



CITY OF CLEWISTON
115 West Ventura Avenue
Clewiston, Florida 33440

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP AGENDA

Tuesday, January 16, 2024
(immediately following the City Commission Special Meeting at 3:00 p.m.)

Call Workshop to Order

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

Additions/Deletions/Changes and Approval of the Agenda

Public Comments – At this time, any person will be allowed to speak.

- 1. Draft Ordinances - Parks and Trespass**
- 2. RV Parking Ordinance Discussion**
- 3. Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services Operations Evaluation**
- 4. Commission Comments and Discussion**

Adjournment

The City of Clewiston is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

City Hall is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking spaces are available. Accommodation requests or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to the meeting. Please contact the City Clerk's office at (863) 983-1484, extension 105, or FAX (863) 983-4055 for information or assistance.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, the person will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, the person may need to ensure a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify the above Notice of Meeting of the City Commission of the City of Clewiston is a true and correct copy of said Notice and that I posted a true and correct copy of said Notice at the front and rear entrances of City Hall, a place convenient and readily accessible to the general public at all times.

Mary K. Combass, City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-___

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLEWISTON, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CLEWISTON CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 62, STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND CERTAIN PUBLIC PLACES, CREATING ARTICLE IV, PUBLIC PARKS; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; CONFLICT; SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Clewiston, Florida, finds that it is necessary for the proper administration of the City to provide regulations outlining the use of city-owned and operated public parks.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLEWISTON, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Clewiston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 62, Article IV. – Public Parks is hereby created to read as follows:

ARTICLE IV. – PUBLIC PARKS

Sec. 62-99. – Hours and Use.

- (1) City of Clewiston Parks shall be open for public use each day from sunrise to sunset and shall otherwise be closed for public use. These hours shall not apply to official activities conducted by the City or granted via special event application when such approval specifically authorizes longer hours.
- (2) It shall be unlawful for any person to willfully enter or remain within any City Park during the hours these parks are closed for public use. Remaining in City Parks during closed hours shall constitute trespass. No person shall remain upon park property after a lawful command to leave by any law enforcement officer, regardless of whether the park is open or not.

Sec. 62-100. – Prohibited Activities

Except for activities of a governmental agency within the scope of its authority, or unless specifically permitted to do so by a permit, the following activities within City parks shall be unlawful:

- (a) Sleeping at any time during the hours from sunset to sunrise the following day.
- (b) To lie or otherwise be or remain in any bushes, shrubs, or other foliage.
- (c) Constructing any structures.
- (d) Cooking foodstuffs except where such activities are permitted by the City.
- (e) Starting or stoking fires.
- (f) Discharging or depositing any waste or rubbish except in bathroom and waste receptacles facilities provided by the City.
- (g) Digging or otherwise disturbing the natural ground surface, damaging, or removing plants, trees, shrubs, or any other part of park grounds.
- (h) Erecting or affixing signs to any park structures except those posted by the City or as directed by the Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services Director.
- (i) Killing, injuring, harming, capturing, chasing, poisoning, or removing any wildlife.
- (j) Writing upon, drawing, or otherwise defacing, damaging, removing, or destroying any park facilities or park grounds.
- (k) Operating or parking of any motor vehicle, except in designated parking areas.

Sec. 62-101. – Camping Prohibited

Camping on park property is prohibited. For the purposes of this section, the term "camping" means the use of camping facilities (such as tents, RV campers or other temporary shelters), the use of non-City designated cooking facilities (such as fires or portable stoves), or the use of cots, beds or hammocks.

Sec. 63-102. – Trespass Warnings; Enforcement

- (1) Any law enforcement officer, authorized to enforce the laws of the state within the city limits of Clewiston, may enforce the provisions of sections 62-99 to 63-102. Violations of Article IV shall be punished in accordance with section 1-15 and Chapter 62 Article V of this code.

Secs. 62-103-62-110. – Reserved.

SECTION 2. Codification. The provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made part of the Code of Laws and Ordinances of the City of Clewiston.

SECTION 3. Severability. If any phrase, sentence or portion of this Ordinance is, for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and individual provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

SECTION 4. Repeal of Laws in Conflict. All ordinances of the City of Clewiston, Florida, which are in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 5. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and consistent with all requirements of general law.

PASSED on first reading by the City Commission on _____, 2023.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on second and final reading by the City Commission on _____, 2023.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CLEWISTON, FLORIDA

Mary K. Combass, City Clerk

James Pittman, Mayor

(MUNICIPAL SEAL)

**APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY**

By: _____
Dylan J. Brandenburg, City Attorney

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-___

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLEWISTON, FLORIDA AMENDING THE CLEWISTON CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 62, STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND CERTAIN PUBLIC PLACES, CREATING ARTICLE V - TRESPASSING; AUTHORIZATION TO ISSUE TRESPASS WARNING FOR PUBLIC PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; CONFLICT; SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Clewiston, Florida, finds that it is necessary for the proper administration of the City to provide regulations outlining the use of city-owned and operated public property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CLEWISTON, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Clewiston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 62, Article V. – Trespassing is hereby created to read as follows:

ARTICLE V. – TRESPASSING

Sec. 62-111. – Trespass Warning; Authorization to Issue Trespass Warning for Public Property.

