



The Story of St. Pete Beach: An Amendment 4 “Testing Ground”

Since beginning a 3-year experiment in Amendment 4-style rule, St. Pete Beach residents have seen **endless lawsuits, wasted taxpayer dollars and widespread economic turmoil.**^[i] In November, 2009, the citizens of St. Pete Beach scaled back their local version of Amendment 4 so that only certain land use changes require a referendum. While Florida voters are set to soon decide the fate of Amendment 4—a statewide Vote on Everything initiative—St. Pete Beach voters have chosen to rein in their own local experiment by a decisive 60-40 margin.

"St. Pete Beach residents are tired of voting on everything, especially issues that don't even relate to development," said Ward Friszolowski, former Mayor of St. Pete Beach. **"This amendment doesn't work. It has resulted in chaotic, confusing and expensive elections driven by sound bites rather than sound planning."**

The St. Pete Beach TIMELINE:

November, 2006: St. Pete Beach narrowly adopts a local version of Amendment 4, requiring a referendum for all changes to the local comprehensive plan. Amendment 4 supporters promise that they just want to give "the people a right to vote."

June, 2008: St. Pete Beach voters approve a new comprehensive plan at the ballot box.

June, 2008: **After losing the election, Amendment 4 supporters in St. Pete Beach file a string of legal challenges to invalidate the will of the people.**

September, 2008: Numerous administrative challenges are subsequently filed by Amendment 4 co-author and co-founder Ross Burnaman.

June, 2009: The St. Petersburg Times reports that St. Pete Beach has exhausted its legal budget months before the end of the fiscal year.^[ii]

September, 2009: Amidst rising legal bills, St. Pete Beach raises its millage rate.[iii]

October, 2009: Court-ordered mediation collapses when Amendment 4 supporters refuse to join the City and the business community in supporting a compromise.[iv]

November, 2009: St. Pete Beach residents vote decisively to scale back their local experiment in Amendment 4.

St. Pete Beach is proof positive that Amendment 4 is not designed to give the people a say on growth. It is designed to give anti-growth lawyers another legal avenue to stop commonsense progress, even when voters approve it. In St. Pete Beach, the taxpayers' legal bills continue to mount. Unfortunately, there is no end in sight.

Citizens for Lower Taxes and a Stronger Economy leads opposition to Amendment 4. To date, more than 200 organizations throughout Florida have opposed Amendment 4. More join the fight every day.

Please visit www.florida2010.org.

[i] St. Petersburg Times on September 22, 2009 ("St. Pete Beach tax rates goes up, but will it be felt?"):

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/st-pete-beach-tax-rate-goes-up-but-will-it-be-felt/1038346>

[ii] St. Petersburg Times on June 1, 2009 ("St. Pete Beach's legal costs bust budget")

[iii] St. Petersburg Times on September 22, 2009 ("St. Pete Beach tax rates goes up, but will it be felt?"):

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/st-pete-beach-tax-rate-goes-up-but-will-it-be-felt/1038346>

[iv] St. Petersburg Times on November 4, 2009 ("Mediator declares impasse in talks to end St Pete Beach development lawsuits"):

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/mediator-declares-impasse-in-talks-to-end-st-pete-beach-development/1049083>