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## HELP US SAVE SANIBEL'S BEAUTIFUL NIGHT SKIES [View Article Archives \(/archives.cfm\)](#)

November 26, 2014

### ***HELP US SAVE SANIBEL'S BEAUTIFUL NIGHT SKIES!***

Written by David Bath, Larry Schoop, Mike Gillespie

## **SANIBEL'S "DARK SKIES" ORDINANCE IS IN PERIL OF BEING UNDERMINED.**

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PERSUADE CITY COUNCIL TO PRESERVE IT.**

In 2000 the Sanibel City Council enacted a "Dark Skies" ordinance whose purpose was:

**"To set outdoor lighting standards that will minimize glare, light trespass, and skyglow; conserve energy while maintaining nighttime safety, security and productivity; protect the privacy of residents; minimize disturbance of wildlife; enhance the ambiance of the community; and ensure the optimal viewing of the spectacular skies above Sanibel."**

Dark Skies establishes standards for outdoor lighting that carry out its stated purpose by discouraging what is known as "uplighting" and establishing a preference for "downlighting." The idea is simple. Reduce artificial light pollution by redirecting light where it is needed without having it intrude where it is not needed.

Except for new construction and properties near turtle nesting areas, City Council in 2000 delayed compliance with law for fifteen years - until 2015 - so that property owners would have ample time to consider modifications to their outdoor lighting.

Last spring the City Council extended the time for compliance for an additional three years and undertook to make what were supposed to be minor changes to address new technology and a few safety concerns.

To our great disappointment, the revised ordinance that is now proposed -- and will be up for discussion before the City Council on December 2 -- bears little resemblance to the original. Besides weakening key standards, it "grandfathers" almost all noncompliant light fixtures until they are replaced voluntarily.

In other words it makes compliance with the law in most cases optional. What would have been the result if hooking up to the new sewer system, complying with the Brazilian pepper removal, or fertilizer ordinances had been made voluntary? It would have undermined the very purpose of those laws and been unacceptable.

**Grandfathering noncompliant light fixtures will destroy the spirit and intent of Dark Skies. It should be removed from the proposed ordinance.**

If you share our belief that Dark Skies needs to be preserved -- because it is an important part of what makes Sanibel so special -- come to the City Council meeting on December 2 and make your feelings known. If you are unable to be there on the 2nd, write to members of City Council and tell them that you support Dark Skies and want "grandfathering" of noncompliant fixtures removed from the ordinance. **Here is the link for sending your email to Council:**

Help us preserve Sanibel's beautiful starry skies. Come to Council on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or email them now to remove the "grandfathering" language.

Thank you for helping us keep Sanibel special....

**Jim Beauchamp**

COTI President



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