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County's strict RV rules pulled into slow lane

- [By JOHN WAYNE FERGUSON The Daily News](#)

GALVESTON



Galveston Co. Precinct 1 Commissioner
Darrell Apffel

A set of new regulations meant to clean up and move derelict recreational vehicles in unincorporated parts of Galveston County will be rewritten after the county collects input from community groups, the commissioner behind the effort said.

It could take as long as six months for the new rules to be developed, County Commissioner Darrell Apffel said Friday.

The schedule is a deliberate tap of the brakes on a proposal that last month was in front of county commissioners for an approval vote.

The county had developed a set of new rules for recreational vehicles parked in unincorporated areas of the county. They would have required all RVs in the county to be licensed and permitted, and to be moved every 180 days.

Similar rules already exist for RVs parked in federally defined flood zones, but the new rules would have applied to RVs not parked in flood zones.

County officials said the rules were being expanded because all areas of the county are prone to floods. The rules would ensure that RVs are mobile in an emergency evacuation. Alternatively, RV owners would be allowed to elevate their vehicles to be above an area's base flood elevation in order to comply with the rules.

The news rules were being made to the county's floodplain regulations, which is one of very few things counties have the legal authority to regulate, but also be used as a tool against blight.

The rules would force derelict vehicles out of some RV parks, particularly in San Leon and Bacliff, or allow the county to level fines against RV park owners who allowed the vehicles to stay, Apffel had said during discussion of the proposal.

The rules would rid some places of people who lived in RVs and brought nuisances and crime to the area, Apffel said.

Residents of San Leon and Bacliff objected to the proposed rules. Hundreds showed up at a community meeting on Feb. 13 to discuss, and widely condemn, the regulations. Some argued the rules would harm senior citizens and low-income people who would not be able to raise or move their vehicles.

Apffel said that he was forming a committee of RV park owners and RV owners, to see what changes could be made "for the better of the community."

"I will not put it back on the agenda until I vet this out," he said.

Commissioners will meet for a regular meeting today at 9:30 a.m. in Galveston.

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