

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



August 25, 2011

St. Petersburg Bans Digital Billboards

Clear Channel Swap Deal Dies

In a dramatic vote that took place after midnight on August 19, a deal to swap out traditional billboards for newer digital billboards was rejected by the City Council after more than three hours of testimony by over 30 citizens.

Speakers were frequently elected officials of various civic organizations and were at the hearing to represent thousands of citizens who had previously voted within their own community groups to reject the measure. City council members characterized the citizen input as "unusual" and "overwhelming".

St. Petersburg Times:

(City council members) "rejected a deal to remove 80 traditional billboards and replace six regular billboard faces with six digital billboard faces. It would have included \$2.1 million worth of advertising space over 20 years for city public service announcements.

Overall, it would have meant 6.4 square feet of traditional billboard faces would be replaced with one square foot of digital, which wasn't enough for dozens of residents who spoke in opposition to the deal...."

"I can turn off my television, but I can't turn off a billboard," said Bill Bucolo, a Park Street neighborhood resident. "They are going to pollute our airspace and no one will be able to turn them off."

Michael Van Sickler -- St. Petersburg Times

[Read St. Petersburg Times Article Here >](#)

Fox News 13 Tampa covered the first of the two hearings on August 4 in this news segment:



[Watch Video Here](#)

The proposed ordinance to allow digital billboards required two public hearings and Fox News 13 Tampa covered the first on August 4:

"....a parade of citizens at a public hearing raised numerous objections to the proposal, impressing city council members with their technical expertise.

'They have done an amazing amount of homework,' council chair Jim Kennedy commented after the three-hour hearing....

St. Petersburg's sign ordinances currently do not allow digital billboards.

Most of the speakers prefer banning new or replacement billboards altogether, so over time existing billboards just go away...."

Steve Nichols -- Fox News 13, Tampa

[Fox 13 News Here >](#)

[Jousha Holton's WMNF Radio Coverage Here >](#)

August - September



Fun Festivals and Events

Central Florida

Aug 24

19th Annual Gourmet Feastival,
Tampa. Annual fundraiser for Centre
for Women

Sept 1-30

Orlando Magical Dining Month,
Orlando

Sept 3

Suncoast Corvette Show, St.
Petersburg

Sept 3-5

Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival,
Tarpon Springs

Sept 3

First Saturday Jam, Barberville

Sept 9-10

Night of Joy, Lake Buena Vista

Sept 13-Nov 1

Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween
Party, Lake Buena Vista

[Read More >](#)

South Florida

Aug 26-27

Caladium Festival, Lake Placid

Aug 26-Sept 18

VXI annual International Ballet
Festival of Miami, Miami

Sept 5

55th Annual Jaycees Pioneer Days
Parade, Englewood

Sept 15

Downtown Gallery Walk, Punta
Gorda

Sept 16-19

Sneak Preview of Documentary:

"The Battle Of Tacoma"



[Watch BlightFighters.org Preview Here](#)

Tacoma: Clear Channel Swap Deal Dies

"City Bans Digitals and Requires Removal of 160 Traditional Billboards"

"Tacoma's City Council called ... for quickly removing at least 190 billboards, and possibly dozens more, reigniting a legal fight with sign owner Clear Channel Outdoor.

The council voted 7-1, with Joe Lonergan opposed and Spiro Manthou absent, to tighten zoning restrictions, set a new deadline for removing signs that don't comply and ban the modern versions of billboards that switch messages electronically.

By keeping digital billboards out of Tacoma, the council backs out of a legal settlement with Clear Channel that it had approved unanimously last year."