- (1) Any law enforcement officers authorized to enforce the laws of the state within the city limits of Clewiston are authorized to issue a trespass warning to any individual who violates any City ordinance, rule or regulation, State law, or lawful directive of a law enforcement officer, which violation was committed while on or within a City facility, building, or outdoor area, including municipal parks, for the specific property where the violation occurred.
 - a. Trespass warnings shall be issued as followed:
 - i. For the first violation, the individual may be issued a trespass warning for a period of one year.
 - ii. For a second or subsequent violation, the individual may be issued a trespass warning for a period of two years.

- iii. A copy of the trespass warning shall be provided by mail or hand-delivered to the individual. The written trespass warning shall advise of the right to appeal and the location and telephone number for filing the appeal.
 - iv. Any person found on or within any city facility, building, or outdoor area, including the municipal parks, in violation of a trespass warning may be arrested for trespassing.
 - v. A City employee or official having control over city facilities may authorize an individual who has received a trespass warning to enter the property or premises to exercise his or her First Amendment rights if there is no other reasonable alternative location to exercise such rights or to conduct necessary municipal business. Such authorization must be in writing, specify the duration of the authorization, and any conditions thereof, and shall not be unreasonably denied.
- b. Appeal of trespass warning. A person to whom a trespass warning is issued under this section shall have the right to appeal as follows:
- i. An appeal must be filed in writing, within ten days of the issuance of the warning, and shall include the appellant's name, address, and phone number, if any. No fee shall be charged for the filing of an appeal.
 - ii. The appeal shall be filed at the City of Clewiston Police Department.
 - iii. Appeals shall be set and heard by the City Special Magistrate.
 - iv. Notice of hearing shall be provided to the appellant in one of two ways:
 - 1. By leaving or posting notice at the City of Clewiston Police Department, or
 - 2. By telephone if a telephone number has been provided by appellant. If appellant cannot be reached by telephone, then notice at the Police Department shall be deemed sufficient.
 - v. Copies of documents in the City's possession intended to be used at the hearing shall be made available to the appellant upon request at no cost.

- vi. The appellant and City shall have the right to attend with an attorney, the right to testify, present evidence and call witnesses. The appellant shall have the right to bring a court reporter at their own expense.
- vii. The magistrate shall consider the testimony, documentary evidence, and any other evidence presented at the hearing.
- viii. The City shall bear the burden of proof by clear and convincing evidence that the trespass warning was properly issued pursuant to the criteria of this section.
- ix. The magistrate shall issue a written decision and order on the appeal which shall be mailed to the appellant at the address provided. If no address is provided, a copy of the decision shall be posted at the City of Clewiston Police Department.
- x. The Decision of the magistrate shall be final, and the appellant shall be final. Such decision may be subject to judicial review in the manner as otherwise provided by law.
- xi. The trespass warning shall remain in effect during the appeal and review process, including any further judicial review.

Secs. 62-112 - 62-120. – Reserved.

SECTION 2. Codification. The provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made part of the Code of Laws and Ordinances of the City of Clewiston.

SECTION 3. Severability. If any phrase, sentence or portion of this Ordinance is, for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and individual provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

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**APPROVED AS TO FORM
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By: _____
Dylan J. Brandenburg, City Attorney

CITY OF CLEWISTON
City Commission Agenda Item Report

AGENDA ITEM REPORT NO. 2
Commission Workshop Meeting Date: January 16, 2024

Subject: Staff Recommended Changes to Clewiston Ordinance 50-7

- 1. Background/History:** Review of and discussions about the interpretation and enforcement of Clewiston Ordinance Sec. 50-7; Storage on private property There has been further discussion during publicly held workshops reviewing Sec 50-7. During those questions and discussions these were the points of discussion:
 - Public comment received during a regularly scheduled commission meeting. The question/discussion; is the enforcement of the ordinance being done by the city. The current interpretation and enforcement by the Code Enforcement Officer of Sec 50-7 was discussed in open meeting. This question/discussion brought more questions and the Commission decided to review the ordinance in a public workshop for further discussion and possible ideas for updating Ordinance Sec 50-7.
 - A presentation was provided by Community Improvement Division Supervisor during the March 6, 2023 and September 26, 2023 workshop on the subject. This presentation and discussion at the workshop addressed the current ordinance and interpretation for enforcement. The workshop provided staff direction for recommended changes to the ordinance based on the discussion.

- 2. Financial Impact:** Cost of Ordinance revision/recording.

- 3. Attachments:**
 - a. Power Point Presentation “RV Mobile home trailer storage” presented at the March 6, 2023 and September 26, 2023.
 - b. Current Version and staff recommended version with changes to Clewiston Ordinance 50-7.

- 4. Actions/Options/Recommendations:** Staff Recommendations are to approve moving forward to effect the changes to Clewiston Ordinance 50-7 as presented in attachment b.



