

# Residents sign petition to prevent development on rural grounds in Seminole County

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**SEMINOLE COUNTY, Fla.** – As more growth sprawls into Seminole County, pressure mounts again to push back the rural boundaries in Seminole County set by voters in 2004.

Thousands of residents have [signed a petition](#) to protect the rural boundary as developer Chris Dorworth files an application to hopefully develop on 70 acres within the land where Pappy's Strawberry Patch is currently located at the northeastern corner of Florida Avenue and DeLeon Street.

That land is currently within the Seminole County Rural Boundary, set by voters in 2004, includes 74,413 acres.

It contains most of Seminole County's wilderness areas, notably the Black Hammock Wilderness Area, the Geneva Wilderness Area, the Lake Procter Wilderness Area, the Lake Harney Wilderness Area, and the Chuluota Wilderness Area. The Little Big Econ Wilderness Area and the Lake Jessup Conservation Area are also adjacent to the Rural Boundary.

The area is so important to residents, there is a group called 'Save Rural Seminole' led by David Bear.

“Growth doesn’t have to occur on every square foot of land, that growth should occur in a concentrated way, it should occur in the urban core of the counties as opposed to sprawling out over the entire area,” Bear said. “And that’s really what the rural boundary is all about.”

But as that growth continues, the pressure to sprawl has strained the rural boundary and that pressure came with the same developer years ago. Save Rural Seminole was created when Chris Dorworth filed an application to develop on 600 acres of land within the rural boundary for the controversial River Cross vote. The application, denied by the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners, has led to lawsuits that continue to this day.

Bear said Dorworth’s new application, while only 70-acres within the rural boundary, will be met with pushback from residents once again.

“I can promise you, without any uncertainty that if the county commission were to allow them to move the line here, the very next developer is going to come and point to this exact application and say, ‘Well you let him do it, how could you not let me do it?’” Bear said. “So, it’s vitally important that in this situation, whether it’s 25, 50, 75 or 200 acres, that they not allow the rural boundary to be moved.”

Bear said residents are ready to hold that line - literally with the petition and sending letters to county commissioners.

However, in a text conversation with Dorworth about the pushback already headed his way, Dorworth told News 6 he doesn’t want to develop all on Pappy’s Patch instead his

plan was, “do a very high-end single-family community with no commercial or industrial use. And as my family loves the strawberry patch, we will preserve a substantial portion of the existing strawberry patch as it’s a community treasure. But I don’t know what that looks like,” Dorworth said.

There was a public hearing to discuss the application set for Tuesday of this week, it has since been pushed back until next year.