Augustine, particularly Vilano Beach before it gets out of hand?

In addition to the cultural loss, the ongoing pressure on our infrastructure is a growing concern. As more development is approved, our roads, utilities, and services are becoming strained. We must take a more measured approach to growth—one that balances smart development with the preservation of the environment and the quality of life for all who live here.

The developer, Rick, has made it clear that his intention for the property is not to contribute to smart growth but rather to maximize his profit by demolishing the Magic Beach Motel and replacing it with high-density condos and a 5,000-square-foot commercial building. He has openly discussed this plan with the Vilano Beach Main Street Board, and previously, his request to develop the property with the existing footprint was denied. Now, he is seeking approval for demolition to push forward with his original plan, which will further exacerbate the issue of overdevelopment.

Rick the developer has said “the Magic Beach is in disrepair”. Well, this is obvious, there has not been any money put towards restoration or renovation, or it has been minimal. But if you look at what was recently done with Haley’s Court – they did an incredible job of investing in the property while maintaining the look, feel and vibe of what our Beach Towns should be. To me they are the shining star of Economic Development and Preservation and caring about the impact on the community.

I urge you to consider the lasting impact that the demolition of this culturally significant property will have on our community. It is crucial that we protect the character of Vilano Beach and St. Augustine for future generations. I ask that you reject the proposal to demolish the Magic Beach Motel and work to preserve this important landmark. Let’s protect our heritage, our infrastructure, and the very essence of what makes Vilano Beach and St. Augustine so special.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. I trust that you will make the right decision in preserving the character and charm of our community.

I look forward to hearing how you will help Vilano Beach maintain its integrity, your plans on smart growth vs. bigger & better without regard to the community, and next steps as you see them.

And I am happy to work with Commissioner Taylor on this important initiative.

Sincerely,
Cindy Campbell-Taylor
A Vilano Beach Resident
Past Vice President of Vilano Beach Main Street (2022-2024)

Article:

<https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/magic-beach-motel-in-vilano-beach-faces-demolition-again/77-c92a1632-d7bc-4c22-b4c9-e68c6edbe52a>