

## The Truth About Growth and St. Pete Beach

*PolitiFact said the opposition's claims about St. Pete Beach are "half truths" and said "voters should be wary in blindly believing that St. Pete Beach's experiences would be duplicated statewide should Amendment 4 pass."*

The well-heeled and politically influential opponents of Amendment 4 are proving that they will tell any lie, distort any fact and use "scare tactics" (as one South Florida business newspaper called them) in their attempt to keep voters from having a say about proposed large-scale developments that would result in higher property taxes for them.

Amendment 4 is very simple: It will give voters the seat at the table that they deserve. Any changes to a local comprehensive land-use plan would have to be ultimately approved or rejected by voters in a referendum instead of by politicians subject to the influence of special interest money and lobbyists.

There is no comparison between St. Pete Beach's use of its charter to give voters a say in some comp plan decisions and how the statewide Amendment 4 proposal would work. In fact, the former vice mayor of St. Pete Beach, Harry Metz, says if his city had Amendment 4 it would have not faced the litigation it faced as a result of developers trying to take a short cut to dramatically increase densities on beachfront properties.



**Truth:** "The St. Pete Beach litigation is all about developers who wanted to build 15-story hotels on our waterfront and triple the population density of our small island community," Metz said. "Many community residents strongly opposed this. The litigation that resulted dealt exclusively with the attempt by developers to submit their own comprehensive land use plan to the voters without complying with the requirements of the Florida Growth Management Act. **It had nothing to do with Hometown Democracy.**"

**Truth:** Of the six recent amendments to the comp plan that were properly put on the ballot for voters in St. Pete Beach, all six were approved. Having voters involved in comp planning did not stop healthy, appropriate growth in that small island community. The developer-fueled recession did that.

**Truth:** Redevelopment continues to occur in St. Pete Beach. An older hotel was rehabbed into Postcard Inn On The Beach, a boutique hotel that has been featured in national travel and lifestyle magazines.

To get the truth about Yes on 4/Hometown Democracy, go to its website at [www.floridahometowndemocracy.com](http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com).

*(photo courtesy of flickr.com/inazakira)*