City of Sanibel

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS: In 2016, the Gopher Tortoise Council adopted April 10th as Gopher Tortoise Day in Florida to increase awareness and appreciation for this protected species. The gopher tortoise is considered a keystone species and is an essential indicator of ecosystem health; and

WHEREAS: Gopher tortoise burrows provide shelter and protection to more than 350 species. Due to problems such as habitat loss, disease, and poaching, gopher tortoise populations have declined, and the gopher tortoise is listed as threatened species and is protected by the state of Florida; and

WHEREAS: On September 28, 2022, the island's gopher tortoises, their burrows, and their habitats were significantly impacted by Hurricane Ian; and

WHEREAS: The recovery of gopher tortoise populations and their habitats on Sanibel will require continued commitment by the citizens of Sanibel to the gopher tortoise protection measures set forth in the Conservation Element of the Sanibel Plan and City and State laws; and

WHEREAS: Development activities on Sanibel must avoid or minimize the impacts to gopher tortoises and their habitats; and

WHEREAS: You can show your appreciation and help to ensure the survival and long-term recovery of gopher tortoises on Sanibel by creating a "tortoise friendly landscape" including a diversity of native grasses and wildflowers and keeping a watchful eye for gopher tortoises while driving and walking around Sanibel.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the City Council of the City of Sanibel, Lee County, Florida, on behalf of the citizens of Sanibel, do hereby declare April 10, 2024, as Gopher Tortoise Day on Sanibel Island, and urge all citizens to celebrate the Gopher Tortoise and to help protect a keystone species of this island.

WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Sanibel to be affixed hereto.

This 2nd day of April 2024

Richard Johnson
Richard Johnson, Mayor

Mike Miller
Mike Miller, Vice Mayor

John Henshaw
John Henshaw, Councilmember

Holly D. Smith
Holly D. Smith, Councilmember

Arlene Dillon
Arlene Dillon, Councilmember