

POSITION PAPER
Abandoned Vehicle At The Savannah Center
February 23, 2017

To: Amenity Authority Committee (AAC)

From: Bryan Lifsey, VCDD 2 Supervisor and District 2 Resident

PURPOSE: To expedite removal of an abandoned motor vehicle which has been parked at The Savannah Center for well over eight (8) months?

BACKGROUND: In mid-October, 2016, reports were received from Villagers, primarily residents of District 2, that an abandoned car has been parked at The Savannah Center for several months. These residents alleged that they reported this to Community Watch on more than one occasion. On 11/06/2016 I went to The Savannah Center and visually confirmed that the vehicle was still there, appeared abandoned, and had expired tags on it. I raised this issue as a concern of District 2 residents living on Caribe Drive at our 11/14/2016 VCDD 2 Board Meeting. Assurances were given by District Staff that they were aware of the situation, that this vehicle was known to them, and that removal was “being looked into” by staff.

On 12/09/2016, I again visited The Savannah Center. This same vehicle was **STILL** in the same parking spot. Again, this same vehicle was raised as a concern with District Staff during our 12/09/2016 VCDD 2 Board Meeting. Again the Board was advised that this was an unacceptable situation that District Staff was addressing it, and that it would be resolved soon. On Monday, 01/02/2017, I again personally went to The Savannah Center and observed this same vehicle **STILL** in the same parking spot, apparently having gone undisturbed for well over four months. Photographic evidence of this situation, to include a picture of the car together with the 01-02-2017 front page of The Villages Daily Sun, is attached.

I prepared a Position Paper which I intended to include in the agenda of the 01/13/2017 VCDD2 Board Meeting Agenda. It was a rather sharply worded position paper. Submitting that to the District Clerk for inclusion in our January agenda package elicited a call to me from our District Manager. After some back ‘n forth discussion, I agreed to withdraw my Position

Paper from the January 2017 agenda and the District Manager agreed to include this vehicle in the Open Items Section of our monthly agenda package each month until the issue was resolved and to expedite, within legal limits, rule changes or whatever it took to have the vehicle removed.

At that point (early January, 2017) our best guess (Ms. Tutt and myself) at when “something” would be completed so as to allow the District to legally remove this vehicle was March or April, 2017.

At our 02/10/2017 District 2 Board Meeting, I again asked about progress on this issue. During our meeting, Ms. Tutt reported that **NOTHING** had been done concerning the convoluted process required to modify the rules to allow towing away this vehicle. Without elaboration, she further reported that staff was pursuing some alternatives removal scenarios in conjunction with law enforcement.

On 02/11/2017, I wrote an email to Ms. Tutt expressing my disappointment in that nothing had been done to date to remove the abandoned vehicle from The Savannah Center parking lot. The text of my email to her is quoted below.

From: Lifsey, Bryan
Sent: Saturday, February 11, 2017 1:01 PM
To: Tutt, Janet
Subject: The Savannah Center Car

Janet:

I thought it would be unproductive to pursue what was being done to get that abandoned car out of the Savannah Center parking lot during Friday's District 2 Board meeting. I never thought the new parking rules for CDDs had any meat in them to handle a situation such as this so I was not surprised (but was disappointed) to learn that nothing has been done yet to get that car removed.

I would be interested in learning how the District or the AAC or whomever plans to get rid of that car. Can you share those plans with me?

Thanks.

Bryan

On 02/13/2017, Ms. Tutt replied to my email. She assured me that the new parking regulations have “meat” in them but that no rules have been

adapted (by the AAC, I presume) so there is nothing to enforce. She declined to share her work or progress with law enforcement to remove the vehicle. The text of her reply to me is quoted below:

From: Tutt, Janet
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 09:39
To: Lifsey, Bryan
Subject: RE: The Savannah Center Car

Good Morning,
Actually, the new parking legislation does have “meat” in it. However, there have been no rules adopted. And, therefore, nothing to enforce.
I cannot share the plans at this time as I am working with law enforcement on options.
Janet

That appears to be where it stands today – EIGHT MONTHS LATER! Just before writing this report, I looked at The Savannah Center Parking Lot and the abandoned vehicle was STILL there as of 1730 hours on Wednesday, February 23, 2017.

DISCUSSION: The vehicle involved is a black Jeep Liberty Limited Edition (LE) with Arizona tags of AVL6960. The tag registration expired a year ago – March 2016. Pictures of the subject vehicle are attached to this position paper. It appears to be correctly positioned in a marked parking space at The Savannah Center.

I did informally discuss this vehicle with the SCSO. They were aware of the vehicle. I was advised that they have “run” the tags and that the vehicle was not reported stolen nor was it wanted in connection with any ongoing investigation. SCSO further advised me that since the car was properly parked in a marked parking spot on private property, they were unable to do anything to remove it.

The Savannah Center is not a property belonging to VCDD 2 but this abandoned vehicle is certainly an eyesore to residents of VCDD 2 surrounding The Savannah Center.

Until the fairly recent brouhaha and subsequent prohibition against tour busses loading/unloading passengers at any recreation center, numerous news articles advised residents that there was ‘no overnight parking’ at recreation centers. Apparently the existence of such a rule is balderdash or

District staff is unable or unwilling to enforce such a rule. Soon we run the risk of our recreation centers becoming the 'dumping ground of choice' for unwanted, unregistered, abandoned vehicles since no one seems able to do anything to clean up this unsightly mess or to stop this practice.

SUMMARY: It is taking an excessive and inordinate amount of time to remove this unsightly eye sore and public nuisance from The Savannah Center parking lot. For eight months this problem has existed. For the past four months running, this problem has been discussed at VCDD2 Board meetings. It is time to quit equivocating and start acting. District staff has failed to move expeditiously and aggressively to remediate this problem. Failure to act could produce similar problems at other recreation centers, postal stations, or other properties. The continued presence of this abandoned vehicle makes a mockery of Village government and our ability to enforce rules within our community

Apparently, VCDD2 is not the proper Board to push for resolution of this issue - but the AAC is. Please PUSH! As it stands now, this inaction is making a laughingstock of District Government.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend, and hereby request, our Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) to start proceedings to enact parking rules and/or regulations that will prevent future parking problems such as this in all AAC areas north of CR 466.

I have asked our District Clerk to include this paper in your 03/08/2017 AAC Meeting Agenda. I plan to be present at that meeting to answer any questions your Committee may have for me. I also plan to include this paper as an Information Item for my fellow VCDD2 Board members at our 03/10/2017 Board meeting.

I recommend that the rules – the real rules – for overnight parking at any of our recreation facilities, postal stations, and similar properties be reiterated on the District web site (districtgov.org). These rules should then be aggressively enforced.

Attachments: Three Photos of Abandoned Vehicle





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