Community Improvement Division



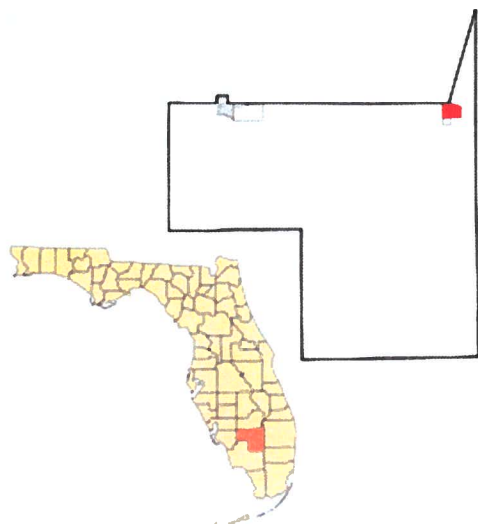
Recreational Vehicle, Commercial Trailer, and Mobile Home Storage on Private Property

March 6, 2023

Workshop Discussion

Clewiston Code of Ordinances

Chapter 50 - MANUFACTURED HOMES,
MOBILE HOMES, MANUFACTURED HOME
AND MOBILE HOME PARKS, RECREATIONAL
VEHICLES AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE
PARKS AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES
ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL



Sec. 50-1. Purpose.

The intent and purpose of this chapter is to provide regulations governing mobile home parks and recreational vehicle parks as to their location and manner of operation in general; to provide regulations and zoning restrictions governing individual mobile homes and recreational vehicles as to their location, occupancy and use, when other than in regularly licensed mobile home parks or recreational vehicle parks; and to establish such traffic and parking regulations for all types of mobile homes, recreational vehicle parks and commercial trailers as to promote the public health, safety, and welfare.

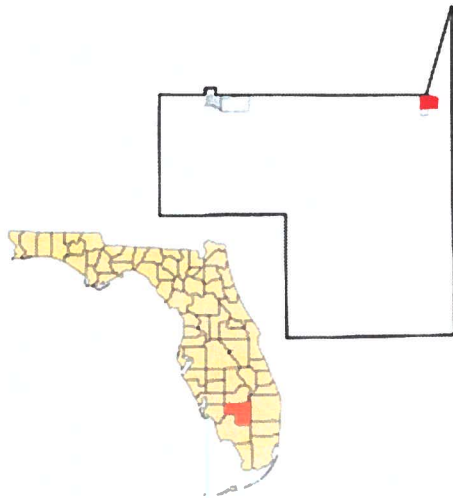
(Code 1982, § 20-1; Code 1999, § 50-1; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-1), 12-19-1994)

Chapter 50 - Chapter 50 - MANUFACTURED HOMES, MOBILE HOMES, MANUFACTURED HOME AND MOBILE HOME PARKS, RECREATIONAL VEHICLES AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES
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Sec. 50-2. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Commercial trailer includes the various types of trailers advertising a business, vehicles commonly known as semitrailers and any type of vehicle used as a temporary office or headquarters for a business. **Small utility trailers used for transporting boats and other vehicles are specifically excluded from this definition.**

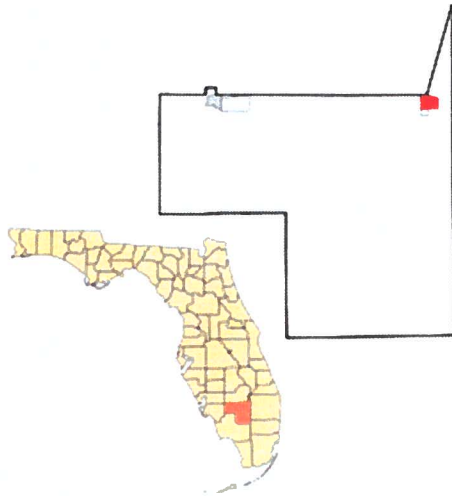
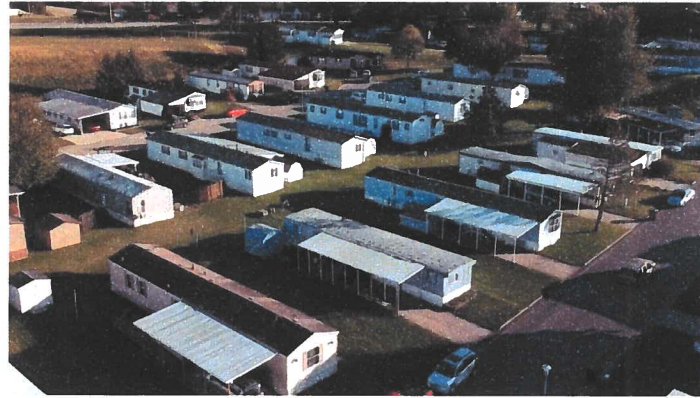


Sec. 50-2 Continued.

