

Brian Lockwood — SGPOA Board Election Information Sheet

Our beach is not simply one amenity among others; it was — and is — foundational from the time Gene Brown and John Stocks established the Plantation. Since the first person happened upon St. George, people have traversed the island along our beach. If that access goes, this is a drastically different place. Lot owners, interior owners, and bay-front owners lose the beach we were sold as members. Gulf-front owners would keep the sand in front of their houses but the Plantation as we know it would be replaced with an unthinkable realignment: a few Gulf-front houses and a gated neighborhood cut off from the water.

This litigation has burdened all of us for so long. We are all weary from it. With the case heading toward trial, the legal work — and the cost — will pick up. But we must not let our weariness weaken our resolve to preserve the way things have always been and see this thing to the end. Although I'm a retired attorney (judicial law clerk; House of Representatives subcommittee counsel; private practice lawyer representing litigants), I'm not running to try the case or to second-guess strategy. Our trial counsel is among the best in this area of the law. I will treat the representation as necessary — and every invoice as something that the board is obliged to read.

Shifting to dues, they went up way more than any of us liked. I followed FINCOM's work over the course of last year and believe they worked the number down as far as they could. I break our costs into three buckets. Statutory reserves and required ratios — we have little room there. Day-to-day operations — FINCOM already wrung that bucket hard. Litigation — that is the one that can still run away from us. I will work with FINCOM and the other members of the board to keep those numbers tight. Ditto on litigation and legal expenses.

In order to increase home sale velocity as well as vacation rental weeks, both of which will increase our non-dues revenue, I'd like to build upon the Plantation's uniqueness by exploring recognition as a "Dark Sky Community". I believe many of the things we've established in our ARC design guidelines combined with our efforts to protect sea turtles give us a jumpstart toward this recognition. Only one other Florida community has achieved "Dark Sky" status: the City of Groveland. And only two Florida public lands—one state, one federal—have been named "Dark Sky Parks". Our own St. George Island State Park is seeking to become only the third Dark Sky Park in Florida. Our designation would set us apart from every other Florida beach community, boosting our brand. We'd offer owners, prospective owners, and visiting vacationers who value peace, solitude, and all of our abundant nature a refuge in an increasingly digital world. If the state park is named a "Dark Sky" park, people will be able to experience it in a tent or camper; in the Plantation they can live it 365 days a year. We have something that's rare — let's use that to benefit every owner in the community. More sales (at conceivably higher prices) and more visitor weeks translate to increased revenue, reducing the pressure for dues inflation.

We all have multiple reasons why the Plantation and its beach are important to us. I have one that's particularly personal to me: last Thanksgiving, on a clear, cold morning, I married my wife at a place that we owners cherish and love to share with family, friends and, yes, vacationers who visit for the week: the Plantation's beach. So, although we don't currently reside within the Plantation, we're very close to it, and it plays an important role in our lives: my wife is Debbie Ingram, our Communications Director. Of course it is our dream to build our final home on my lot.

I'll do everything I can to preserve beach access and to preserve our refuge from the world's madness. In order to do so, I'd like the opportunity to earn your vote. I can be reached at (850) 509-0954.