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THIS JUST IN

County targets privileges for sex offenders

From Staff reports

Posted June 19, 2005

Efforts to limit where sexual predators can live is gaining momentum in Seminole County. Oviedo passed an ordinance earlier this month prohibiting sex offenders whose victims are younger than 16 from living within 2,500 feet -- almost a half mile -- of parks, day-care centers, churches and playgrounds. Since then, officials in Sanford, Lake Mary, Winter Springs and Casselberry have started looking into similar ordinances. Now, a committee formed to look into ways of consolidating services offered by cities and the county is getting into the act. That committee met last week and voted to bring up the sex-offender issue for a full discussion at its July 20 meeting.

SCC reverses speech decision

Seminole Community College did an about-face last week in a dispute over free speech. It originally refused to let a student hand out animal-rights brochures in the café at its Oviedo campus. The student could do that, but only in a designated "free-speech zone," administrators had said. They changed their position after a national group, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, took them on. The school says it will now re-evaluate its free-speech policies.

Name game

A massive redo of Seminole County school policies is up for approval Tuesday by the School Board. But the board has been unable to settle on how to handle naming schools. A continuing flap over Hagerty High, named after former Superintendent Paul Hagerty, has brought disagreement among board members as to what the future policy should be. A wordy proposal on what should be named after whom under which circumstance was whittled down to a short sentence saying the School Board will simply decide as it sees fit. Then that was junked. Board Chairman Jeanne Morris said she hopes the usually agreeable board still will agree on a policy.

Political fest

Looks like elections Supervisor Michael Ertel is keeping his word about enlivening the political process. Ertel's office is sponsoring an elections forum this week dubbed Democracy 2012. The event, at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the elections office next to Orlando Sanford International Airport, will bring together officials from the local Republican, Democratic and Libertarian parties, the four local chambers of commerce, the League of Women Voters and the Christian Coalition. The discussion is to focus on issues likely to affect elections in the coming years, from early voting to paperless ballots.

Save the lakes

Casselberry's City Commission last week appointed eight residents to serve on the newly created lakes management advisory board. The board will make recommendations to staff regarding water quality, aquatic weed control, erosion and shoreline vegetation, and use of lakes and canals. Board

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members will serve for two years, but initially five members will serve only one year each to eventually stagger terms. Two positions remain open. To apply, residents can contact the city clerk's office at 407-262-7700, Ext. 1132, or go online at casselberry.org. Click on the link for online forms, and look under the heading "administration."

Canopies gain support

Casselberry commissioners also gave initial approval Monday night to an ordinance that would allow canopies in residential back yards -- with some restrictions. The canopies must be screened from the street with a fence, wall or hedge. Mayor Bob Goff, along with Commissioners Kathy Cook and Linda Hart, voted for the measure. Cook has said the canopies are good places for people with one-car garages to protect extra vehicles. Commissioners Susan Doerner and Colleen Hufford have been staunchly against allowing the canopies, saying that doing so will look bad and lower property values. "I don't see this as being a major step forward," Doerner said. Final approval is scheduled for July 25.

Sandra Pedicini, Robert Perez, Rene Stutzman and Dave Weber of the Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

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