**Chapter 50 - Chapter 50 -
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ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL

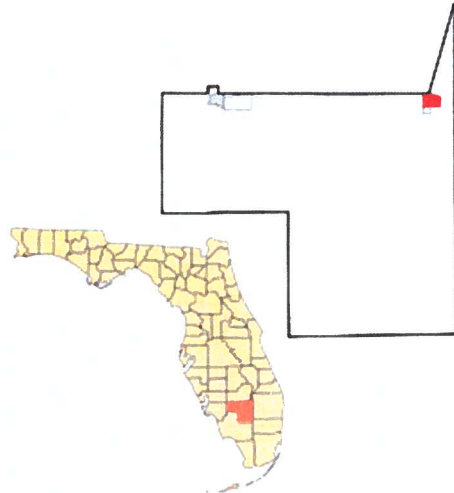
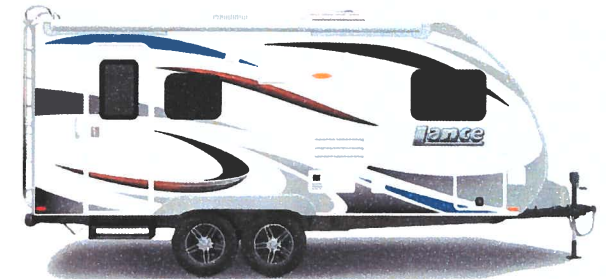
Mobile home means a residential structure, transportable in one or more sections, which is eight body feet or more in width, over 35 feet in length, built on an integral chassis, and designed to be used as a dwelling when connected to the required utilities, and includes the plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems contained in the structure.



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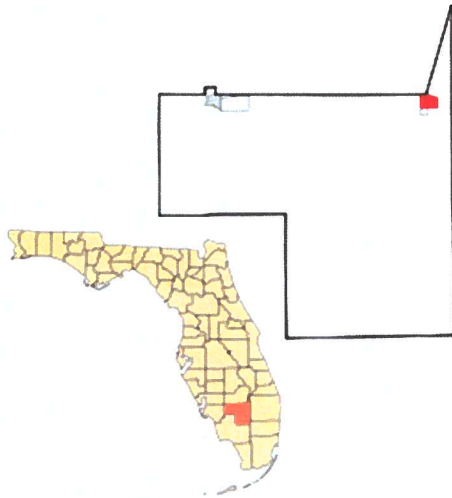
Sec. 50-2 Continued.

Recreational vehicle means a portable vehicular structure which is built on a chassis, designed as a dwelling for travel, recreation, or vacation; with a transportable body width not exceeding 8½ body feet and a length not exceeding 40 feet, and does not qualify as a mobile home. This includes both motor homes which are self-propelled recreational vehicles and travel trailers which are on wheels and are towable.



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Sec. 50-2 Continued.

For purposes of this chapter, the term "recreational vehicles" includes the following terms and their definitions:

(1) **Auto camper** means a lightweight, collapsible unit that fits on top of an automobile and into the trunk with the cover removed, and is designed for travel, recreation and vacation uses.

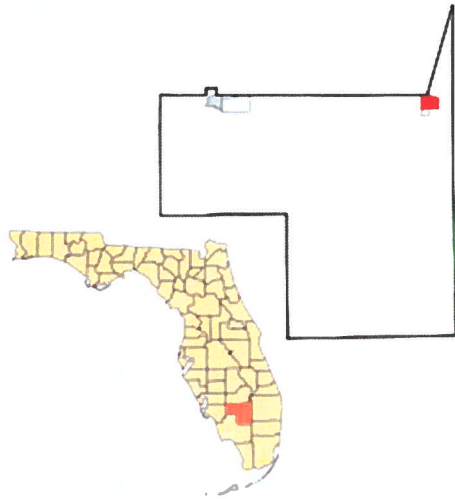


(2) **Camper van** means a vehicle specially equipped for camping.



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Sec. 50-2 Continued.

(3) **Camping trailer** means a vehicular portable unit mounted on wheels and constructed with collapsible partial sidewalls which folds for towing by another vehicle and unfold at the campsite to provide temporary living quarters for



(4) **Fifth-wheel recreational trailer** means a vehicular portable unit mounted on wheels of such size and weight as not to require special highway movement permits. It is primarily designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational camping or travel use and designed to be connected for towing through the use of a fifth-wheel device. It is of a length and width not exceeding the limitations provided in F.S. § 316.515, as administered by the state department of highway safety and motor vehicles.



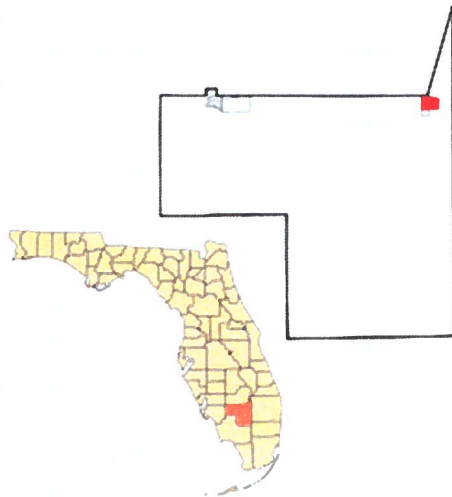
**Chapter 50 - MANUFACTURED
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Sec. 50-2 Continued.

