

 Print This**BRADENTONHERALD.COM**[Back to web version](#)

Tuesday, Apr 15, 2

Posted on Tue, Apr. 15, 2008

Trailer Estates to host open-records workshop

NICHOLAS AZZARA

nazzara@bradenton.com

Several Trailer Estates residents angry with elected officials over possible Sunshine Law violations won a small victory this week after the park's governing board decided to brush up on the law during a workshop next month.

A May 12 Sunshine seminar will give the park's nine elected officials as well as its residents a refresher on the law that governs most public business and elected officials' conduct. Trailer Estates' board oversees an annual budget of almost \$1 million, collected from a special tax assessment for residents of the retirement community. The board was scheduled to have a workshop on the law in January, but that one was cancelled when no new members were elected to the board the previous month.

John Vander Molen, vice chairman of the board and its unofficial spokesman, said the meeting comes not from residents' requests but at the advice of the park's attorney, Mark Barnebey. The Bradenton lawyer sent a letter to the board last week suggesting an update since it has been 18 months since the last refresher.

The board is also close to adopting an electronic document management program to make public records easily available to anyone with an Internet connection. The park's current records system is bulky and expensive and has been another source of resident angst. The new software could cost up to \$15,000, Vander Molen said.

"The goal there is quicker retrieval of records rather than looking them up in file cabinets or folders," Vander Molen said. "The eventual goal is to have everything electronically available for office staff and ultimately for the public."

© 2008 Bradenton.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.bradenton.com>