



## THE FIVE-DOLLAR BILL

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History was made on 3 November 2006 when three petitions were delivered to the Board of Elections for verification to bring three issues to referendum on the March 2007 ballot. The three petitions containing 10,352 signatures were delivered to the Riviera Beach City Clerk before being police escorted to the Board of Elections. This was the culmination of a 30-day all out effort to get the required number of signatures.

The three issues are:

- 1) Referendum for Reconsideration and Repeal of Riviera Beach Ordinance 3016
- 2) Charter Amendment Limiting the Number of Years that the City May Lease Municipal Property (which restores the Charter to its original wording)
- 3) Charter Amendment Establishing Height Limitations for Municipal Beach Property



Why was all of this necessary? On 4 October 2006, the City Council of Riviera Beach in a 4 to 1 vote (Jim Jackson dissenting) passed Ordinance #3016 which changed the City Charter to allow a 99-year lease on the Ocean Mall property. For the 35 years that the Charter was in place, this lease period could not exceed 50

years. Many residents felt that the 50-year lease was too long a period based on Riviera Beach's inability to effectively manage the current 50-year lease when it was under Brock's management. The remainder of this lease was recently purchased by Dan Catalfumo and an organization known as OMRD, LLC.

Five residents formed a committee to petition the City to begin the process. The committee members, Dawn Pardo-Chairperson, Gordon Rowse, Diana DiMeo, Draga (Dorothy) Lindblom and Kathy Groover, representing both sides of Lake Worth, met with Carrie Ward, the City Clerk, to register the petitions so that the signature gathering could begin.



The 30-day clock started ticking as soon as Ordinance #3016 was passed. Circulators had that short amount of time to gather signatures from Riviera Beach's registered voters in order to get this issue to referendum in the March 2007 election. Residents from all over the city felt very strongly that this particular matter was one that the residents should decide versus the decision being made only by the council members.



The first petition, which required signatures from 15% of Riviera Beach's registered voters, was a "Petition for Referendum for Reconsideration and Repeal of Riviera Beach Ordinance 3016" which changed the City Charter. A second petition "..for Charter Amendment Limiting the Number of Years that the City May Lease Municipal Beach Property" was drafted to put the 50 year limit back into the Charter and to reinstate the

limitations of use for the municipal beach property to tourism and recreation. This amendment will also insure that any future changes to the charter affecting this property must be by referendum. This petition required signatures from 10% of Riviera Beach's registered voters as did the third petition "..for Charter Amendment Establishing Height Limitations for Municipal Beach Property" which set the height limit for the municipal beach property to be no more than five (5) stories. The height limit petition was in keeping with the original Caribbean village concept that the City/CRA had promised its citizenry a few short years ago.

Signature gathering started by going door to door in the housing communities and

**in condo buildings. The Grator Gator, Buddy's, Johnny Longboat's, Sands Hotel and other businesses on the east side of the bridge joined in the signature effort. As thirty days is a very short period of time in which to gather the number of signatures needed, the petition team recruited more members from the west side and all started to canvas neighborhoods as well as station themselves at several retailers such as Walgreens and K-Mart. All of the businesses were very supportive of the petition gatherers efforts.**



**Unfortunately, Dan Catalfumo, as reported in the Palm Beach Post and on local TV, hired individuals to place surveillance on circulators and signers. Some people felt that this was intimidation. OMRD, LLC also sponsored several mailings to our residents as well as to the residents of the surrounding municipalities in order to encourage people not to sign the petition and, if they had signed, to contact the City Clerk to have their signatures deleted.**

**Bill Contole and Dawn Pardo organized the team effort to accomplish this monumental task of signature gathering. Members of CRGRB (Citizens for Responsible Growth for Riviera Beach), COASI (Condominium Officers' Association of Singer Island), SICA (Singer Island Civic Association) and Church and Community leaders on the mainland joined forces to accomplish this monumental task. The cooperation between the East and West side was magnificent!**



**Thank you to each of you who 'hit the streets' to help bring these issues to the Riviera Beach voters. And, thanks to each of you who signed the petitions. This is the first time that we have all joined hands and stood up for an issue.**

**The Board of Elections has 20 days to verify the petition signatures that were submitted to them on 3 November. If, after dismissing those not on the registered voter roles, there are not enough signatures to put the items on the ballot, the**

**petitioners will be given another ten (10) days to make up the difference. By the time you read this, that process will be over.**

**And, now the story of the \$5.00 bill. One of the circulators who was gathering signatures outside of a local retailer was approached by an small, elderly gentleman. This man stated that he was not registered to vote but wanted to help support the efforts of the Public Beach Coalition. He stated that he did not want to see the public lands converted to hotels and condominiums. He handed the circulator a folded \$5.00 bill, and wished us well. This story is a rallying cry for what is still ahead.**

**The Public Beach Coalition was established to place on the March 2007 ballot these charter amendments for the municipal beach property. That effort has succeeded.**

**There still is a lot of work to be done between now and the March 2007 election. The Public Beach Coalition needs your help and financial support to insure that the Riviera Beach citizens' right to vote on these issues is protected. Funds are needed for legal matters, experts and the costs incurred by the petition process. **Please send your donations to: Public Beach Coalition, 1281 N. Ocean Drive, PMB 119, Riviera Beach, Florida 33404.****

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