

130 Gasparilla Special Exception Summary

This is a condensed summary of the nearly 50-page Special Exception Narrative submitted to Charlotte County. Background intended mainly for County reviewers, such as ferry access, neighborhood context, and general information about the Conservancy, has been omitted so this version can focus on what matters most to island residents.

Overview

We envision 130 Gasparilla Way as a modest shared resource that brings value to both the Conservancy and the broader island community through two closely connected uses:

1. Providing a permanent home to support the Conservancy's mission
2. Creating a Community Meeting Hall available to island organizations, clubs, and groups

The Outdoor Grounds

On most days, the property would primarily function as a quiet, educational park with native plants, wildlife habitats, plant growing areas, and maybe even an edible garden. This park would be open from ~9am until sundown with 0-10 people a day, with most visits lasting 5-20 minutes. We plan to retain as much of the native vegetation as possible and to ensure the property is fenced on all sides. Eventually, we plan to add an additional structure that would provide a shaded area for meetings, programs and events.

Meetings & Clubs

Both the indoor and outdoor spaces would be available by reservation.

- **For the Conservancy**, this would include lectures, workshops, board and committee meetings, volunteer orientations, and other programs that currently take place in private homes or borrowed locations.
- **For the community**, it would be available to PIE, island organizations and homeowners' associations, and groups such as book clubs, card or game groups, crafting clubs, etc.

We expect the vast majority of meetings to involve approximately 5-15 people, last less than 2 hours, and conclude by 8pm. A few infrequent Conservancy programs (such as Living Lectures) and PIE programs (such as InfoCentrals) may have closer to 40 people.

The property would not be available for unrestricted public booking, private parties, receptions, family gatherings, or unrelated celebrations. The building will be locked except when scheduled.

Occasional Larger Events

The property could also host a limited number of larger, outdoor Conservancy or Community events. We estimate 2-6 of these events per year, generally hosted on Saturdays, with no more than 100 people present at one time. These types of activities are already held on the island, such as the Casino Night Fundraiser usually hosted in a private home or PIE's annual meeting

usually hosted at the fire station. Larger events would end by 8pm, with organizers allowed additional time for cleanup and putting away materials. The property would be vacated by 10pm.

Parking and Transportation

The existing driveway can accommodate ~14 golf carts, with several additional spaces at the front. This should accommodate the vast majority of uses. For occasional larger gatherings, the Conservancy will help organize right of way and overflow parking.

Limited Overnight Guests

We expect the vast majority of nights to have no overnight guests and any overnight stay would be approved by the Conservancy. Guests might include approved researchers, educators, speakers, and conservation partners whose work benefits the islands. Examples could range from a speaker staying overnight to a stay by a qualified researcher conducting fieldwork.

This would not be a VRBO, Airbnb, hotel, bed and breakfast, or any other publicly available lodging. Overnight stays would not be advertised, rented, offered as a donor benefit, or used for vacations, personal visits, private getaways, or general guest accommodations.

Office Space & Storage

We envision a small workspace with a desk, printer, records, and basic supplies, *not an office building or corporate compound.*

About the Proposed Guidelines

The Special Exception includes proposed guidelines for hours, attendance, parking, lighting, community use, events, building access, and overnight occupancy. These are recommendations intended to help the County evaluate the property, and Charlotte County will ultimately determine what conditions or limitations become part of any approval.

What Happens Next

The Special Exception is scheduled to be considered at the October 14th County meeting, beginning at 9am. As we understand the process:

1. County staff will present the Special Exception request and their review to the board
2. The Conservancy will then have an opportunity to present additional materials
3. Members of the public will be given a timed opportunity to speak
4. The Conservancy may follow up
5. The board will make its decision

Questions? Please email them to feedback@bocillaislandsconservancy.org