

DATE: July 23, 2009

**FROM: South Florida Free Beaches/Florida Naturist Association ; Florida Keys Free Beaches Cmte.**

## **The Quest for a Key West Naturist Beach**

### **The following is our update to the Action Request issued on July 16**

#### **Key West City Commission denies 1-year trial but votes to place clothing-optional beach on public referendum.**

**While not our preferred outcome as it will delay resolution till autumn, the issue remains alive and now goes directly to the citizens of Key West**

**KEY WEST CITY COMMISSION MEETING JULY 21, 2009:** Naturist forces and allies were marshaled in the audience, including members of the Key West Business Guild. Commissioner Teri Johnson moved that a clothing-optional beach be authorized for a 1-year trial period; that motion was defeated. Commissioner Bill Verge moved to refer the issue to a public referendum; that motion passed.

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** We would have preferred a direct and positive commission vote; however, the referendum keeps the issue open, while moving it into a more public forum. The referendum should occur sometime in the fall. With so many Key West citizens dependent upon tourism, we expect a favorable outcome barring organized opposition from other interest groups.

**SFFB/FNA/FKFB PLANS:** We do expect some opposition to arise to a naturist beach, although we don't know how vocal, extensive, or organized. The naturist interests plan at the least on hosting several town hall meetings to present the issue to the citizens and educate them on naturism, on the benign nature of clothing-optional beaches, and on the financial benefits of increased tourism. We will probably need to do advertising in the local media to insure good attendance.

Direct marketing to individual voters through mailings, robo-email or robo-phone calls might be considered if the opposition forces are strong, but this would involve considerable cost.

**WHAT NATURISTS CAN DO:** Letters to Key West officials are at this point not critical, but may still to be sent. **Our thanks to all those who sent many cogent and well-reasoned letter prior to the July 21st meeting. While not enough to sway the commissioners to a direct yes vote, they were probably of influence in the positive vote for the referendum.**

**OUR ORIGINAL ACTION REQUEST FOLLOWS ON THE NEXT TWO PAGES**

DATE: July 16, 2009

FROM: South Florida Free Beaches/Florida Naturist Association ; Florida Keys Free Beaches Cmte.

## Calling All Naturist/Nudists for Immediate Action

Subject: The City of Key West and a Clothing-optional Beach

**OUR REQUEST:** We are asking that you email and/or fax a letter to the officials of the City of Key West listed on the next page before Tuesday July 21, 2009. Your immediate response is essential for obtaining a designated clothing optional beach in the City of Key West.

**BACKGROUND:** South Florida Free Beaches/Florida Naturist Association, B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation Institute and the Florida Keys Free Beaches Committee have been working to establish a designated clothing-optional naturist family beach in Key West -- a Haulover Beach European-style facility. The beach section we have selected is at the east end of Smather's Beach.

For the past several months, our team has met with members of the county and city commissions, the city manager, and other community leaders. We have provided them with our Government Affairs Packet, which contains information required to make an educated and informed decision. It shows an economic impact of about \$900 million annually with 2008 parking revenues of \$1,770,834 from Haulover's clothing-optional beach.

On Tuesday July 7th, we spoke before the Key West City Commission presenting the projected economic impact that would be the result of a designated naturist beach.

**CURRENT STATUS:** The Key West City Commission is comprised of six commissioners and a mayor. The mayor votes when there is a tie vote with the commission. We have three firm votes in favor of a naturist beach. The mayor has stated he would vote against a designated beach if there is a tie vote although recent local Florida Keys polls have been favorable to a designated naturist beach.

Next Tuesday, July 21, City Commissioner Bill Verge intends to make a resolution to place the issue of a designated naturist beach on the ballot for a referendum vote (a vote for the individual citizens of Key West to decide) in October. A negative vote will have serious delaying consequences. His strategy is to kill the issue for any future approval for a beach.

Commissioners are in fear of a registered voter/church sponsored backlash if they vote in favor of a designated beach. However, there are other ways to get this done without them having to vote directly for the issue, including modifying the anti-nudity city code.

### **NATURIST POSITION:**

This issue does not require a voter referendum. Commissioners are elected to make the tough decisions and a clothing-optional beach wouldn't even require the city to spend money for it.

We have the support of the Lodging Association, the Hotel Association, the Business Guild and most members of the Chamber of Commerce as well as the media.

We need a large number of letters e-mailed immediately to these commissioners to make them aware that there is a large naturist visitor population that will visit Key West if they have a designated naturist beach.

**ELEMENTS OF YOUR EMAIL LETTER SHOULD INCLUDE:**

- \* Request the commissioners vote on the issue and NOT refer to a ballot referendum of the residents of Key West. Skinny-dipping and nude sunbathing is a recreational choice, not a zoning issue.
- \* You would visit Key West if they had a naturist beach.
- \* Your vacation dollars are only spent in cities or countries where there are naturist facilities.
- \* You visit South Florida because of Haulover Beach’s legal clothing optional status.
- \* You and your friends only vacation where there are naturist beaches or resorts.
- \* For non-United States citizens: When making plans to vacation in a tropical climate, you select Miami/Haulover and Caribbean countries, including Cuba.

**PLEASE E-MAIL and/or FAX IMMEDIATELY TO:**

Mayor Morgan McPherson	<a href="mailto:mayor@keywestcity.com">mayor@keywestcity.com</a>	Fax: 305-809-3886
Commissioner Bill Verge	<a href="mailto:Bverge@keywestcity.com">Bverge@keywestcity.com</a>	“
Commissioner Mark Rossi	<a href="mailto:mrossi@keywestcity.com">mrossi@keywestcity.com</a>	“
Commissioner Barry Gibson	<a href="mailto:bfgibson@keywestcity.com">bfgibson@keywestcity.com</a>	“
Commissioner Teri Johnston	<a href="mailto:johnston@keywestcity.com">johnston@keywestcity.com</a>	“
Commissioner Clayton Lopez	<a href="mailto:clopez@keywestcity.com">clopez@keywestcity.com</a>	“
Commissioner Joe Pais	<a href="mailto:jpais@keywestcity.com">jpais@keywestcity.com</a>	“
City Mgr. Jim Scholl	<a href="mailto:jscholl@keywestcity.com">jscholl@keywestcity.com</a>	Fax: 305-809-3771
Tourist Development Council (TDC)	<a href="mailto:research@fla-keys.com">research@fla-keys.com</a>	Fax: 305-296-0788
Keys Tourism Agency	<a href="mailto:webeditor@fla-keys.com">webeditor@fla-keys.com</a>	

The effort to obtain a naturist beach has been expensive for South Florida Free Beaches. We will incur additional expenses as we try to break through the status quo and counter the anti-nudity forces, which we have been told are gearing up to vote “No” on the referendum.

We are also partnering with B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation to restore our traditional clothing optional beaches at Florida state parks that were lost in the mid 1980’s.

**Donations to SFFB’s Legal Defense & Political Action Fund is appreciated and truly needed.**

You can donate on-line at: [www.sffb.com/sponsors](http://www.sffb.com/sponsors)

OR mail your check to:

SFFB/FNA, P.O. Box 530306, Miami Shores, FL 33153-0306

Thanking you in advance.



Richard Mason, President SFFB/FNA

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