

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



August 16, 2010

Top News:

"Colorful" Residents Help Convince Durham Council To Vote Against Electronic Billboards

"You won't be seeing electronic billboards in the City of Durham anytime soon. Late Monday night the Durham City Council unanimously voted down a text amendment that would allow Fairway Outdoor Advertising to upgrade dozens of signs across Durham..."

"The question before us is this: Has the applicant met its burden of proof? Has it proved a public good, not the good of just the applicant, its leasors or its suppliers ... but the general public; all of us,' said Councilman Mike Woodard. 'To me, on both of those questions, burden of proof and public good - the answer is no and no.' ..."

"...Councilwoman Diane Catotti said in her years serving in City Hall, she had never seen a larger response from Durham residents: more than 1,000 e-mails in opposition to changing the old ban.

Monday those residents showed up in full force. One of them spoke before she knew the final number of e-mails that had come in.

[Billboard Company Seeks Extra Month Before Approaching the County Commission on Same Matter>](#)

'Speaking on behalf of the 850 people who wrote to you against this proposal: does this look like Durham cool to you', said Page McCullough as she and other opponents wore eyeglasses that flashed in brilliant colors.



Photo: Josh Green, jgreen@wncn.com

She was just one of nearly three dozen who signed up to speak in front of the council.

'The electronic billboards will become another massive ... moving clutter which we will either be distracted by to the detriment of our safety or which we will simply train ourselves to ignore,' said Durham resident Susan Pochapsky. 'That won't benefit sales either.'

Some feared electronic billboards would have an impact on property values here. 'Unfortunately: I ... overlook where 15-501 merges with I-85 and I have to contend already with a bunch of bright lights there,' said Tom Harris. 'As I look out from my deck or porch or my bedroom ... and envision Fairway Outdoor Advertising's biggest and best - I can only see my property values going to hell in a hand basket real fast.' "

-- by Josh Green, NBC17

[Details On This Two Year Battle Can Be Found in the Complete Article - Click Here >](#)

July-August



Fun Festivals and Events

North Florida

Aug 21-22

Jazoo's Birthday-Back to School Summer Bash, Jacksonville at Zoo and Gardens

Sept 4-5

First Weekend Union Garrison, Fernandina Beach

Sept 11

Artrageous Artwalk, Amelia Island

[Read More >](#)

Central Florida

Aug 15-16

Pioneer Settlement Outdoor Extravaganza, Barberville

Aug 21-22

The August Stomp, Lake Wales at Lakeridge Winery

Sept 4

Suncoast Corvette Show, St. Petersburg

Sept 4-6

Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs

Sept 5

Labor Day Block Party, Daytona Beach

Sept 6-7

Pioneer Days Festival, Dade City

Sept 10-11

Doctors, Lawyers and Weekend Warriors Surf Benefit, Sebastian Inlet

[Read More >](#)

40 STORY Digital Billboards Coming to Miami

Mayor and Council Rush Approval

Are They Legal?



Image: Miami Herald

"With virtually no discussion, the Miami City Commission on Thursday unanimously approved a developer's controversial plan to erect a pair of skyscraper-size electronic advertising towers next to the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, leaving unaddressed questions about the project's legality and its impact on the adjacent Omni and Venetian Island areas.

Before the 5-0 vote, however, Commission Chairman Marc Sarnoff obtained some concessions from developer Mark Siffin, who agreed to contribute \$8 million toward the construction of the nearby planned Museum Park. Siffin also agreed to a slightly higher annual permit fee than initially contemplated -- a total of \$2.2 million, according to Sarnoff. But other commissioners fended off Sarnoff's attempt to increase the fee significantly.

Critics of the deal -- hammered out in private by Mayor Tomás Regalado and city staff and put on a fast track to commission approval with little formal public review outside of Thursday's meeting -- say the fee is too low because the signs are expected to generate tens of million of dollars for Siffin.

A second and final vote was scheduled for July 29, though that now appears a legal formality.

Commissioners did not delve into questions about the legality of the proposed ad towers, which appear to contravene federal, state and county laws that sharply limit the size, use and location of commercial signs. A state regulator has said the signs -- which would rise as high as 40 stories atop a parking garage Siffin proposes to build -- would 'far exceed' those limits.

