

Preserving the past, while planning for the future

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ANNA MARIA ISLAND (Bay News 9) -- A group of residents and developers are working to preserve the past, as they plan for the future of Anna Maria Island.

Residents Jane Coleman said the island community's charm won her over, but when she noticed "For Sale" signs popping up and down along Pine Avenue, she worried that big development could move in.

"I've seen these incredible little villages and I've seen them go both ways," Coleman said. "I've seen them lost forever, the character's lost forever and you can never get it back."

So Coleman, along with her husband, Michael, teamed up with other residents of the island to create the Pine Avenue restoration project. The group is buying historic homes and turning them into places suitable for business.

More Information

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The Rosedale Cottage is kind of home the group hopes to save. It was built in 1913, built using block purchased from Sears and Roebuck. The Roser Chapel across the street is constructed out of the same store-bought block.

The group envisions Rosedale Cottage as a hub of sorts along Pine Avenue. The development would be similar to what has already happened in the nearby Roser Cottage, which now houses Sato Realty.

Jason Sato, who operates the realty company, said he's looking forward to getting neighbors.

"I can't say enough," he said. "I mean we're very excited about it happening. I mean we can't wait for them to break ground."

Coleman said she can't wait either, as she anxiously watches her vision come to life.

"It's just going to come alive," she said. "To do that without losing what we already have is the exciting part of it."

Organizers said they hope Pine Avenue will have the pedestrian-friendliness of St. Armand's Circle while still maintaining Anna Maria Island's laid-back, old-Florida atmosphere.

The Rosedale Cottage is one of the first historic homes purchased by the group.