

---

12 Comments

[Jump to comment form](#) [Close this window](#)

---

 **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

---

 **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 remember to do what is best for the people of the park we would be a lot better off. They think too much about power that they think they got and not about the people that voted them in. Remember 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 things like they want it done. We would like to see them do it for the people of the park and by the law. Remember 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. Things change 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. No action has been taken by this Board to approve the expenditure of 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

---

 **anonymous said...**

I'm not aware that anyone on the board is paid. These are people of goodwill doing a job that most people flee from. I'm sure that mistakes are occasionally made but I cannot believe they're made with malice aforethought. The abuse of the board members and unproven charges are enough to make many flee from such a position. If those seeking change would only run for a seat on the board.--Bill

April 21, 2008 4:58 PM

---

 **bill said...**

A bigger concern regarding Trailer Estates is where are the oversight government agencies. I know I have written a letter to the board over 3 years ago complaining about sunshine and other violations and nothing seems to change. Where is the local state attorney who is supposed to enforce sunshine violations? The sunshine law has been in effect now for over 40 years. I know the local district attorney in the community where I live most of

the year would not tolerate this. He even put on a class rather than fine a local community who violated a similar sunshine law. Now we have to spend \$175/hr for an attorney to tell the park what is lawful. It even could be \$350/hr because I think the last seminar there were 2 attorneys. I would believe there are less expensive alternatives to educate board members on what the law is. I guess I would even question the billings from the current legal firm. Is it readily known who called for legal advice and were these people authorized to call? Why should TE have to pay for discussions between 2 attorneys from the same firm? Why can the board encumber more legal expense when they are over budget, should not the attorneys tell them that this against the law? If I would fail to pay my park tax, I am sure someone would quote me some statute or ordinance that I am violating!

April 23, 2008 9:22 AM

---

**e** mary lou said...

In response to the comment of "anonymous" about the Board being volunteers, I cannot agree that being unpaid should give public officials license to manage a million dollars of public monies without knowing the applicable laws and governing documents of the park. Anyone who is willing to throw their hat into the ring to run for office, should assume the responsibility of knowing the expectations of public servants (as recited in the oath of office each one takes).

It has been my personal experience that an important attorney opinion that I requested was withheld from me and other residents. Why? Because it agreed with me. The Board, instead, hired another law firm, which has now told the park (a year and a half and about \$50,000.00 later), that the charter needs changing to "clarify" things. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to read between the lines and determine that what they are doing now is not in compliance with the charter, as I have asserted. Otherwise, it would not need changing. Had they acknowledged the first legal opinion, and dealt with the problem, we wouldn't have spent all the money we have spent and still not addressed the problem.

I have experienced letters from the Manatee County Attorney's Office being misrepresented and concealed from the public, by somebody on the Board. Why? Because in one case, they wanted the people to think the first letter was written to the park, when in fact, it was a courtesy copy of a letter written to me. The second letter contradicted what was reported to be in the first letter, in the Board Meeting minutes, so the second letter was never publicly acknowledged. The letter from Manatee County Attorney Tedd Williams has not been acknowledged to this day, even though furnished the letter to the park and I requested the minutes be corrected to acknowledge the correspondence.

I believe for these things to happen, there has to be some malace involved. They were not "mistakes". We are all expected to make mistakes from time to time. Deliberately withholding information from property owners, which is contrary to the position of the Board Chairman is not in the best interest of the park, and has cost residents thousands of dollars in attorney fees.

There are plenty of qualified people willing to serve on the Board. They are treated so badly, however, for even trying to question some practices of the incumbents, they tend to get discouraged. I wish those Board members that whine about nobody being willing to run for office, would simply step aside and see what happens.

April 23, 2008 9:44 PM

---

**e** mary lou said...

Wally, TE is a local special purpose government, not a Homeowners' Association. It is like the City of Bradenton (a local general purpose government), with a much narrower focus and much less authority. The only purpose of TE is to furnish recreation to the residents of the park. TE had a HOA when the park was owned by the developer. When the park was originally Chartered as a Special Park and Recreation District, the developer still

owned the common areas, and the residents paid him for the use. They were purchased the following year by the property owners. HOAs and Special Districts have very different rules and expectations. For one thing, HOAs do not fall under the Sunshine Laws, thus their records are not public.

I have come to the conclusion that a lot of the basis of the current turmoil is the fact that the Board of Trustees are not familiar with the expectations of operating a Special District, and continue to try to operate as a HOA (in which the residents generally are not entitled to a say in what the Board does) despite becoming a Special District. I don't fault the current board for assuming that past practices were correct. I do fault them for insisting that the past practices have been lawful despite the growing amount of data to the contrary. I do fault them for being unwilling to discuss the issues. I do fault them for insisting on substituting attorneys (that residents pay for) for education and common sense.

The Let's Talk Club that has been so maligned by the establishment, was formed to educate residents about government and to give residents a chance to discuss current park issues and bring forward all sides of the issues so we all can learn from one another.

April 23, 2008 10:15 PM

## Leave your comment

---

You can use some HTML tags, such as `<b>`, `<i>`, `<a>`

**Comment moderation has been enabled. All comments must be approved by the blog author.**



WORD  
VERIFICATION



Type the characters you see in the picture above.


### Choose an identity

Google/Blogger

USERNAME

PASSWORD

No Google Account? [Sign up here.](#)  
You can also use your **Blogger** account.

OpenID 

Name/URL

Anonymous

PUBLISH YOUR COMMENT      PREVIEW