

Town of Fort Myers Beach  
ORDINANCE NO. 13-04

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 14 IN THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE--ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES; AMENDING SECTION 14-1, DEFINITIONS AND SECTION 14-6, BEACH RAKING AND WRACK LINE POLICY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1.** Section 14-1 of the Town of Fort Myers Beach Land Development Code is hereby amended as follows:

**Sec. 14-1. Definitions.**

For purposes of this article, the following terms, phrases, words, and derivations shall have the meaning given herein. When not inconsistent with the context, words used, in the present tense include the future, words in the plural number include the singular number, and the words in the singular number include the plural number. The word "shall" is always mandatory.

**Beach** means that area of sand along the gulf of Mexico that extends landward from the mean low-water line to the place where there is a marked change in material or physiographic form, or to the line of permanent vegetation, usually the effective limit of storm waves.

**Beach furniture or equipment** means any man-made apparatus or paraphernalia designed or manufactured for use or actually used on the beach or in the adjacent tidal waters. Examples include chairs, tables, cabanas, lounges, umbrellas, sailing vessels up to 16 feet in length, personal watercraft, concession storage units, canoes, kayaks, paddle vessels, sailboards, surfboards, fishing gear, sporting equipment, floatables, tents, and bicycles.

**Beach width** means the perpendicular distance measured from the edge of wet sand to the place where there is a marked change in material or physiographic form from beach sand to dune vegetation, seawall, turf grass, etc.

**Director** means the person to whom the town manager has delegated the authority to administer this article, or that person's designee.

**Dune** means a mound, bluff, ridge, or emergent zone of loose sediment, usually sand-sized sediment, lying upland of the beach and deposited by any natural or artificial mechanism, which may be bare or covered with vegetation, and is subject to fluctuations in configuration and location (reference 161.54 F.S., 62B-33.002 F.A.C.). It encompasses those ecological zones that, when left undisturbed, will support dune vegetation. As to areas restored or renourished pursuant to a permit issued by the town or state, it encompasses the area specified in the permit as a dune or any area specified as suitable for establishment of dune vegetation.

**Dune vegetation** means pioneer species of native vegetation which, if left undisturbed by manmade forces, will begin to grow on a dune, including species such as bitter panicum, coastal panic grass, crowfoot grass, saltmeadow cordgrass, sandbur, seacoast bluestem, sea oats, seashore saltgrass, stiffleaf eustachys, beach bean, blanket flower, dune sunflower, fiddle-leaf morningglory, partridge pea, railroad vine, sea purslane, beach creeper, nicker bean, coin vine, inkberry, lantana, saw palmetto, seashore elder, baycedar, green buttonwood, cabbage palm, cocoplum, seagrape, and southern wax myrtle.

**Edge of wet sand** means the point where the visible darkening or staining of the beach sand from wave action is no longer detectable.

**Hand raking** means the use of a standard garden rake, pitchfork, potato fork, or any other handheld tool used for the purpose of removing or altering the "wrack line."

**Mechanical beach raking** means ~~the cleaning of the sandy beach seaward of the dune and vegetation line of trash and other debris on or near the surface by use of a rake or other similar porous device which penetrates no more than 2 inches below existing ambient grade and results in no removal of in situ sand.~~ a method of maintaining the beach by pulling a pronged rake or a piece of chain link fence that meets the requirements of the LDC Sec. 14-6 (c). The rake or chain link fence may be pulled behind a tractor, golf cart, ATV, or other vehicle, as approved by the town, that meets the maximum ground-to-tire pressure found in LDC Sec. 14-6(c).

**Seaward line of vegetation** means the location closest to the mean high water line containing, or suitable for, dune vegetation. If there is no such vegetation upon a parcel or portion of a parcel, it shall encompass a line alongshore projected from the closest areas on each side where such vegetation does exist.

**Wet sand** means the area on the beach where the sand is saturated by sea water from wave action. This area is identified by a visible darkening or staining of the beach sand from the water driven onshore by wave action.

**Wrack line** means a well defined zone of the natural organic marine material cast on the shore by the last high tide, including seaweed and other vegetative and animal debris, but excluding manmade material. Any areas of organic marine material left on the upper beach due to abnormally high spring tides, storm tides, or other extreme conditions or events, as determined by the town, are not included in the definition of "wrack line."