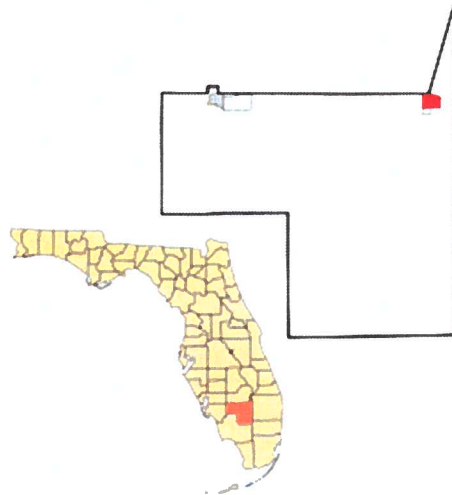
(5) *Motor home* means a vehicular unit, not exceeding length and width limitations provided in F.S. § 316.515 (link below), as administered by the state department of highway safety and motor vehicles, and built on a self-propelled motor vehicle chassis, primarily designed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use.

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0300-0399/0316/Sections/0316.515.html



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ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL



Sec. 50-2 Continued.

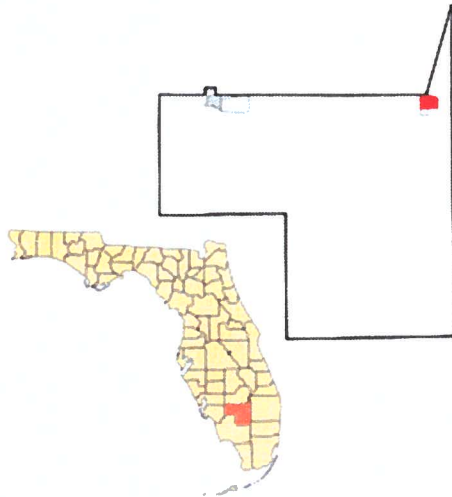
(6) **Park model recreational vehicle** means a transportable unit built on a single chassis and designed to provide seasonal or temporary living quarters when connected to utilities necessary for operation of installed fixtures and appliances. The total area of the unit in a setup mode, when measured from the exterior surface of the exterior walls at the level of maximum dimensions and including any bay windows that extend to the floor line will not exceed 500 square feet.



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Sec. 50-2 Continued.

(7) **Travel trailer** means a vehicular portable unit mounted on wheels, of such size or weight as not to require a special highway movement permit when drawn by a motorized vehicle. It is primarily designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use.

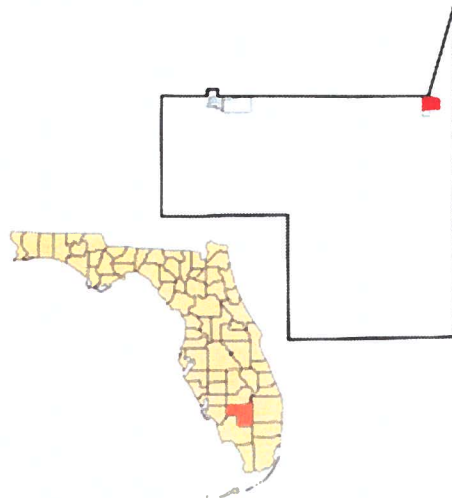


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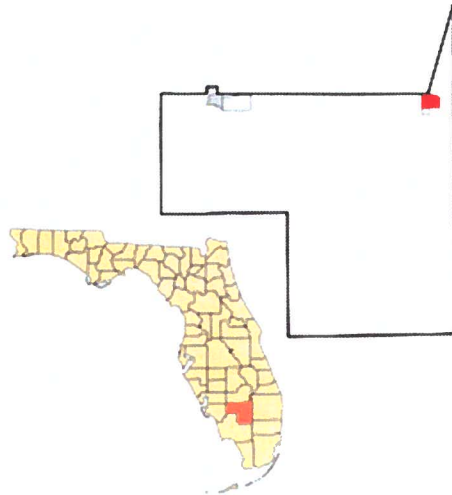
Sec. 50-2 Continued.

(8) **Truck camper** means a portable unit which is designed to be loaded onto or affixed to the bed or chassis of a truck and is constructed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping or travel use.



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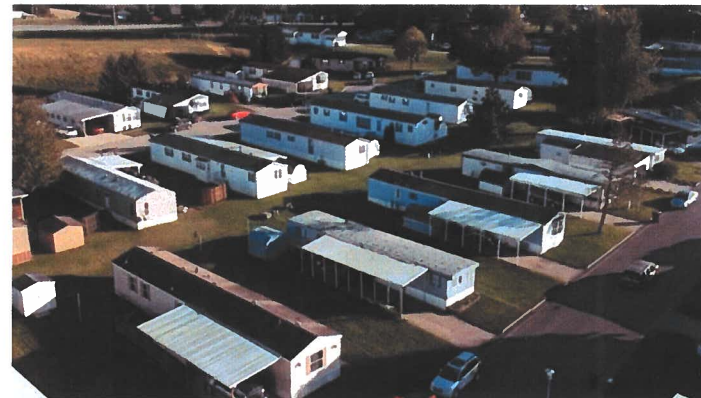
Sec. 50-5. Mobile homes prohibited outside mobile home parks; exception.

