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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2008

Trailer Estates stories are about the law

We've published several stories in the past month about Trailer Estates, including [this one](#) today. The coverage was sparked by some residents after they read the Bradenton Herald's story about Florida's open records law on Sunshine Sunday.

We've written on the efforts throughout Florida and the United States to hold government accountable. The First Amendment Foundation has one of the best compilations [here](#) to guide you through your public records rights.

Trailer Estates' board oversees an annual budget of almost \$1 million, and these residents want to know how the board is deciding to spend their money. It's difficult for us to imagine why anyone would question us checking into this, but not everyone agrees that this is a story worth covering. We've had reporters threatened, subscription cancellations threatened, and threats of picketers here at the Herald realized.

Two encouraging developments, as reporter Nick Azzara wrote today: A Sunshine seminar has been scheduled to give elected officials and residents in Trailer Estates a brushup course on the law; and the board is looking for a program to make its records more accessible.

Joan

Posted by Editors' Blog at [12:06 AM](#)



8 comments:

Wally said...

The Trailer Estates story is just another in a long line of typical homeowner associations that hold back from residents on how their hard earned money is spent. HOA boards are just another form of a military junta who believe they need not report to anyone. HOAs (and CDDs) should be abolished by the Florida Legislature. Until that happens, this story will continue to be repeated, except the names will change...

[April 17, 2008 8:50 PM](#)

Bradenton Herald's 'Editors' Blog'

Editors' Blog

In this forum, the Herald's Executive Editor [Joan Krauter](#) and Managing Editor [Jim Smith](#) discuss news content and editorial decisions for the Bradenton Herald, its zoned editions and the online 24-hour edition, [Bradenton.com](#). We hope to share insights with you on how those decisions are made. And we will also reach out to you for thoughts on issues that challenge and shape our community. More editors will join this blog as the issues unfold. So help start a deeper community conversation with Manatee County's daily newspaper and online site, [Bradenton.com](#).

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Izod said...

You are so right. Power and Trust play a big role here. Folks who lack ability to govern are elected and it goes straight to their head. Then the abuse of power begins.

[April 18, 2008 10:45 AM](#)

Bill said...

The reporters and editor of this newspaper now see the retaliation and intimidation that park residents have endured when using their 1st Amendment Rights to try to correct injustices at Trailer Estates! I think many board members would like to abolish the 1st and 4th amendments to the US Constitution. Having just gotten back from a heritage trip to Bohemia in the Czech Republic I visited the memorial at Lidice. This "big guy with glasses" did have tears in his eyes. You may want to google "Lidice" to see what real retaliation was all about. See what can happen when you don't have freedom to speak!!

[April 18, 2008 10:12 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

I think that if most of the trustees would remeber to do what is best for the people of the park we would be alot better off. They think to much about power that they think they got and not about the people that voted them in. Remeber we voted you in and we can vote you out. Need to come up and live in 2008 and not 20 years ago.

[April 20, 2008 12:25 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

I think that most of the trustee's need to stop doing thing like they want it done. We would like to see them do it for the people of the park and by the law. Remeber we voted you in and we can vote you out. Some of you need to come up to 2008 and not back 20 years ago. Thing changes and we have to do the same and not use the theme of this is the way we have always done it.

[April 20, 2008 12:41 PM](#)

Sharon Denson said...

I certainly agree with Wally, the sad part is that we are not a Homeowner's Association, we just govern as if we were. The majority of our Board of Trustees do not understand that they are a government, chartered by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.

The majority of the Board members operate as Super Trustees. The workshop that was reported in the Bradenton Herald was not done lawfully. The charter calls for the Board to act for any affirmative action. One Trustee decided to have the workshop and expend the funds or some of the Trustees had a meeting outside of the sunshine.

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these funds. The Chairman of the Board set up a committee to write policy and procedures for the park. There was no discussion and she by decree established the committee. This committee has spent funds of the District for the attorney advice and presence with no approval for the expenditures. This is just a sample of how this Board operates. If we complain we are labeled dissidents and our name is smeared all over the park by the majority of the board and their surrogates. The surrogate reports the behavior to the Board of Trustees. This behavior by the surrogates and the majority of the Board of Trustees is unbelievable in this day and time. Let's hope that the only recourse the people have, the press, is forever protected. Thank goodness for the 1st Amendment Foundation. They help protect the Press.

Sharon Denson

[April 20, 2008 1:11 PM](#)

[kayaker](#) said...

I only hope every error in the operation of TE that can be found, is brought up so we can get things corrected and once again have harmony.

Kayaker

[April 20, 2008 4:15 PM](#)

[Mary Lou](#) said...

I agree with kayaker. Let's work together to sort out issues, learn about the intentions of the Charter and other laws that govern the park, fix the problems and get on with our lives.

The problem I have encountered is that bringing up a problem shifts the focus from the problem to the individual bringing it up and the individual is crucified for bringing it up. It is a clever diversion tactic, but the price the Board and the rest of us pay is the keeping of the park in turmoil and never addressing the problem. The first step to fixing a problem is acknowledging that a problem exists. We have not reached that stage yet. Only then, will we be able to use the collective wisdom of ALL park residents to fix the problems and enjoy the unique and wonderful treasure we have.

[April 21, 2008 10:42 AM](#)

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