

So very many residents and visitors to Islamorada have enjoyed boating and swimming in the near shore waters off Port Antigua and White Marlin Beach over the years. We all hate to see that end. But when crowds get so large, so loud and so unrestrained, it is inappropriate and dangerous for our island and our environment and makes life for nearby residents miserable. It is time to do something.

I searched the village code using "noise" to find the applicable ordinance that limits noise in the Village and found that in addition to the ordinance regulating noise, noise was mentioned in 7 other ordinances, limiting noise for vacation rentals, construction, home occupations, alcoholic beverage permits, and public assembly. And yet the extremely disturbing nature of the noise at Party Beach continues especially on holiday weekends.

The Village has demonstrated through existing regulations that it is important to assure that activities within the local jurisdiction do not "unreasonably interfere with the enjoyment of life or property." It is the municipal obligation to do all possible to protect the fragile environment and assure a safe environment for residents and guests.

How ironic that the village has a public assembly ordinance so that as residents we must get permits from the village and follow strict requirements to have gatherings of more than 100 people. It is clearly anticipated by our code that crowds can cause issues.

Key Biscayne has had a similar problem with a party beach and it took numerous fatal accidents before their council unanimously passed an ordinance on first reading at their last meeting to create a no-motor zone within their jurisdiction. Below is the link to their ordinance.

I have loved going to the beach in front of Port Antigua with family or friends. I wish there was a way to outlaw vessels only on holiday weekends, to end objectionable behavior, to discontinue loud music, to limit the number of boats to a reasonable number, to eliminate the trash thrown overboard, to protect the sea grasses. There are so many who have enjoyed that area without abusing the opportunity. But there are too many who do not use their Sunday manners and common sense. So unfortunately a more drastic solution is needed.

And as demonstrated by Key Biscayne, it is not complicated to fix the problem. Their ordinance was extremely simple, including a map demonstrating the area being restricted as a motor-free zone. Perhaps you can follow their lead.

Thank you,

Sue Miller