Except as provided herein, and except in zoning use districts RM-1 and RM-2, no person shall occupy, use or locate a mobile home in any place other than a regularly licensed mobile home park.

(1) This section shall not be construed as prohibiting the occupancy or use of existing mobile homes not located within licensed mobile home parks; provided, however, no existing mobile home which is located outside a regularly licensed mobile home park shall be replaced with another mobile home at such time as the present one is removed or damaged beyond repair or becomes unsafe for habitation.

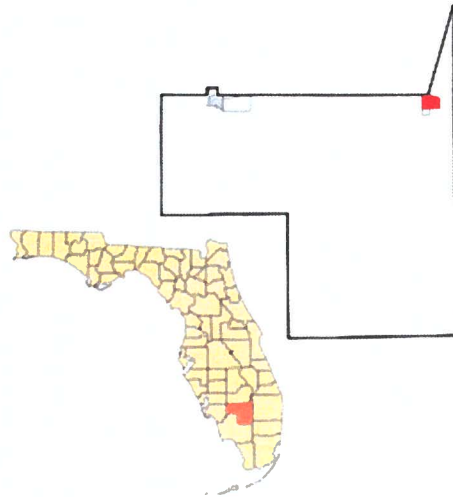
(2) Occupancy of existing mobile homes as permitted by subsection (1) of this section shall nevertheless be limited to the person in whom legal or equitable title to the real estate on which the mobile home is located is vested.

(Code 1982, § 20-4; Code 1999, § 50-5; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-4), 12-19-1994)



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Sec. 50-6. Parking on streets.

Mobile homes, recreational vehicles and trailers of all types covered by this chapter may be parked on a temporary basis upon the streets or public areas available for parking and controlled by the city only upon the following conditions:

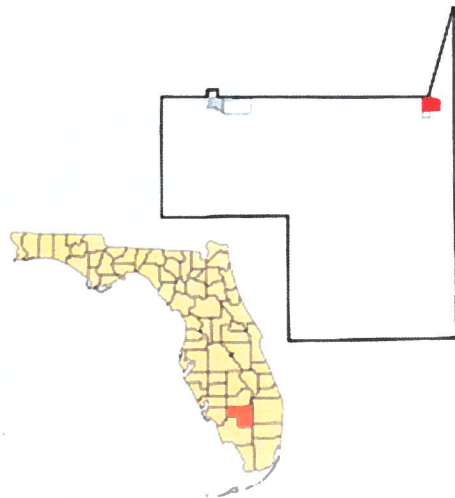
- (1) They shall be parked parallel to the curb and within the parking lines and areas indicated upon the pavement or by appropriate signs nearby.
- (2) While the necessity for their temporary parking is recognized, mobile homes, recreational vehicles and trailers parked at the curb require an unusual amount of space and present a hazard to traffic safety, and for that reason they shall not be parked upon any public street for longer than one hour.



- (3) They shall not be parked on any public street unless attached to the towing vehicle at all times.



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Sec. 50-6. Parking on streets Continued.

(4) They shall not be parked on any public street of the city in such a manner as to interfere with the normal use of such street for traffic, even though such parking may be temporary for the purpose of loading or unloading freight or other commodities.



(5) The chief of police, with the approval of the city manager, is authorized to promulgate, from time to time, additional regulations on the movement and parking of mobile homes and commercial trailers, as may be necessary to carry into effect the intent of this chapter. Such regulations shall be considered promulgated and in effect upon suitable signs being prepared and posted at the place where the regulation applies, setting forth such regulations clearly.

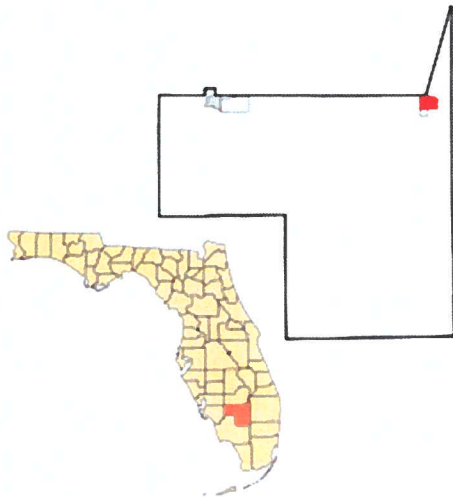
(Code 1982, § 20-5; Code 1999, § 50-6; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-5), 12-19-1994)

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Sec. 50-7. Storage on private property.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any resident of the city from storing a recreational vehicle of any type on the same lot as his residence, provided such recreational vehicle complies with the definition of a recreational vehicle, travel trailer or camping trailer and is not occupied or used for any purpose while stored; carries a current vehicle registration tag; and, provided further, that such recreational vehicle is stored at least 60 feet from the front property line and ten feet from all other property lines. All commercial trailers may be stored only in a commercial or industrial district and mobile homes may be stored only in an industrial district and shall be located so as to conform with building setbacks of such district.

