

## FEBRUARY 18, 2003 – WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop on Tuesday, February 18, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. at the South Walton Courthouse Annex.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Tim Pauls, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Lane Rees, Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Ro Cuchens. Mr. Michael Underwood, County Administrator, Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services and Attorney Kira Honse were also present.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order to review the proposed Beach Activities Ordinance.

Ms. Honse presented the proposed ordinance as drafted and reviewed the recommended changes.

Mr. Charles Hilton Jr. appeared before the commissioners and presented several recommended changes to the ordinance. He feels that it is an adverse affect to the beachfront property owner when they are made to allow people to use their private property.

The Commissioners agreed to add language provided by Mr. Hilton that states, “It is not the intent of the commission to presume or make any finding of fact that the public has or has not customarily used any particular piece of gulf front property.”

Discussion was held regarding the boundaries of water bodies. Commissioner Cuchens requested that a change be made to Section 2 stating that the ordinance regulates water bodies south of Highway 98 instead of Highway 20. Commissioner Pauls felt that it should also apply to water bodies south of Highway 20. Mr. Ed Goodwin commented that

it should apply equally to all property. It was the general consensus of the Board that it would remain as stated “south of Highway 20”.

Section 4 was discussed relating to fires on the beach of the Gulf of Mexico. It was suggested that private gulf front property owners be exempted from the permit fee. It was also suggested that a permit be issued that could be activated each time a property owner wants to have a bonfire. Ms. Lorna Patrick asked if “property owner” would include condominium owner associations. The Board stated that it would only include full-time residents. Mr. Mike Meyer suggested allowing property owners to have bonfires and to fine those who abuse it and does not clean up after themselves. Commissioner Cuchens recommended exempting property owners from the fee and container requirement. Discussion was also held regarding the possibility of the Sheriff’s Department or fire department issuing the permits after county business hours.

The commissioners agreed to add the language “of the Gulf of Mexico” to Section 4 B (1). They also agreed to change the language to state that no fire will be allowed within 50 feet of vegetation, 100 feet of marked turtle nest or habitable structure. They also agreed that property owners would be exempt from the fee and containers. The bonfire permit fee would remain at \$50.00 and funds would be given to the Tourist Development Council to cover the expense of cleanup.

The commissioners also discussed the section relating to obstructions on the beach. Commissioner Pauls spoke about keeping the beaches clear from obstructions for emergency personnel. Mr. James E. Ray stated that he owns beachfront property and the property owners do not want to be required to remove their articles from the beach each night. He also feels that it would hinder his rental business and deter visitors from coming

to Walton County. Mr. Emmett Hildreth also agreed that beachfront property owners should not be made to remove their personal belongings from their own property. Mr. Goodwin addressed the commissioners and voiced opposition to being made to allow the public to use their property. Mr. Wilde spoke about difficulties in enforcing the ordinance because of the lack of staffing. He also spoke about TDC's difficulties in cleaning the beach with the amount of staff they have. The commissioners agreed to leave Section 4-G as it is written regarding obstructions on the beach.

The commissioners agreed to add language to Section 4-K to read, "No water may be pumped from the Gulf of Mexico except for permitted construction."

The word "vessel" was added to Section 5-B.

The ordinance was changed in Section 7D to read that the vehicle beach permits will be issued by the Clerk of Court.

Discussion was held regarding Section 9-C-2: Permits for special events. The language was clarified to read "special" events for groups of 50 or more.

Ms. Honse reviewed the definitions of the ordinance and clarified which ones would be removed and stated that they were removed to match the ordinance. Ms. Honse will make final corrections to the ordinance and prepare it for review by the commissioners, staff, and the public. A date will be set to hold the final adoption hearing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry D. Jones, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court