

# *Anna Maria* The Islander

## Ambitious project is 'exciting' for busy Chiles

By Rick Catlin. Islander Reporter

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**This vacant lot on Pine Avenue is one of the Chiles-Coleman properties under contract where a two-story retail-office-residential structure would be built.**

**Islander Photo: Rick Catlin**

To say Anna Maria Island businessman Ed Chiles is busy is an understatement.

In addition to being the head of the ownership group of the Sandbar, BeachHouse and Mar Vista restaurants, Chiles is also chairman of START, the organization that fights red tide; president of the Manatee Community Foundation; vice-chairman of

the Lawton Chiles Foundation; a member of the tourism development council; the former chairman of Goodwill (two terms); campaign treasurer for Christine Jennings for Congress; and volunteers to help the Anna Maria Island Community Center when called upon.

So, why take on the work and financial responsibility of putting together an investment group to purchase Pine Avenue properties in Anna Maria for development as retail-office-residential locations with an "Old Florida" architectural style?

"It's a very exciting opportunity," said Chiles, who is working with partner Mike Coleman, who lives on Pine Avenue, to accomplish this dream.

"In my lifetime, I'll likely never have but this one opportunity to preserve the Anna Maria that I grew up in, the Anna Maria we all remember. Why not take the chance?"

The project involves options on 15 Pine Avenue properties and six lots on North Bay Boulevard at the Pine Avenue intersection.

Chiles and Coleman have pledged to create only two-story ROR units on the Pine Avenue properties. Because of the high cost of the six lots on North Bay Boulevard, Chiles told the city in a letter that those might have to be developed as three-story ROR units (two stories over parking).

To fulfill the dream will take a lot of cooperation between the planners and the city, Chiles acknowledged. It will also take a lot of money, and Chiles has already begun the arduous task of finding investors who believe in the Pine Avenue vision.

Without the effort, Chiles believes that, in time, Pine Avenue will eventually become nothing more than a canyon of three-story residential structures.

"I have nothing against those residences, but I just don't think people want to see Pine Avenue become a street with nothing but those type homes. If that happens, the ambiance of the original Anna Maria is lost."