

From: geoff@comrie.net
Sent: Friday, September 26, 2025 8:14 AM
To: 'CEO@stpete.com'
Subject: TV Marina Discussion

Chris,

As a member of the TVCA and a resident of Tierra Verde, I am writing to express my strong concern and disappointment regarding the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce's refusal to correct materially false and/or misleading statements made in your September 22, 2025, letter to the St. Petersburg Development Review Commission (DRC).

Once you were made aware that statements in the letter were inaccurate or misleading, it was your ethical responsibility to correct the record. Instead, the Chamber has chosen not to take accountability. This failure reflects poorly on the credibility of your institution and undermines the public's trust in your endorsements.

Your letter gives the direct impression that Greenleaf Capital has demonstrated a "willingness to collaborate" and has acted responsibly with the community in this redevelopment effort—claims that are demonstrably false. Endorsing such statements without verification is misleading and damages the Chamber's reputation as a reliable stakeholder in our community. Equally concerning was the unprofessional and defensive tone taken by your team during yesterday's discussion. On multiple occasions I had to ask your staff not to mischaracterize the conversation. Language such as "ruin" and "criticize" was repeatedly used by your staff—language that I did not use and that misrepresents the request to retract your support. Let me be clear: many of us strongly support the redevelopment, but we do not support the reckless manner in which this project is being executed.

My request to the Chamber was simple: correct statements that have been proven false or materially misleading. The unwillingness to even consider the impact this project has had on local businesses—many of which are now permanently closed—is telling. It is particularly disheartening for an organization that claims to champion the local business community. Perhaps those businesses did not contribute dues to your Chamber, but they still deserved your respect and due consideration.

What I found most troubling was the candid admission that no due diligence was conducted on this project simply because neither I nor the TVCA are paying members of the Chamber. That rationale is indefensible. The obligation to ensure the accuracy of public statements and endorsements exists regardless of membership status or affiliation.

This situation marks a disappointing chapter for the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. My initial concern that the Chamber of Commerce was deceived into writing the letter was incorrect, you were merely paid to do it, without any verification of truth. Going forward, I would encourage your organization to consider including a disclaimer on such endorsements, making it clear when they are issued without verification or are based solely on the interests of paying members.

Finally, I want to inform you that the Chamber's process and unwillingness to correct its misleading statements will be presented on the record at the next Development Review Committee meeting for the city and press to fully understand.

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