

STOP McKinnon Groves Development Lake County Florida

STOP McKinnon Groves Development Lake County Chairman Sean Parks. Protect Lake Avalon Rural Settlement, Orange County Commissioner Nicole Wilson.

WINTER GARDEN, FL, US, August 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One of the more recent battlegrounds is right in the heart of one of the most rural areas of southern Lake County, the Flat Lake Area under Lake County District 2 Commissioner and Chairman Sean Parks. The area borders the protected Lake Avalon Rural Settlement area of Western Orange County, under Commissioner Nicole Wilson.



Going to rural Lake County is an exercise in masochism for anyone who loves nature, Florida, its wildlife, flora, warm winds and clear, beautiful skies. To know that this land will soon become another pseudo-Mediterranean cutout community, with all its attendant retail and infrastructure, is a real kick to the sternum. Will the panthers resort to feeding off the purebred dogs of northern retirees? In truth, I'm more concerned about the panthers than the dogs or the retirees.

This rural part of Lake County is not immune to gated McMonstrosities, but these homes are all zoned Rural Residential and sit on five-acre + parcels, with 50-foot setbacks and environmental buffer zones. The notorious Toll Brothers home builders are working under the ironically named, "[McKinnon Groves](#)", and as with many developments, it's named after what it is proposing to destroy — over 120 acres of active orange groves. This suburban nightmare is headed up by former Orange County Commissioner, Scott Boyd, and from north to south, the plan will stretch over 1.5 miles long, bringing with it thousands of vehicles to clog up the now quiet country roads.

The goal is to re-zone the area from Rural Residential (R-2) and Agriculture (A) to Planned Unit Development (PUD). This will result in a mixed-use, massive and incompatible project of 660 units, each on a shockingly narrow 22ft wide building pad lot. The plan includes 48 acres of commercial space to allow for restaurants, offices, retail shops, entertainment and multi-family apartments.

Now, if you happen to be one of the few Floridians who did not become a real estate expert in 2020, taking into account streets, community centers, and other facilities, this means these houses will be about five feet off the street, and you may not be able to get a lawnmower between you and your neighbor's house, as county Planning & Zoning Vice Chairman, Rick Gonzalez from District 4 pointed out, with a lot more laughter than I might have, at the McKinnon Groves planning and zoning meeting on August 4, 2021. What appears to be a simple bureaucratic rezoning effort will change the very character of Lake County, making it increasingly easier to develop even bigger mixed-use projects in the future. So that the Tolls Brothers' goal of "Disneyfying" rural Lake County will be accomplished.

Our previous proposal to require developers to rewild the equivalent area they develop is, admittedly, idealistic, if not entirely unlikely. There is a middle way, however. Since there won't be an end to development in Florida until the Atlantic meets the Gulf and the entire peninsula is under the ocean, in that glorious mean time, we might try to find an alternative to anonymous, relentless development, particularly, of our historically rural areas.

The developers of this Toll Brothers Trojan Horse Housing Hellscape — Boyd, developer Bob Holston and citrus grower, Dayne Jones, might go down as among the greatest consumers of rural land in Florida history. In itself, this is not a bad thing; people need places to live. The difference of course is how and where it's done, and what your county is going to look like once the project is over, when the developers and their promises have moved on to the next rural area, first, stripping it bare and then filling it with concrete, blacktop, glass, cars and more people.

These promises to bring jobs and preserve the character of rural communities are easy to make and no one knows zoning laws and how to manipulate them like developers. As Toll Brothers did when it claimed on its McKinnon Groves rezoning application that no access would be created in the southern portion of the development, limiting traffic on roads that aren't built for that volume. But this promise is only as good as the current commission. They know full well that one commission can't bind a future commission.

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