(Code 1982, § 20-6; Code 1999, § 50-7; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-6), 12-19-1994)

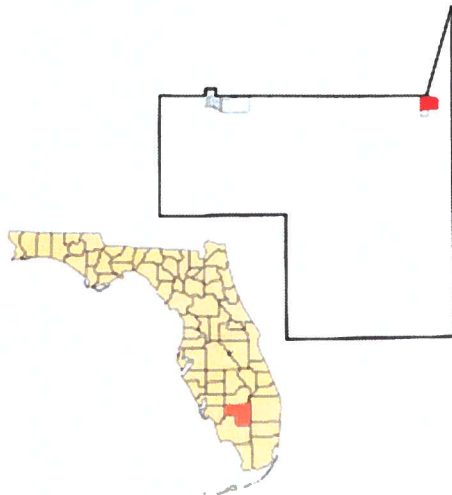


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Sec. 50-8. Use as office or place of business.

No person shall occupy or use a mobile home of any type covered by this chapter for an office or headquarters for a place of business, except that this provision shall not apply to building contractors having an office trailer, which may be located upon a site during the period of active construction.

(Code 1982, § 20-7; Code 1999, § 50-8; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-7), 12-19-1994)



SAMPLE CASE PHOTOS



The boat trailer is specifically excluded by Section 50-2 and the enclosed trailer does not meet the definition of a commercial trailer or Recreational Vehicle therefore neither would be a violation of Chapter 50.

“Commercial trailer includes the various types of trailers advertising a business, vehicles commonly known as semitrailers and any type of vehicle used as a temporary office or headquarters for a business. Small utility trailers used for transporting boats and other vehicles are specifically excluded from this definition.”



This vehicle does meet the definition of a commercial vehicle in section 50-2 therefore it would be a violation of Section 50-7.

“Commercial trailer includes the various types of trailers advertising a business, vehicles commonly known as semitrailers and any type of vehicle used as a temporary office or headquarters for a business.”



This trailer is specifically excluded from the definitions in Section 50-2 therefore it is not a violation of Chapter 50.

“Small utility trailers used for transporting boats and other vehicles are specifically excluded from this definition.”



The Recreational Vehicle would meet the definition of Section 50-2 and would be in violation of Section 50-7. The enclosed trailer does not meet the definition of commercial trailer in Section 50-2 and therefore, would not be in violation.

“Commercial trailer includes the various types of trailers advertising a business, vehicles commonly known as semitrailers and any type of vehicle used as a temporary office or headquarters for a business.”

This trailer does not have any advertisement on the outside or within view.



This enclosed trailer would meet the definition of a commercial trailer in Section 50-2 and would be a violation of Section 50-7.

“All commercial trailers may be stored only in a commercial or industrial district and mobile homes may be stored only in an industrial district and shall be located so as to conform with building setbacks of such district.”



This trailer is specifically excluded within Section 50-2 therefore there is no violation of Chapter 50.

“Small utility trailers used for transporting boats and other vehicles are specifically excluded from this definition.”



This would be a violation of Section 50-7 the vehicle meets the definitions provided in Section 50-2 and is not within the specified storage location of 60 feet from the front property line.

Current Version:

Sec. 50-7. Storage on private property.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any resident of the city from storing a recreational vehicle of any type on the same lot as his residence, provided such recreational vehicle complies with the definition of a recreational vehicle, travel trailer or camping trailer and is not occupied or used for any purpose while stored; carries a current vehicle registration tag; and, provided further, that such recreational vehicle is stored at least 60 feet from the front property line and ten feet from all other property lines. All commercial trailers may be stored only in a commercial or industrial district and mobile homes may be stored only in an industrial district and shall be located so as to conform with building setbacks of such district.

(Code 1982, § 20-6; Code 1999, § 50-7; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-6), 12-19-1994)

Recommended Changed Version:

Sec. 50-7. Storage on private property.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any resident of the city from storing a recreational vehicle of any type on the same lot as his residence, provided such recreational vehicle complies with the definition of a recreational vehicle, travel trailer or camping trailer and is not occupied or used for any purpose while stored; ~~and display~~~~carries~~ a current vehicle registration ~~sticker and~~ tag; ~~and,~~ ~~provided further, that such recreational vehicle is stored at least 60 feet from the front property line and ten feet from all other property lines.~~ All commercial trailers ~~may~~ shall be stored only in a commercial or industrial district and mobile homes ~~may~~ shall be stored only in an industrial district and shall be located so as to conform ~~with~~ to building setbacks of such district.

