

Good evening, I am here tonight as a concerned citizen that has some first-hand experience dealing with the applicant. I will show through my expert testimony that this land usage change will and has adversely impacted residents with the change from agriculture to extraction. My name is Garrett Ramy, I am a bordering resident of the new proposed land usage change in Manatee County, Wingate East. I understand, how much work and research has gone into this. I am here to give my own personal testimony of having Mosaic as a "good neighbor"

I worked the most dangerous job in the nation for nearly 17 years as a tower technician. I wanted to leave my job and become a micro farmer. I just had to establish two dozen juicing customers and possibly two restaurants as a primary purveyor. I decided I wanted to relocate from North Carolina to Florida and find land that was qualified for organic status in a balanced ecosystem in the only location on the east coast where I can grow three crops a year.

I purchased my property in October 2015, prior to doing it I contacted my County officials regarding my neighbor and it was the consensus that a land uses change from agriculture to extraction would be highly unlikely due to the large population of gopher tortoise and the fact that the Myakka Head begins in my backyard coming from my adjacent wetland owned by Mosaic. One year later, I received a letter from Mosaics attorneys stating that they are in application for a land usage change, of 3600 Acres. This was occurring while I am in application for my USDA organic certification which takes three to four years to obtain and qualify for.

I have since lost the ability to obtain and maintain organic status do to a Phosphate mine next door and the land usage change. I am now disqualified.

Not once did Mosaic make a personal attempt to reach out to me to discuss this prior to application. While at the hearings the county feared being sued by the applicant utilizing the Bert Harris Act. So how much of a good neighbor is Mosaic if they're willing to sue your county if they don't get their way? Mosaic pumped money into the community, ran millions of dollars in propaganda ads. They increased donations, and did wonderful things for the community to butter them up like being a great sponsor of your Arena, of a magnitude that it was dedicated in their name. For God's sake they even got to the preacher in the Manatee hearings. I am here to remind you tonight that Mosaic's Goodwill, donations and gestures are just that. There are no strings attached. In fact, DeSoto County owes Mosaic absolutely nothing!

I currently have a lawsuit with Manatee County, and the judge has allowed Mosaic to participate. So here we have a small organic micro farmer, that has undergone a corrupt tyrannical government and special interest and is now in a David-and-Goliath battle against a global phosphate Giant, Mosaic.

So I currently have 28 years of mortgage payments on worthless land, there was no provision for bordering residence laid out in Mosaic's Master Manipulation plan. The county provided no provisions for bordering residents in their mining ordinance. There was no mediator or third party to discuss Regulatory Taking. Fact is no one wants to live next to a Phosphate Mine. They came into application for the land usage change after I was there first. If you have to sue a County and an industry just to get them to do the right thing it's probably something you don't want your county. If I want to sell my property I must disclose a Phosphate Mine has been permitted.



Traditionally, phosphate mining has been in remote areas where citizens are isolated from this horrific mining practice. This is new territory as Mosaic is now approaching into residential communities as many prevailing health issues are now being sighted in Polk County. Phosphate mining has consequences and that must be taken into consideration and included in your mining ordinance. So I'm basically here today to advocate for the citizens especially the bordering residents. Not only does phosphate mining bring a health risk and environmental risk, it brings no jobs and has no benefit to the county or the state. This is why Mosaic maintains the lowest approval rating. This can easily be replaced by micro farmers that have similar business plans like mine that would hire 5 to 10 employees at 15 to \$35 an hour.

Micro farmers can produce more superior products on less land, and certainly do not require the use of Mosaic products or pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

That's an environmental and economical win for the county. If anybody has read the Art of the Deal, the one thing we've learned from Trump, is negotiating a good deal. Hardee county gets paid nearly \$4,000 per acre. Why doesn't DeSoto have the same offer?

You will hear a lot of opposition in here today from the environmental side, and they are justified to be considered and heard. I am self educated on phosphate mining in Florida and the more I learn the more difficult I find it that we are assembled here today having this discussion and that this mining practice is not outlawed in this state. I ask that you take this information from the environmentalist into deep consideration because the environment and the future of our agriculture and tourism is everybody's business in FL.

During the Manatee County hearings when the applicant was asked what about the surrounding and bordering residence, and their property values we were told by the applicant that that we were irrelevant. The job of the county is to represent its citizens not the special interests, we are also in an election year and many commissioners in Manatee County had committed political suicide with this vote and will not be reelected from this decision. I'm asking this Commission to reject this proposal.

You have an opportunity to be a hero for DeSoto County today and your citizens. We can all wake up tomorrow morning and read the paper and note this historically as the commission that saved DeSoto County. You have the ability and power to kill this right here, right where it lies or you can go back to the drawing board and address all these issues. Either way a postponement of this vote to make a better, well informed decision would be in the best interest of the citizens of DeSoto County. There is no need to rush one of the most important decisions you will ever probably be making for the future of this County. I recommend as I have dedicating an hour a night to become educated on phosphate mining. This was not my choice to obtain this knowledge. I had to become informed about what is going on in my backyard from this aggressive mining company. I invite you to come take the toxic tour so you can get the real information first hand. You will discover that the cons outweigh the pros especially since a large majority of this product is being shipped overseas and Mosaic monitors themselves.

That's right, the industry monitors itself. That does not produce for the citizens a warm fuzzy feeling. Especially after years of irresponsibility and incompetence and being penalized for it. A bigger question is to ask why does Mosaic have over 800 million dollars in OSHA violations? Is this an industry you are comfortable having in your county?

We all took an oath here in this hearing, however some of us have no reason to sugar coat, exaggerate or even lie.

I don't know the outcome of my personal case because it is still pending, however it is evident that I am certainly outgunned financially. I understand that this is only the Planning Commission but I am asking you as public servants to be Citizens First and honor your constituents and oaths to your Community First. This is why we have these hearings, they're here for the people not for the applicant.

There is certainly plenty of opposition here from educated citizens that have taken the initiative to investigate the other side of Phosphate mining.

I would like to add a note to this testimony, because I don't know the outcome of my personal case I'm going to need another place to live. I'm going to have to relocate in order to reenter a strategy to my pursuit of happiness and DeSoto County is looking mighty attractive.

Let's keep DeSoto County that way, attractive!

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