

Scenic Watch



"Sign ordinance brings down 88 signs in Navarre"



Photo: AJC.com

"...'Signs, signs, everywhere a sign. Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind. Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign?'

In Navarre and Navarre Beach, the lyrics from Five Man Electrical Band's 1970 song no longer ring true, thanks

Dec
2016



Fun Festivals and Events

Central

Nov 25-Jan 8
Poinsettia Display, Lake Wales
Nov 25-Jan 8
Winter Walking Tours,
Lake Wales
Jan 6
The annual Epiphany

to a resident and county effort to control the signage cluttering up public spaces.

'We've had an overabundance of stop signs, no motor vehicles on the path,' said Navarre Beach resident Peter Birckhead, the 62-year-old chairman of the beach beautification liaison committee for the Navarre Beach Leaseholders Association.

County officials agreed when Birckhead and association president Gary Buroker raised their concerns, and a total of 88 signs have been removed and/or consolidated since the beginning of the year, according to Santa Rosa County Public Works Director Stephen Furman.

Furman said the effort included removing old and faded signs such as those with information on a Santa Rosa County Sheriff Office's program warning beach goers to protect their belongings. Other signs were removed from individual posts and consolidated with similar signs.

'If you're driving a car and a side street crosses the bike path, we're required to put 'no motor vehicles' for someone who might turn onto the bike path,' Furman said. 'We consolidated the 'no motor vehicle' signs and put them on the stop sign so there's one post.'

Furman said the county removed about 60 signs from the beach alone.

'There were a number of signs that could be removed without compromising public safety,' he said...

County Commissioner Rob Williamson, who represents the Navarre area, was on board for the project and enlisted his wife, Amie, and others to take inventory of the signs to figure out which ones should stay up and what signs could come down.

'We need less signage and more consistent signage,' Williamson said. 'People here come to look at our beaches, not to look at signs as you drive into a

celebration, Tarpon Springs
Jan 7-8
Sunshine City Antiques and Collectibles Show, Venice
Jan 7-8
Coquina Beach Winterfest Arts & Crafts Show, Bradenton Beach
Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Winter Music Series at the Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards, Clermont
Jan 7, 14, 21, 28
Sue Blue's Historic Trolley Tours, Sarasota
Jan 7-8
Dade's Battle Re-enactment & Trade Fair, Bushnell
Jan 12-14
Yeehaw Music Festival, Yeehaw Junction
Jan 12-22
Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival, Tampa
Jan 13-15
Gem, Jewelry and Bead Show, Sarasota
Jan 14
Fly-in Breakfast, Titusville
Jan 14
Sunshine Music Festival, St Petersburg
Jan 14-15
Sarasota Winter Fine Art Festival, Sarasota
Jan 14-15
Central Florida Scottish Highland Games, Winter Springs
Jan 14-16
Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs
Jan 18-21
Florida Flywheelers 30th Annual Antique Engine & Tractor "Swamp Meet," Fort Meade
Jan 19-21
World Quilt Florida, Orlando
Jan 19-22
Fellsmere Frog Leg Festival, Fellsmere

parking lot.'

Among the signs on the remove list are those aimed at sexual predators or offenders warning them against entering a park. Williamson said the sign sends the wrong message.

'If a bad person is doing bad things, we don't need a sign to enforce the law, we need to enforce the law,' Williamson said.

Furman said the removal and reduction phase is nearly complete. The next phase will include construction of large informational signs, detailing rules and regulations for public areas.

The project so far is a success in the mind of Birckhead, an avid walker on the beach, and others. Birckhead said he's heard from residents who are pleased with the new look to the area..."

-- Anne Delaney, Pensacola News Journal

[Read entire article](#)

Legal Update: "New motions filed in Federal lawsuit involving Private Beach signs"

Jan 21
Cruisin' Downtown DeLand
Classic Car Show, DeLand
Jan 21-22
Brooksville Raid Re-
enactment, Brooksville
Jan 25-30
Space Coast Birding and
Wildlife Festival, Titusville
Jan 21-29
Zora Neale Hurston
Festival of the Arts and
Humanities,
Orlando/Eatonville
Jan 27-29
Images, a Festival of the
Arts, New Smyrna Beach
Jan 27-Feb 4
DeSoto County Fair,
Arcadia
Jan 28
Gasparilla pirate parade
and street festival, Tampa
Jan 28
Pinellas Folk Festival, St
Petersburg
Jan 28-29
Blue Spring Manatee
Festival, Orange City

South

Jan 5-15
Uncorked Key Largo and
Islamorada Food and Wine
Festival, Key Largo
Jan 7-8
Bi-Annual Estero Fine Arts
Show, Estero
Jan 7-8
Downtown Naples New
Year's Art Fair, Naples
Jan 7-8, 14-15
Medieval Faire, Fort Myers
Jan 7-8
Las Olas Art Fair, Fort
Lauderdale
Jan 8
River, Roots and Ruts Trail
Run, Alva
Jan 13-14
Historic House Tours, Key
West
Jan 13-15
Art Deco Weekend, Miami



Photo: The Defuniak Herald

"Beachfront property owners who had sued Walton County in federal court over its ordinance banning unpermitted obstructions on the beach such as ropes, chains, signs, and fences, have filed new motions in the case.