(Code 1982, § 20-6; Code 1999, § 50-7; Ord. No. 94-01, pt. 1(20-6), 12-19-1994)

CITY OF CLEWISTON

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January 16, 2024

To: Mayor & Commissioners

From: Randy Martin, City Manager

Subject: Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services Operations Evaluation

BACKGROUND

In recent years, Clewiston's parks, recreation & leisure services have seen major swings in terms of activity levels, programming considerations, administrative oversight and facility maintenance and improvement efforts. Prior to 2019 when I assumed the role of city manager, the city operated these programs without a Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services for several years. The then Public Works Director was assigned the duties of facility maintenance responsibilities, limited involvement in coordinating with volunteer groups for usage of park properties and athletic facilities, as well as, oversight and coordination of John Boy Auditorium & other parks and recreation facility rentals. Upon the retirement of the former Public Works Director, the City reorganized its administrative structure to create a Director of Operations position with broadened responsibilities which included public works operations and parks & recreation related activities in like manner.

During the period 2019-2021 in particular, recreation type programming and leisure services activities saw major changes in usage levels due in large part to the impacts of the nationwide COVID-19 pandemic to be followed by ramped up efforts by the City and its partners, particularly with the support of the US Sugar Corporation, to improve facilities long in need of upgrades. The City renewed its inter-local agreements with Hendry County schools and Hendry County government in terms of continuing facility operations financial assistance support

for Eastern Hendry County and priority school athletic program usage during the period as well.

The years that followed have seen significant growth in sports and recreation program facility demand and usage. In terms of facilities needing attention, partnership collaborations resulted in the investment of both public and private donated funds to renovate and reopen the much improved youth center facility that had seen limited public usage for several years particularly while the Parks & Recreation Director position remained vacant. Likewise, the historic swimming pool facility that had been completely closed during the prior period was renovated and reopened for public use. Other efforts were pursued and continue to likewise pursue replacing playground equipment at various facilities needing upgrades.

The Commission and management recognized the need and next made it a priority to begin the process of expanding programs and leisure service activities by pursuing the hiring process for a Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services which was accomplished in July, 2022 and the creation of a new Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services Advisory Board to provide support for the effort which followed with the Advisory Board organizing and becoming active on September 14, 2023. Subsequent fiscal year budgets have been significantly impacted by all these efforts. Upon the hiring of the Director, associated responsibilities were transitioned back during the period that followed from the prior interim oversight by the Director of Operations.

CRITIQUE

It is my contention that the City has made substantial progress particularly over the last couple of years in the area of parks, recreation & leisure services. Described facility enhancements and those programmed but yet to be completed are and will be obvious successes. I am convinced the need for filling the long vacant director position and the creation of the advisory board are also justified, as well as, the enhanced funding of the department. These are both necessary for efficient departmental operations and essential to continue progress on goals. Limited progress has been made on organizational matters including the development of policies to address identified deficiencies resulting from the period of limited oversight when the director position was vacant for several years, but much more work on this area remains particularly as it relates to volunteer managed organized

sport program utilization of facilities. This relationship needs immediate attention to avoid some of the communication failings experienced during the most recent fall sport season. Significant progress has been made in terms of leisure service type activities with the enhanced frequency and scheduling of community wide events over the past year plus. However, focus on these activities must not be allowed to contribute to delayed completion of pending capital improvements when funding is made available. Timeliness and proper continuous oversight of facility maintenance activities and personnel utilizing available resources also needs improvement. The post renovation reopening of the pool facility was a success, but the season was cut short and marred by maintenance related issues which will invariably occur especially when a facility has been closed for a period. Nonetheless, repair efforts need to be well-coordinated to avoid further delayed use and related complications. A major identified shortcoming is that enhanced programming particularly better utilizing resources now available at the youth center is overdue. Current efforts to pursue programming enhancements such as after school programs need to be expedited also.

Without elaborating unnecessarily in this report on further specific details of management's evaluation and despite the noteworthy accomplishments to date, it is my overall assessment that our current performance in this area is lacking. It pains me to say, but the bottom line is management feels ineffective communication and other concerns related to performance and the public perception of current operations results in at best a subpar grade. This result is unacceptable and cannot be maintained if long term goals are to be achieved. Management has already begun the process of discussing next steps with staff with additional actions to follow to address identified deficiencies.

CONCLUSION

As discussed at the December 18, 2023 Commission workshop & regular meeting and in consideration of public input critical of certain aspects of parks and recreation program operations, Commission members expressed concerns and the desire for management to respond during the upcoming workshop. In preparation, management has evaluated specifics of complaints received, program and event considerations, related issues and city staff responsibilities and citizen/volunteer organization interactions. Reasonable people can certainly have differences of

opinion and interactions between city staff and the public in general not uncommonly can be contentious; however, this does not alter the overarching responsibility of the City to provide services and be accountable to the citizenry. I firmly believe public service is a calling that requires dedication and a recognition that this is the sole purpose for the organization's existence. Granted, public servants are charged with serving the best interests of the entire City and all its constituencies which quite often can conflict with the desires of individuals or specific organizations. Regardless, it is paramount that public employees as agents of the City should always conduct themselves with respect, dignity and integrity. The reputation of the City and the confidence and overall support of its constituents must be the priority. These things said, as the responsible party for the administration of the City, I pledge to the Commission that management's priority will be to accomplish the necessary tasks in the period ahead to satisfactorily improve this dynamic as it pertains to all city services but particularly matters of identified shortcomings in the area of parks, recreation & leisure services.