

Mayor  
JIM O'BRIEN

THE TOWN OF  
**Windermere**



Town Manager  
ROBERT SMITH

Clerk  
DOROTHY BURKHALTER

614 Main Street, Windermere, FL 34786  
Office: (407) 876-2563 Fax: (407) 876-0103

April 18, 2022

Dear Mayor and Commission,

Egret Island (aka Bird Island) is an island on Lake Butler, part of the Butler Chain of Lakes which has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water body. Egret Island is owned by the Florida Audubon Society and was established as a bird sanctuary in 1958. These designations are important for not only the protection of our lakes but also the natural habitat of the sanctuary itself.

Over the past decade, this island and surrounding area regularly draws a significant number of boaters to its shores. The boaters anchor at the shoreline and proceed to trespass onto the island, using it for a multitude of unsafe, unwanted, and illegal activities. They are disturbing the wildlife and leaving behind mounds of trash in their wake. The trespass activity, accompanied by underage drinking, loud music, and dangerous interactions between watercraft and swimmers, create imminent environmental and safety issues that must be addressed.

Since August of 2020, the Town of Windermere has been working cooperatively with Orange County elected officials (both past and present), staff, and law enforcement on the drafting of amendments to the Boats and Water Safety Code. This is in addition to the multitude of shoreline improvements, ordinances, and enforcement done by the Town in concert with OCSO, FWC, Butler Chain of Lakes Advisory Committee, Florida Audubon Society and the Department of Environmental Protection. Throughout the process described below, Town residents have participated and engaged in discussions with various officials in a variety of capacities. They described the multitude of issues and concerns regarding the environmental and safety matters in and around Egret Island.

Timeline:

- Draft ordinance review meetings: February 2021-September 2021
  - EPD
  - OCAO
  - Risk Management
- Finalize draft ordinance: September 2021
- External draft ordinance reviews: October 2021
  - FWC Law Enforcement
  - OCSO Law Enforcement
  - OCSO AO
- WC Boating and Waterways Section permitting review:
  - Prep meeting with OCAO and EPD: September 2021

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- First draft review meeting with FWC Boating and Waterways Section, OCAO and EPD: October 6, 2021

- Draft presentations (versions for EPC, stakeholders, BCC): October 2021
- Presentation to Butler Chain of Lakes Advisory Board (BCLAB): October 18, 2021
- Stakeholder meetings (2 hybrid, morning and evening): October 19, 2021

- Stakeholders

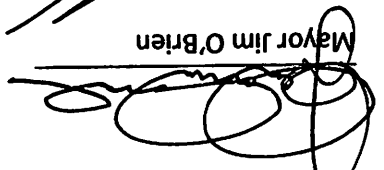
- WVNCD
- Butler Advisory Board
- FWC
- OCSO
- Town of Windermere
- Town of Windermere PD
- Florida Audubon Society
- TITF

- Amend draft ordinance as needed based on stakeholder feedback: October/November 2021
- Finalize FWC Boating and Waterways Section permitting review: November/December 2021
- Briefings with District Commissioners, Senior Staff, County Administrator and Mayor: December 2021/January 2022
- Finalize draft ordinance: January/February 2022
- EPC public hearing: 2/23/22
- BCC work session: 3/22/22
- BCC public hearing: cancelled (4/5/22)

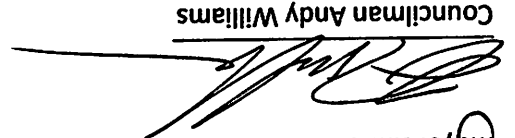
At the BOCB workshop on March 22, 2022, the voices of a very few seemed to outweigh the overwhelming support of the community at large. We sympathize with the constraints placed on law enforcement both in staffing and enforcement capabilities. This lack of capabilities, however, coupled with a marked increase in unregulated and unlicensed boat/jet ski rentals, has created a dangerous situation that will certainly get worse. Alarmingly, there have been 6 boating-related fatalities in the last 4 years on the Butler Chain (three of those occurring in 2021 alone). The code changes proposed will provide law enforcement with additional tools to protect those that lawfully and safely enjoy the lakes as well as protect the sanctuary. We understand that this may not entirely correct the issue, but will definitely be a step in the right direction.

The Town of Windermere and its residents have been waiting for years for something to be done and respectfully ask for the BOCB to readdress and place this code change onto the next available meeting for discussion.

Respectfully,



Mayor Jim O'Brien



Councilman Andy Williams

Сопровождающий документ

*[Handwritten signature]*

Исполнитель

*[Handwritten signature]*

Исполнитель

for the region

исполнитель для ВОСС по направлению: подписание документов на участие в тендерах и проведение тендеров. В рамках деятельности по направлению: подписание документов на участие в тендерах и проведение тендеров.

as well as provide the necessary information and documents for the tender process. The contract is concluded with the BOCC for the region. The contract is concluded with the BOCC for the region. The contract is concluded with the BOCC for the region.

- ВОСС направление: закупки (1/2021)
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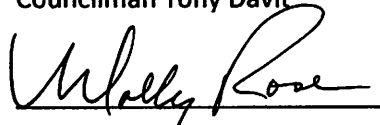
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Councilman William Martini

  
Councilmember Mandy David

  
Councilman Tony Davit

  
Councilmember Molly Rose