When Commissioner Richard Dunn asked City Attorney Julie Bru her view of the signs' legality, she responded, 'I can't tell you.' Bru added that Siffin would be required to ensure they are legal, ending the commission's discussion of the subject.

Siffin and his lawyers -- who the city allowed to design the special ordinances and the permitting process for the towers -- argue that they need no other authorization than the city's to build.

Commissioners brushed aside concerns from some residents, primarily from the

South Florida

Aug 21

Grape Stomp and Music Fest, Lake Placid

Aug 27-29

Caladium Festival, Lake Placid

Sept 3-12

XV International Ballet Festival of Miami, Miami

Sept 4-7

USTA Summer Smash Regional Tennis Championships, Delray Beach

Sept 6

54th Annual Jaycees Pioneer Days Parade, Englewood

Sept 7-12

WomenFest, Key West

Sept 11

Pirate's Day Festival, Punta Gorda

[Read More >](#)



Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

nearby Venetian Islands, that the giant signs -- which will show animated, flashing LED images -- would disturb their quality of life..."

-- by Andres Viglucci and Patricia Mazzei - Miami Herald

[Complete Miami Herald Article Click Here >](#)

"...Only Frank Carollo voted against the plan after expressing his concern that the commission considered it for final approval just seven days after first voting on it.

'What is the rush?' Carollo asked. Chairman Marc Sarnoff, the plan's principal backer, had an unexpected rebuttal to Carollo's worries: LeBron is coming. 'When we signed LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh, the paradigm shifted for Miami,' Sarnoff said just before the vote. 'We're going to have 42 Super Bowls coming through the city of Miami next year. There's going to be a helicopter before 40 of those games looking down at this project going up and it's going to put us on the map...."

-- by Tim Elfrick - Miami New Times

[Complete Miami New Times Article Click Here >](#)



ClearChannel in Lombard, IL

What Licensing and Permit Process!?!

Photo:Lombard Spectator - Bill Ackerman

"...Villa Park resident Mary Wyse manages a small condo association neighboring the billboard, and said many residents of her complex have been negatively affected. She said many residents, especially the elderly, are disturbed by the billboard's bright lights shining into their condos.

'It's like watching TV out the bedroom window,' Wyse said.

Wyse has been vocal about her concerns and those of her neighbors from the start of the process, and has attended all meetings regarding the billboard.

'The public hearing was scheduled for May 8, but the billboard was already up by May 1,' Wyse said. "

"...The licensing and permit process for Clear Channel's electronic billboard will next be discussed at Monday's Village Board meeting...."

-- By Eleni Demertzis, Lombard Spectator

[Read The Article Here>](#)

News on Digital Sign Issues and Lawsuits from Around the Nation



Cincinnati - "Federal District Court Upholds Cincinnati Law Banning Placement of Advertising on Benches Public and Private Property."

[Read Complete Article >](#)

LA - "Grim Sleeper' Billboards: Great PR or Mixed Messages?."

[Read Complete Article >](#)

Tacoma - "City Settles Lawsuit with Clear Channel, Allowing 'Digital Billboard' to be Installed." - This includes the text of the settlement agreement and the Constitution Matters Ad Campaign

[Read Article with Photos of "Constitution Matters" Ad Campaign >](#)
[Read Complete Article About City Settles Lawsuit >](#)

St. Louis - "St. Louis Takes Breather on Digital Billboards"

[Read Complete Article >](#)

Rapid City -

1. "Billboard Company Sues City Over Denial of Two digital signs"

Lamar Executive Comments: " ..It's really not a hostile lawsuit,' Rumpca said. 'Hopefully, we can work out some sort of compromise going this route.'

2. " City Claims Lamar Accepted Settlement in Legal Dispute"

3. "Lamar OK'd for Second digital Sign on Anamosa"

[Read Billboard Company Sues Article >](#)
[Read City Claims Lamar Reneged On Agreement Article >](#)
[Billboard Company Gets Approval Article >](#)

