

**From:** [Stephen Thompson](mailto:Stephen.Thompson)  
**To:** [Kathy Grandt](mailto:Kathy.Grandt)  
**Subject:** FW: Renaissance I / Van Wezel Foundation  
**Date:** Sunday, March 1, 2020 10:16:53 AM  
**Attachments:** [image887001.png](#)

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I talked to Mr. Bailey who represents the Van Wezel Foundation and it looks like they want to revisit the view corridor easement. Can you send me a copy of the easement and we may need for you and I and the president to initially discuss.

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**From:** BAILEY, DAN [mailto:[dbailey@williamsparser.com](mailto:dbailey@williamsparser.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 28, 2020 10:15 AM  
**To:** Stephen Thompson <[SThompson@najmythompson.com](mailto:SThompson@najmythompson.com)>  
**Subject:** Renaissance I / Van Wezel Foundation

Stephen,

Thanks for calling me back yesterday. This will summarize our conversation.

I believe you are familiar with the fact that, in 1999, the City of Sarasota executed a "View Corridor Easement" to encourage the development of the site now occupied by the Renaissance I condominium and two parking areas to the east, which appear to serve the Valencia Rosemary Place townhouse subdivision. The Easement encumbers the vast majority of the Cultural District, extending on the north from the seawall of the 10th Street boat basin, south to the vicinity of Boulevard of the Arts. Thus, it restricts the area where The Sarasota Bayfront Master Plan proposes as the site of a new performing arts hall to replace the Van Wezel. The operative restriction is found in paragraph 2 which provides:

*City shall not construct, nor shall City permit any other person or entity, including, without limitation, any tenant of City to construct, any new structure having a height of greater than 45 feet above the established minimum Federal Emergency Management Agency flood elevation level ("Flood Zone A") on or within the City Property. Notwithstanding the foregoing, expansions to the "fly" or "loft" of the Van Wezel Hall and/or a successor hall and one other, existing or new structure for the primary use of the performing arts may have a height of up to 90 feet above Flood Zone "A," and existing structures on the date hereof may be repaired or reconstructed to a height not greater than the existing height of such structures or the height permitted above.*

Our client, the Van Wezel Foundation, intends to plan, design, finance and construct the successor hall to the Van Wezel; but its planners have determined that it will be necessary for the fly loft of the new hall to extend to a height about 22.8 feet above the 90-foot maximum permitted by the Easement. This added height will be required to enable the hall to host major productions on the scale of those performed on Broadway; and to address the expected sea level rise over the next 50 years. In order to sanction this added height, it will be necessary to amend the Easement.

The new performing arts center will be sited at the extreme northern end of the Cultural District so it will not be in the view line of Renaissance I residents looking westward toward City Island and South Longboat, but rather off to their right, more in a northwesterly direction. Moreover, the fly loft will constitute a very small component of the overall performing arts structure, and will only affect residents on two floors, and then only to a *de*

*minimis* degree. We are hopeful that the Renaissance residents will support the idea of amending the Easement to accommodate this increased height.

There are several benefits that might make the amendment appealing to them. First, it could be coupled with a binding commitment from the City to place the new performing arts hall at the location presently proposed--at the extreme northern end of the current parking lot, west of the northernmost lawn bowling greens. Second, it would lend certainty to the scale and orientation of the proposed performing arts hall. Third, the City might be open to surrendering the right to build a second building to a height up to 90 feet (since the Orchestra has announced its intention to leave the Bayfront).

I hasten to add that the only parties who can amend the Easement are the City of Sarasota and the Renaissance I board of directors. But because the amendment of the Easement will be essential to the success of the new performing arts hall project, the Van Wezel Foundation proposes to take on the responsibility of starting the conversation with your condo association leadership. Within recent days, City Commissioners have been individually apprised of the need for the additional height, the need for the Easement amendment, and the fact that the amendment is dependent on the condo association's concurrence. But beyond that, the circle of present awareness about the issue is still quite small. We have no reluctance to eventually be as transparent as possible, yet we must be discreet at this stage as we feel an obligation to first share this news with the condo leadership and their residents, rather than having them find out by reading a newspaper article.

Once you have had a chance to alert the condo management to the issue at hand, I propose that we meet with the association officials that you recommend, with whom we might share all the information at hand; then move on to a wider audience. If, in the meantime, you have any questions of me, don't hesitate to call.

We appreciate your counsel and guidance.



**Charles D. (Dan) Bailey, Jr.**  
Attorney at Law  
Williams Parker Harrison Dietz & Getzen  
(941) 329-6609  
[d Bailey@williamsparker.com](mailto:d Bailey@williamsparker.com)  
[williamsparker.com](http://williamsparker.com)  
[200 South Orange Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236](http://200 South Orange Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236)



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