**Section 2.** Section 14-6 of the Town of Fort Myers Beach Land Development Code is hereby amended as follows:

**Sec. 14-6. Beach raking and wrack line policy.**

(a) The use of boxblades on the beach or dune is prohibited. In an emergency and/or storm event resulting in a build-up of sand against seawalls, the use of a boxblade may be allowed with the approval of DEP, where required, and upon filing that approval with the town manager and meeting any other requirements set by the town.

(b) Under normal circumstances, the raking of the wrack line is prohibited. No mechanical or hand raking may take place seaward of the wrack line or within ten feet (10') landward of the wrack line, provided, however that hand raking of the wrack line may be performed anytime to ameliorate hazardous conditions such as removal of sand castles or filling in of manmade holes on the beach. The town manager may approve the raking of the wrack line conditioned upon prior approval by the DEP if it is determined that excessive accumulation of natural or other debris caused by extreme events, including, but not limited to, red tide, red algae bloom, or storm carried debris, are present. Should such excessive accumulation be determined, the town manager may approve raking consistent with the authorization given by DEP. Any such raking which will result in the unreimbursed expenditure of town funds in excess of currently budgeted funds shall first be approved by the town council. If this occurs during sea turtle season (May 1 through October 31), the raking must be in compliance with the specific conditions in § 14-6(c)(4).

(c) Any mechanical beach raking other than town-initiated raking pursuant to subsection (b) above requires a permit from the town:

(1) Application for permit to mechanically rake an unvegetated portion of the beach shall be submitted to the director or their designee, in writing, on a form provided by the director. as part of this application, a site plan will be submitted depicting the property corners as represented by aerial photography available at the Lee County Property Appraiser's website (www.leepa.org), the dimensions of the area to be raked, and the location of existing vegetation and structures.

(2) The application shall be made by the owner of the business that conducts the raking, or by the property owner or authorized agent of the property owner. Any application by a raking business must attach a current copy of the Lee County business tax receipt for such business and a letter of authorization from the property owner.

(3) Any business that conducts mechanical beach raking shall be required to carry \$1,000,000 in liability insurance and name the Town of Fort Myers Beach as additionally insured. Mechanical beach raking conducted by a property owner or a condominium on their own property only is exempt fro their requirement to carry liability insurance.

(4) Any business that conducts mechanical raking shall require all operators to attend an educational and training session developed by the Town at least once every year. The education and training session shall address topics such as dune vegetation, sea turtles, and beach-nesting birds. All operators of the beach business and the business owner shall sign a form acknowledging that they understand and will abide by the Town's raking regulations.

(5) Prior to the granting or denying of the application, the director or their designee will conduct an on-site inspection to determine if the proposed raking conforms to the requirements of this article and if any native vegetation exists to be protected.

~~(3)~~ (6) Based upon the information contained in the application and the site inspection, the director shall approve or deny the application.

(7) A single permit may be issued to a business that conducts raking on multiple properties. A site permit for any newly-contracted properties must be added to the permit of any business that rakes multiple properties.

(8) A restricted beach vehicle permit will also be issued with the mechanical beach raking permit provided that the vehicle meets the maximum ground-to-tire pressure found in LDC Sec. 14-6(c).

(4) (9) The director shall attach site specific conditions to the permit relating to identifying, designating, and protecting that existing vegetation and other natural features which are not to be removed in accordance with this ordinance. These conditions are in addition to the following standard permit conditions for all mechanical beach raking permits:

a. During the sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31), mechanical beach raking activities shall be confined to daylight hours and shall not begin before 9:00 A.M. or before the completion of daily monitoring for turtle nesting activity by a the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) authorized marine turtle permit holder, whichever occurs first (see requirements in § 14-78(b)). During the rest of the year (November 1 through April 30), mechanical beach raking may be conducted at night (sunset to sunrise) only with sufficient lighting on vehicles. The lighting levels must be approved by Town staff by an inspection of the field at night. All fixtures should be shielded to focus light only onto the direct work area. Red lights or red filters shall be used to reduce disturbance to wildlife such as shorebirds.