Jordan Schrader -- Bellingham Herald

[Read Bellingham Herald Article and Comment on it Here >](#)

[Visit Blightfighters Website Here >](#)

LEGAL UPDATE:

Orlando Sign District Created



Key West Poker Run, Key West

Sept 16-18

Martin County Nautical Flea Market and Seafood Festival, Palm Beach

Sept 17

POW/MIA Recognition Day at Fishermen's Village, Punta Gorda

[Read More >](#)

North Florida

Sept 2

First Friday Art Walk, St. Augustine

Sept 3-4

First Weekend Union Garrison, Fernandina Beach

Sept 10

Artrageous Artwalk, Amelia Island

Sept 17-18

Spanish American War Event, Fernandina Beach

Sept 18

Old Time Dance at O'Leno, High Springs

[Read More >](#)



Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.



Photos: FOR LARGER MAP AND VIDEO - See Link Below to WFTV.com news

Mayor Initially Halted New Sign Ordinance Amid Concerns About Las Vegas Style Districts

"The city of Orlando said they are working on a plan to start allowing flashy electronic signs to go up on buildings in places like downtown Orlando, but the city wants to make sure they don't end up looking like the Las Vegas strip.

Commissioners said they were prepared to vote on the ordinance ..., but Mayor Buddy Dyer pulled it from the agenda.

He said the city still has to compromise tacky versus tactful.

The digital billboards on the side of buildings and scrolling advertisements in bright neon colors is not exactly what Mayor Buddy Dyer said he wants. It's what some people in Orlando said they fear will happen, if the city starts allowing businesses to install flashy digital billboards.

'We want to make sure we protect the character of downtown, but also make it a creative place,' said Mayor Dyer.

...Digital signs that have spinning or rotating animations could only operate from dusk until 2:00am and the signs would not be allowed on buildings around the Mall at Millenia or International Drive, said city officials. "

Tim Elfrink -- WFTV.com

[See Video and Read WFTV.com Article Here >](#)

Orlando Ordinance Passed at a Second Hearing

Editors Note: The ordinance passed at the City Council Meeting held on August 25. Read the minutes of that meeting on the city website.

[LARGER MAP](#) of designated sign districts can be downloaded here. (.pdf)

[TEXT OF NEW LAW](#) can be downloaded here. (.pdf)

WEST MIAMI:

Clear Channel (Again)

"West Miami Reschedules Hearing on Digital Billboards"



Photo: C.W. Griffin/Miami Herald

"City leaders have rescheduled a public hearing regarding an applicant's request to erect a digital billboard on private property in West Miami. "

"...The commission voted 4-0 to continue the hearing at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 7. About two dozen West Miami residents packed City Hall commission chambers at the July 20 regular commission meeting to voice their concerns with the potential placement of the LED billboard signs.

In November, commissioners approved an ordinance amendment that would allow digital billboards to be installed along commercial corridors in the city with the intent of generating additional revenues. Clear Channel Outdoor has a franchise agreement with the city in which they will install up to a maximum of six billboards and pay West Miami \$5,000 a year in advertising revenue per sign, potentially totaling \$30,000.

The sign waiting for approval at the 1811 SW 67th Ave. property is city-owned, for which Clear Channel would pay West Miami an additional \$25,000 a year in rent.

Since the ordinance was amended last year, the commission has approved one billboard at the Latin American Restaurant and Bakery on the corner of Southwest Eighth Street and 57th Avenue and denied another at a dentist's office on Southwest 24th Street and 65th Avenue. The latter was protested by neighbors at a February meeting.

Residents in the affected area complained that the lighting from the sign, which cycles through several digital advertisements, would spill onto their properties at night and lessen their home values.

Homeowner Anthony Oliva at Wednesday's meeting also expressed concerns that placement of the signs could be illegal.

'I'm extremely concerned that erecting the proposed LED billboards is not legal and could result in a financial burden to our city,' Oliva said.

'The billboards violate county, state and possibly federal laws. Should the commission decide to approve the creation of these billboards, legal challenges are likely to follow from these governments, special interest groups and even private citizens within and external to West Miami.'

City Manager Yolanda Aguilar said Thursday she will ask City Attorney Jose

Villalobos for a legal opinion on the matter...."

Jose Cassola -- Miami Herald

[Read Miami Herald Article Here >](#)

This message was sent to steve.carey@oceanwebjax.com from:

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