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February 21, 2018

Christia Alou  
Interim Village Manager  
Village of El Portal  
500 NE 87th Street  
El Portal, FL 33138

**RE: Application for Special Exception and Site Plan Approval  
The Sanctuary in El Portal LP  
205 NE 87th Street, El Portal, Florida**

**LETTER OF INTENT**

Dear Ms. Alou:

This firm represents The Sanctuary in El Portal LP, the applicant ("Applicant") for special exception and site plan approval of a mixed-use project (the "Project" or "The Sanctuary") on the property located at 205 NE 87th Street, El Portal, Florida (the "Property"). The Project will serve as an important anchor along NE 2nd Avenue, promoting the community's vision to transform this corridor into a vibrant, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use main street within the Village of El Portal (the "Village"), as explored further below.

**I. THE PROPERTY: LAND USE AND ZONING**

The Property is approximately two acres in size (87,792 SF) and contains an existing structure previously used as a religious facility. The Property has a future land use designation of Medium Density Mixed Use under the Village's Comprehensive Plan. This future land use category allows for a broad range of office, commercial, and limited lodging uses in addition to multi-family residential development.

The Property is designated Zone 4 ("Z4") under the Village's recently adopted form-based zoning code (the "Code"). The Z4 designation, or "Main Street Zone", is designed to include small scale mixed-use development with a range of building types to create a walkable, human-scale urban environment.

## **II. PROPOSED PROJECT**

### **A. Background**

The proposed mixed-use Project, known as The Sanctuary, will serve as a vibrant and engaging anchor of El Portal's main street corridor along NE 2nd Avenue. The Project will include approximately 10,617 square feet of office use, 2,713 square feet of retail space, a 3,524 square-foot restaurant, and approximately 4,776 square feet of multi-purpose event space with a capacity of 308 people for concerts, lectures, and other events within a pre-existing and renovated church structure on the Property.

### **B. Tenants**

As currently proposed, the restaurant to be included within The Sanctuary is "Osteria Italiana", a creation of the owners of Toscana Divina in Mary Brickell Village and Ironside Pizza. The restaurant will have a maximum of 150 seats and will be open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The Sanctuary will also proudly serve as the permanent home of Miami's Nu Deco Ensemble ("Nu Deco"), a local 21st century orchestra. Nu Deco works in conjunction with guest musicians, composers, dancers, DJs, and media artists to create adventurous and unique classical music performances. As currently proposed, Nu Deco will hold evening programs five times per year, running from Thursday to Saturday. The anticipated attendance for these events is approximately 220 people. The event hall will also be home to up to four lectures per month with an estimated 100 attendees. These lectures will be held on weekdays during working hours. The orchestra, lectures, and dining opportunities are perfect community uses to launch the Village's main street concept.

The Applicant intends the office spaces to be occupied by customary tenants such as non-profit organizations, attorneys, public relations firms, marketing and graphic design companies. Dry retail uses such as apparel, furniture, and fitness such as yoga are the target tenants for the retail spaces.

### **C. Operation and Parking**

The office spaces will operate during typical business hours while the retail tenants may establish evening and weekend hours as is customary practice to encourage an activated pedestrian realm along the NE 2nd Avenue corridor. The restaurant will operate seven days a week serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner in addition to beer, wine, and liquor service, to be enjoyed with a meal or at one of The Sanctuary's highly anticipated events. The Applicant intends to pursue a liquor license from the State of Florida.

A total of 58 parking spaces is required under the Code for the proposed Project. With 128 total parking spaces, inclusive of valet spaces, the Applicant is providing more than double the number of required parking spaces to ensure minimal disruption to neighbors and local traffic flow. Furthermore, parking during all events on the Property will be managed by valet service. A proposed valet design and operational plan is included with the application materials.

#### D. Landscaping and Irrigation

To ensure proper irrigation of the Property, the Applicant intends to contract a professional licensed and insured landscape firm to supplement rainfall and soil moisture under drought conditions. Automatic irrigation will be used to maintain the existing and proposed trees on the Property. The Applicant will ensure that the firm contracted to do the work will distribute water equally where necessary and will provide shop drawings once completed. Automatic irrigation will permit improved water-use efficiency through selective and targeted irrigation.

### **III. COMPATIBILITY WITH VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, FORM-BASED ZONING CODE, AND 2013 CHARRETTE**

As noted above, the Property is designated Medium Density Mixed Use under the Village's Comprehensive Plan. This designation allows for a "broad range of mixed-use, office, and commercial uses" in addition to multi-family residential dwellings and lodging uses. With a thoughtful mix of commercial, event space, and office uses, the proposed Project is compatible with this future land use designation.