Among other requests, they have asked the court for a stay on discovery proceedings in connection with common law customary right issues until the court resolves the property owners' claims against another ordinance, the customary use ordinance approved by Walton County on Oct. 25... The ordinance banning unpermitted obstructions on the beach stated that it applied to the beach as defined as 'the soft sandy portion of land lying seaward of the seawall or the line of permanent dune vegetation.'

The plaintiffs, Ed and Delanie Goodwin, owners of beachfront property at Fort Panic in south Walton County, had filed their lawsuit in July 18, soon after Walton County approved the ordinance disallowing beach obstructions.

The litigation was in the form of a civil rights lawsuit. It alleged that the county ordinance prevented beachfront owners from using signs to convey messages, including those indicating property

Beach
 Jan 13-15
 BayGrass Bluegrass
 Festival, Islamorada
 Jan 13-16
 Southwest Florida Nature
 Festival, Naples
 Jan 14-15
 Florida Keys Seafood
 Festival, Key West
 Jan 14-15
 Big Pine Key Nautical
 Market, Big Pine & the
 Lower Keys
 Jan 14-15
 Boca Fest, Boca Raton
 Jan 14-15
 Broward Shell Show,
 Pompano Beach
 Jan 14-15
 Cape Coral Festival of the
 Arts, Cape Coral
 Jan 14-15, Feb
 11-12, March 4-5
 Bonita Springs National Art
 Festival, Bonita Springs
 Jan 21-22
 20th Annual Sullivan Street
 Craft Festival, Punta
 Gorda
 Jan 21-22
 Downtown Delray Beach
 Festival of the Arts, Delray
 Beach
 Jan 28
 Port Salerno Seafood
 Festival, Port Salerno
 Jan 28-29
 Key West Craft Show, Key
 West

North

Nov 19-Jan 31
 Nights of Lights Festival
 and Celebration, St
 Augustine
 Jan 13-14
 Apalachicola Oyster Cook
 Off, Apalachicola
 Jan 14
 Pensacola Beach 1/2
 Marathon, 5K and 10K Run,
 Pensacola Beach
 Jan 14

boundaries and private ownership—and that the ordinance therefore impeded signs as 'a medium of speech.' As such, the property owners maintained, the ordinance 'violates the First Amendment on its face.' They asked the court to bar enforcement of the ordinance, among other requests. In an August 15 response, Walton County argued that the property owners' case was not 'about' free speech but was instead a disguised property rights position aimed at securing 'a beachhead against the potential determination that the public has gained the right of use of the subject beach through the Customary Use doctrine.'

The county further stated that the ordinance did not interfere with the property owners' ability to 'display on their property any message they like in any manner they like, even using signs, so long as they comport with the restriction as to location.' Signs, according to the county response, 'are implicated only to the extent that they constitute an obstruction on the beach.'

In an Aug. 19 order, M. Casey Rodgers, chief United States District judge and presiding judge in the case, ordered an evidentiary hearing, observing, in part that, 'If a public use custom is established, the property owner does not have the right to interfere with the public's right of use and enjoyment...and thus the Plaintiffs' alternative means of communication, i.e., placing signs on the remainder of their property, would be adequate.' Adding that the 'custom and use doctrine requires a fact-intensive inquiry that must be determined on a fully developed record,' Judge Rodgers stated that this issue would 'decide the merits of the suit.' She ordered thus proceeding with the trial on its merits, with it to be consolidated with a hearing on the preliminary injunction sought by the plaintiffs.

The Goodwins were allowed to amend their original complaint to include both the obstruction and customary use ordinances. On Nov. 14 they filed a motion requesting an injunction against the recently-approved customary use ordinance, arguing that it represented a 'taking' of their property.

The customary use ordinance provides for public 'at

Tour de Felasco,
Gainesville
Jan 14-15
Florida Manatee Festival,
Crystal River
Jan 20-29
Annual Amelia Island
Restaurant Week, Amelia
Island
Jan 28-29, Feb
3-5
Hoggetowne Medieval
Faire, Gainesville

[For many more events
and details please visit
the Orlando Times Travel
Calendar here](#)



large' to utilize the dry sand areas of the beach without interference for traditional recreational activities—with the exception of a buffer zone to be set aside at a distance seaward of the toe of the dune, or at the same distance from any privately-owned permanent habitable structure on or adjacent to the dry sand areas of the beach, whichever is more seaward.

The Nov. 14 motion was followed the next day by a motion by the Goodwins for a stay of discovery proceedings in connection with common law customary right uses of the beach until their taking claims in connection with the customary use ordinance had been resolved.

In the latest filing, on Nov. 21, Walton County responded to the plaintiffs amended complaint, asking the court to grant a motion requiring a 'more definite statement' from the plaintiffs, calling the complaint: 'a vague, ambiguous, incoherent jumble.'

-- Dotty Nist, The Defuniak Herald

[Read entire article here](#)

"St. Augustine Beach commissioners will have a special meeting to deal with the city's new sign ordinance"



"The city has been trying to work out issues related to its new sign regulations, which were adopted in July in response to a lawsuit and a U.S. Supreme Court opinion.

The changes brought forward a slew of new rules, including eliminating in-the-ground signs on city property and removing content-based categories such as political signs.

Some changes have caused concern among business owners.

Among other issues about the sign regulations, the meeting will cover 'when to require non-conforming signs to be made conforming' and clarification about signs on public property..."

-- Sheldon Gardner, The St. Augustine Record

[Read entire article here](#)

Happy Holidays!!!



Photo: City of Clearwater

