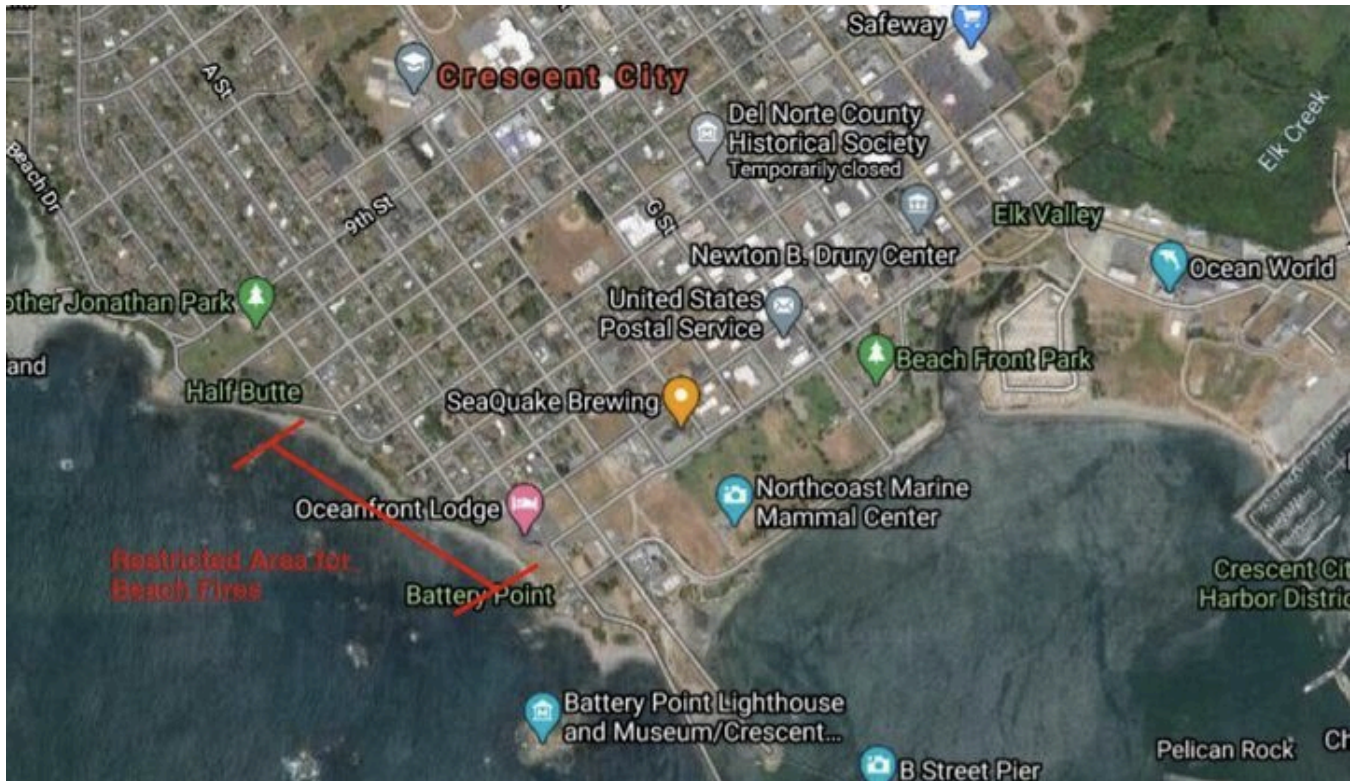


Council bans most beach fires in Crescent City

March 23, 2021



In less than a month, beach fires will be illegal on most beaches in Crescent City.

On Monday, the city council voted 3-1 with Councilman Isaiah Wright voting no, to approve a new ordinance that will almost ban beach fires between Preston Island and Battery Point.

The ordinance would allow property owners on the beach to have fires and would give property owners the right to give written permission for others to burn on the beaches abutting their property. The ordinance would limit the size of fires, would require any to be fully extinguished before leaving and would prohibit the use of coal on the beach.

Before the law takes effect, the city will place signs at all beach access points, explaining that fires are banned.

“If the council does adopt this, we will be immediately ordering signs so they can be up simultaneously with the ordinance going into effect,” City Manager Eric Wier said. “We would have signs at each beach access location in the prohibited area.”

Mayor Pro Tem Blake Inscore urged the city to put signs in all the traditional access points, but also in places that might not be the norm. Wier agreed, saying signage would be placed in most locations where access can be granted to the beach.

During public comment, several people spoke against the ordinance, asking the council to go a step further and ban beach fires outright.

“Allowing permission slips for vacation rentals will threaten full-time owners’ safety and health,” Natalie Fahning said. “Plumes from three-foot fires can be blowing in our homes from as far as 50 feet away. Property owners or managers must be on the property for any fires to occur.”

Fahning added that before considering the ordinance the council should wait until a fifth member has been selected to fill a vacant seat.

Michael Sayre said he agreed with Fahning.

“It is very difficult to understand in an emergency where we’re coming to grips with public health why we would property owners rights to have a fire that would impact multiple property owners,” Sayre said. “This is inconsistent, illogical and inappropriate for public health. I really think this needs to go to a no-fire zone, period.”

Inscore, who has visited the area to get a better understanding, explained the ordinance was a compromise aimed at protecting the rights of all beachfront property owners.

“As is the case with every ordinance we put into the books, this may not be the final decision we or future councils make,” he said. “I appreciate the public comment, but I do think we need to put something on the books that provides enforcement to our fire chief and our chief of police.”

Wright, who also walked the area and has consistently opposed the ordinance, said he, too, walked the area.

“How I feel about this hasn’t changed,” he said. “I would like to say I support my police chief and I support my fire chief, and they’re ability to come to a happy medium with what some people want versus what other people want.”

Before the vote, Mayor Jason Greenough said the ordinance was a good compromise.

“I do believe this is a compromise between completely banning it and allowing property owners to use their property,” Greenough said. “With that said, I do believe it is very restrictive. I don’t see a lot of people using this. I think it will completely stop people from using this stretch of beach. It’s obviously not a perfect balance, but I do think it’s a good balance.”

Inscore then made a motion to adopt the ordinance and Councilman Beau Smith and Greenough also voted in favor.

