

Mayor Hibbard and City Councilors,

Imagine Clearwater has a valuable aquatic resource, sea grass beds along the waterfront that deserve protection during the operation of the concert/entertainment venue. Considerable effort has been made to protect the mature live oak trees from construction activities in the park. The beauty of these trees is readily apparent to anyone who visits the site. However, the sea grass beds are hidden from view by the shallow water. (see attached sea grass mapping information provided by Dr. Anastasiou at SWFWMD)

To keep this letter brief we shall not outline the ecological and water quality benefits of sea grass in this letter. There are extensive studies in the scientific literature readily available should there be interest.

The Environmental Advisory Board is concerned about impacts to the sea grass that is very likely to occur during events. The concert venue can be expected to attract small boats to the waters adjacent to the park to enjoy the music for free. Without mooring restrictions boats will have the ability to cast anchor close to the shore within the sea grass beds. Damage to the sea grass will result from the dropping and removal of anchors. Over time the ecological integrity of the sea grass beds will be degraded.

In our advisory capacity the EAB strongly recommends that the City Council require that a survey of the sea grass along the Imagine Clearwater waterfront be performed. Once these data have been collected a protection plan should be prepared to identify the extent of mooring restrictions that will ensure that this aquatic resource is not degraded as a result of the temporary mooring of boats.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our recommendation.

cc. Jon Jennings, City Manager

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