b. During sea turtle nesting season (May 1 through October 31), the permittee is responsible for ensuring that a daily sea turtle nest survey, protection, and monitoring program is conducted throughout the permitted beach raking area. Such surveys and associated conservation measures shall be completed after sunrise and prior to the commencement of any mechanical beach raking. the sea turtle survey, protection and monitoring program shall be conducted only by individuals possessing appropriate expertise in the protocol being followed and a valid F.A.C. rule 68-E Permit issued by the FWC. To identify those individuals available to conduct marine turtle nesting surveys within the permitted area, please contact the FWC, Bureau of Imperiled Species Management, at (850) 922-4330.

c. All turtle nests will be marked with wooden stakes, flagging tape, and an FWC sea turtle nest sign. No mechanical raking equipment is allowed inside of the staked area. All equipment operators shall be briefed on the types of marking utilized and should be able to easily contact the individual responsible for the nest survey to verify any questionable areas.

d. Mechanical beach raking equipment shall meet the following standards:

1. The vehicle and equipment cannot exceed a maximum ground-to-tire pressure of 10 PSI (pounds per square inch) using the following formula;

-a- PSI = vehicle weight in pounds (includes person and equipment) divided by the footprint in square inches

-b- EXAMPLE: 404 lbs. (ATV weight) + 200 (person + equipment) divided by 198 square inches (ATV with 6" x 8.25" footprint x 4 tires) = 3.1 PSI

2. Raking shall be accomplished with a pronged rake that limits penetration into the surface of the beach to a maximum of two inches. Box blades, front- or rear-mounted blades, or other sand sifting/filtering vehicles are not allowed. A piece of chain link fence or pressure treated lumber not to exceed two pieces 4" by 4" by 10' in size may be pulled behind the rake.

3. The beach raking vehicle and equipment must be removed from the beach when not in use.

4. Beach raking equipment shall be inspected periodically by the town to insure compliance with these standards.

5. Operators of mechanical beach raking equipment shall avoid all native salt-tolerant dune vegetation and staked sea turtle nests by a minimum of 10 feet.

6. Mechanical beach raking equipment must travel seaward of the mean high water line with the rake disengaged when driving on the beach from one raking area to another, and shall not disturb any dune or dune vegetation.

e. Burial or storage of any debris (biotic or abiotic) collected is prohibited seaward of any frontal dune, vegetation line, or armoring structure. Removal of all accumulated material from the beach must occur immediately after raking has been performed in an area. Prior to removing the debris and to the greatest extent possible, beach compatible sand should be separated from the debris and kept on site.

f. All permit fees collected for mechanical beach raking permits shall be used only for environmental education and restoration.

g. Any violation of the any special or standard permit conditions by a business owner, operator, or property owner shall automatically invalidate may result in revocation of the permit for a particular property and/or for the entire permitted area. Revocation of a permit shall not prevent the Town from pursuing any one or combination of the enforcement mechanisms provided in this code (for example, § 1-5, or article V of Chapter 2) for any violation of the article. Permit revocations may be appealed to the town Manager. Periodic compliance inspections will be conducted to insure compliance with the permit conditions and this ordinance.

**Section 3.** Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this ordinance, or application hereof, is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion or application shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion or application hereof.

**Section 4.** Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon adoption, provided, however, that the amended provisions relating to permits for mechanical raking in Section 14-6(c) shall not take effect until October 1, 2013.

The foregoing ordinance was enacted by the Town Council upon a motion by Council Member Andre and seconded by Council Member List and, upon being put to a vote, the result was as follows:

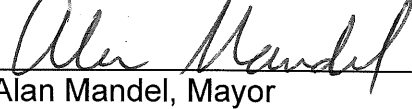
Alan Mandel, Mayor	aye	Joe Kosinski, Vice Mayor	aye
Bob Raymond	aye	Jo List	aye
Dan Andre	aye		

DULY PASSED AND ENACTED by the Council of the Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida, this 20th day of May, 2013.

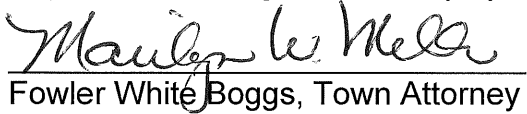
ATTEST:

BY:   
Michelle D. Mayher, Town Clerk

TOWN OF FORT MYERS BEACH

BY:   
Alan Mandel, Mayor

Approved as to legal sufficiency by:

  
Fowler White Boggs, Town Attorney