

**From:** [Herring, Darlina](#)  
**To:** [Burton, Barry](#); [Long, Janet C](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Welch, Kenneth](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Justice, Charlie](#); [Gerard, Pat](#); [Seel, Karen](#); [Burke, Ken](#)  
**Cc:** [Welch, J Doyle](#); [Oversend, Ashley](#); [Herring, Darlina](#); [Greenleaf, Kim](#); [Vandenberg, Courtney](#); [Cresch, Whitney](#); [Simmons, Cyndi M](#); [Klug, Della](#); [Carpenter, Katherine](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Online Customer Service Contact Us Form Result #18023162  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 2:10:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [Vessel Exclusion Zone at Ft Desoto park.docx](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Email forwarded per request of Commissioner Welch.

Darlina Herring  
Executive Aide to Commissioner Kenneth Welch  
(727) 418-5908  
(727) 464-3614  
[dherring@pinellascounty.org](mailto:dherring@pinellascounty.org)

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**From:** "Welch, Kenneth" <[kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 10:53 AM  
**To:** Darlina Herring <[dherring@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:dherring@co.pinellas.fl.us)>, "pmmurphy1@gmail.com" <[pmmurphy1@gmail.com](mailto:pmmurphy1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Online Customer Service Contact Us Form Result #18023162

Mr. Murphy thanks for your response and recommendations regarding boating and swimmer safety at Ft. Desoto park.

DH - please forward to admin, Commissioners and Board Records. Thanks.

KT  
KT

**Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch**  
Pinellas Board of County Commissioners  
[727.464.3614](tel:727.464.3614)

*Please note: all mail sent to and from Pinellas County government is subject to the public records law of the State of Florida.*

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Sent from my iMac

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Patrick Murphy <[pmmurphy1@gmail.com](mailto:pmmurphy1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Online Customer Service Contact Us Form Result #18023162  
**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 9:46:58 AM EDT  
**To:** "Welch, Kenneth" <[kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us)>

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I appreciate your response to my email. I too am all about safety, balanced against personal freedoms. You asked for specific recommendations so I've taken the time to summarize the issues and provide what I think would work. Please see the attached.  
Thanks,  
Pat

On Fri, May 22, 2020 at 2:26 PM Welch, Kenneth <[kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:kwelch@co.pinellas.fl.us)> wrote:

Thanks for your email regarding the Commission's recent decision regarding Vessel Exclusion Zones at Ft. Desoto park. I supported the recommendation in the interest of boater and swimmer safety. The item was properly noticed and discussed in public, televised meetings on both June 19th and June 14th.

Your email however, and the volume of email responses that I've received makes it clear to me that many in the boating community were not aware that the ordinance was under consideration by the BoCC, and I'm open to reviewing the issue. Safety is still my priority - I have seen video and photos of boaters, swimmers and even seaplanes in the same area. That appears to be a potentially hazardous situation.

Given that, I would ask you for any suggestions that you have to address the issue of safety for both swimmers and boaters in the area. Thanks for reaching out with your concerns.

KT

**Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch**  
Pinellas Board of County Commissioners  
[727.464.3614](tel:727.464.3614)

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On May 21, 2020, at 5:56 PM, pmmurphy1 at [gmail.com](mailto:gmail.com) <[form\\_engine@fs30.formsite.com](mailto:form_engine@fs30.formsite.com)> wrote:

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omer Service form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

- Direction of Inquiry**
- Commissioner Janet C. Long - District 1
  - Commissioner Pat Gerard - District 2 (2020 Chair)
  - Commissioner Charlie Justice - District 3

- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2020 Vice Chair)
- Commissioner Karen Williams Seel - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner Kenneth T. Welch - District 7
- County Administrator

