

By Sarah Cavacini scavacini@palatkadailynews.com May 26, 2020 Publication: Palatka Daily News (FL) Page: A1 Word Count: 503

**CRESCENT CITY** – A chunk of public property near the St. John’s River has been a hot topic for debate between a new property owner and the residents of Bass Drive.

Nearby residents use the 110-foot-by-50-foot land at 101 Bass Drive in the River Park West subdivision as a place to watch the sunset, fish and catch up with each other. It’s also the piece of property Bobby Cartwright is fighting to claim.

“I’m not going to be anything but a good neighbor if they’ll allow me to,” he said. “But I should have the ability to do what I want to do here.”

Cartwright purchased the property for the river view, complete with a dock and a boat. He said his goal is to build a home on the land and rent it out to vacationers. Cartwright has done this before with the other 60 properties he owns in Crescent City.

Potential neighbor George Ancheta has no problem with Cartwright building a home, but he said the piece of land on the edge of Bass Drive was not meant to be sold.

Property records from 1959 showed the River Park Boat Club of River Park West owned the property. Club bylaws also lists the club as the owner and said the land should be used “for the exclusive and benefit of River Park residents, property owners and guests of their households.”

“It provides public access for fishing, viewing the river (and) looking at sunsets,” Ancheta said. “It’s public property. ... Once public property becomes private, it’ll never be public again. (It’s) gone forever.”

Other local residents in the area use the property, which the boat club purchased for recreational use.

Ancheta said one problem with Cartwright owning the property is the possibility his position on the boat club board is how he came to own the land in the first place.

Cartwright is the title director for the River Park Boat Club, and boat club board members are the people who control the properties around Bass Drive.

Cartwright said he did not vote during the meeting where he received ownership of the property. He said he did everything in proper regulations. “Putnam County is a county that needs investors,” he said. “I’ve bought lots of properties here. I demo. I clean up. I abide by the law.”

Vacation of the Bass Drive land was granted by the Putnam County Board of Commissioners in December, but Ancheta started a petition to dispute Cartwright’s ability to take the public land.

The petition received 40 signatures and board members said at their May 12 meeting they would discuss the issue of Bass Drive at a later date to be fair to Cartwright and Bass Drive residents.

“Right now, it’s just kind of on hold,” Commissioner Bill Pickens said last week.

Palatka Daily News (FL)

Date: May 26, 2020

Page: A1

Copyright © 2020 Palatka Daily News, Community Newspapers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.