Moreover, Objective 1.2 of the Village's Comprehensive Plan states that the Village "shall continue to achieve a compatible and well designed mix of land uses in the N.E. 2nd Avenue corridor...", and under the Village's recently adopted form-based Code, the NE 2nd Avenue corridor along which the Property is located is designed to serve as the main street corridor of the Village. The Project directly furthers these objectives by providing a vibrant mixed-use anchor in the middle of the NE 2nd Avenue corridor, enhancing the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors within this area of the Village.

The vision of the NE 2nd Avenue corridor as the Village's lively main street was established during the 2013 El Portal Community Design Charrette Study. The purpose of this study was to create a long-term vision for future development within the Village as identified by residents, government officials, and other local stakeholders. Participants' desire to transform the NE 2nd Avenue corridor into a "vibrant, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use corridor" was later codified in the Code and Comprehensive Plan and is embodied by the proposed Project as described above.

### **IV. SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

Pursuant to Article III of the Code, the office, retail, and restaurant uses within The Sanctuary are all permitted by right under the Z4 zoning designation. The multi-purpose event space is permitted under Z4, but requires an additional layer of review by staff and the Village Council through the Special Exception process to ensure this use is compatible with the surrounding area. Under the Code's current use definitions within Section 24-B.8, this event space may qualify as both a "Place of Assembly" and an "Entertainment Establishment", depending on the type of event held. Both uses require Special Exception review and approval. Additionally, an establishment that receives a valid alcoholic beverage license from the State of

Florida that permits the sale and consumption of alcohol on site, to which the sale of food may be incidental, is defined under the Village's Code as an Alcohol Beverage Service Establishment, which also requires Special Exception approval.

In considering a use for Special Exception approval, the Village Council shall evaluate the following standards pursuant to Section 17-59 of the Village's Code of Ordinances:

1. No odor, dust, fumes, gas, smoke or other atmospheric pollutant shall be disseminated beyond the boundaries of the immediate site of the building in which the use is conducted in B-1 districts.

*The proposed uses are not located in a B-1 district. In any case, by their nature the Entertainment Establishment/Place of Assembly and the alcohol beverage service establishment uses will not produce odor, dust, fumes, gas, smoke or other atmospheric pollutant beyond the boundaries of the Property.*

2. There shall be no noise or vibration resulting from or in connection with the use that is perceptible from any part of any district. See also chapter 13 of the Code of Ordinances.

*The Applicant will ensure events and activities on the Property are in compliance with the Village's noise ordinance as codified in Chapter 13. The uses will not create vibration perceptible from neighboring properties beyond what is typical of the types of uses promoted for the 2nd Avenue corridor under the Code.*

3. There shall be no glare resulting from lights in connection with the use that is observable from outside the boundaries of the district within which the use is conducted.

*To ensure minimal disruption to neighbors, the Applicant is installing a high-quality fence along the eastern Property boundary to block glare from headlights and other lighting on the Property. Additionally, through the permitting process, Building Department staff will review issues of lighting on the property to ensure compliance with the Code.*

4. The volume and type of vehicular traffic associated with such use, particularly its impact on residential streets, must be appropriate to the location and to the surrounding road network, as demonstrated by a professional traffic study to be prepared by the applicant or the applicant's representative and accepted by the Village planning director as complete and adequate. The Village Council may condition the approval of a special exception on improvements to the surrounding road network, or other multi-modal transportation improvements, if it determines them to be necessary based on the special exception hearing.

*A professional traffic study for the proposed Project was completed and submitted as part of the Special Exception application package. As noted above, the Project is providing more than double the number of parking spaces than is required and will provide valet services during all events. The traffic generated by the proposed uses is*

*appropriate to the location of the Property within the Village's bustling main street corridor.*

5. Compliance with the goals, objectives and policies of the Village's adopted comprehensive plan.

*The Project not only complies with the goals of Comprehensive Plan, but specifically furthers the objectives, policies, and spirit of the Plan under Objective 1.2, as described above.*

6. Compliance with all applicable provisions of the Village's code.

*The Project is located within a pre-existing structure on the Property. All aspects of the Project design that are within the control of the Applicant are in compliance with the Village's Code, as reviewed and vetted by the Village's professional staff.*

7. The design of the proposed special exception prevents adverse visual impacts and the impact of intensity of the proposed use on adjacent lands. When considering design, the Village Council shall review the application to ensure that the dimensions, height, floor area ratio, setbacks, buffers, location and extent of parking, access drives, open space, appropriate connections to the community, service areas and landscaping are provided in a manner compatible with the area.

*The proposed Project is located within a church structure that has existed on the Property for many years. The proposed renovations to the building will modernize and beautify the Property, providing a vibrant reuse of the structure that has long been a part of the Village's urban fabric.*

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests site plan approval of the proposed Project and Special Exception approval for a Place of Assembly/Entertainment Establishment and an Alcohol Beverage Service Establishment. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Carly Grimm

CSG

Enclosures

cc: Brian S. Adler, Esq.