Subject	Ordinance 20-845A Vessel Exclusion Zone Ft Desoto, Misleading statements by Paul Cozzie, swimmer safety risk caused by your action
Message	<p>I listened to the meeting you had when you passed the ordinance to further increase vessel restriction areas on the North Beach of Ft Desoto.</p> <p>As Paul Cozzie tried to justify the need for the change he clearly mislead you a number of times. At about 7:50 into the meeting Mr. Cozzie states "In order to get to the open water of the gulf you have to cross the lagoon and the lagoon is currently being used by all types of vessels which posses a safety hazard to swimmers and bathers at Ft. Desoto Park North Beach." That statement, which is the kingpin for making the change, is absolutely not true. You can even ague it is a lie. If you visit the site or look at aerial pictures, you will note that there is a point on the south side of the shoal (Outback Key) that nearly connects to the mainland. That spot is the easiest and safest way for swimmers and bathers to move from the mainland to the gulf side of Outback Key. It is the closest point to the north parking lot too. They do NOT have to cross through the lagoon where Mr. Cozzie wishes to exclude boats. If fact, that point of egress onto Outback Key falls within the previously established No Vessel Zone. You didn't need to take any action to protect the safety of beachgoers. It was already in place!!</p> <p>Furthermore, I'm offended by Mr. Cozzie's statement that the "shoal have created an attractive nuisance". Mr. Cozzie must not like the idea of people having fun with their boats. He didn't sight one situation where conduct of boaters within the lagoon or on the outside edges of Outback Key posed a risk other than jet skis traveling at high speeds. That area could easily have been made a no wake zone to solve that concern, rather than closing the whole lagoon.</p> <p>Also, before playing the video of the boaters in the lagoon, Mr. Cozzie prefaced with the statement " a picture is worth a thousand words" stating is was a "good example of conflicts". Frankly, I saw nothing in that video that posed a risk other than perhaps the light aircraft which is irrelevant to the ordinance. What I saw were boaters standing next to their boats like they do up and down the beaches of Florida. I didn't see any swimmer trying to get out of way of boats, or any other "conflicts", did you??</p> <p>And on a final note, I'd like to address the safety risk you have introduced by extending the swim zone on the outside edge of Outback Key, north of the Shorebird Protection Area. If you've ever visited Bunces Pass by foot or particularly by boat you know that the water currents in and around the Pass are very strong and sometimes extremely dangerous to swimmers and bathers. You are now going to be encouraging swimmers and bathers to put themselves at greater risk by swimming on the outside of Outback Key right up to the Pass. Just wait for the first kid to get swept away from that designated swim zone.</p> <p>You need to completely revoke this ordinance.</p>
Your Name	Patrick Murphy
Your Street Address	8013 BOCA CIEGA DRIVE
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33706
Your Email Address	<a href="mailto:pmmurphy1@gmail.com">pmmurphy1@gmail.com</a>

This email was sent to [kwelch@pinellascounty.org](mailto:kwelch@pinellascounty.org) as a result of a form being completed.  
[Click here](#) to report unwanted email.

Patrick Murphy  
8013 Boca Ciega Drive  
St Pete Beach, FL 33706  
813-220-8000

Vessel Exclusion Zone at Ft Desoto park.

Outside edge of Outback Key:

1) Extending the existing designated swim zone north to the entrance to Bunces Pass will put swimmers and bathers in a dangerous situation. The water currents in and around Bunces Pass are very strong, very often. By extending the swim zone to the north side of the pass, you are encouraging swimmers to enter the water there. That is a mistake. You are putting them in great danger. Also, by not letting boaters go to shore there, but rather anchor outside the zone, you are creating a situation where boaters might try to swim to shore from their boats putting them in the dangerous currents. The existing swim zone simply needs to be modified to swing off what is now on land due to fill in and make it go to the water. It should not be extended in length towards the pass.

2) If you ban boats on the outside of Outback Key, they will move further into the Bunces pass inlet, where the sand dunes currently are. They will damage those dunes and that would be a shame.

Inside the lagoon:

3) Contrary to what Mr. Cozzie stated at the commissioners meeting, swimmers DO NOT have to travel through the lagoon to reach the gulf. There are two points on the southern part of Outback Key that come very close to touching the mainland. It's where the shallowest water is. Those are the points where people cross if they wish to reach the gulf. They don't cross through the deeper water of the lagoon for obvious reasons and they do not cross at the northern part of the lagoon because of the deeper water and the currents. Therefore, swimmers are not put at risk because of the boats in the lagoon.

4) The video shown at the commissioners meeting of the lagoon was taken in September, undoubtedly Labor Day Weekend, the busiest weekend of the year. There are usually not that many boats in the lagoon on a typical weekend. Having said that, the video does not show any conflict or swimmer risk, since swimmers are not in the lagoon. The people in the video are people standing next to their boats like they do all throughout Florida. It's just what boaters do. The only disturbing thing in the video is the light aircraft taxiing around. It's dangerous, I agree, but that should not cause the board to prohibit boats. That's an aircraft issue, not a boating issue.

5) Jetskis or boats traveling at high speed inside the lagoon is very dangerous. Make this a no-wake zone.

6) Banning kayaks and paddleboard in the lagoon is just insanity. Aren't kayaks and paddleboards permitted in all swim zones? Kayaks and paddleboards are not a danger to swimmers and nobody is swimming around in the lagoon anyway.

Mr. Cozzie, an admitted non-boater, may not be the best resource for the commission to rely on for these matters. He is out of touch.

Considering these points, I recommend taking these actions:

Revoke the ordinance.

Reposition but do not extend or expand the previous vessel exclusion / swim zone.

Establish a no- wake zone inside the lagoon.