

ANNA MARIA ISLAND

SUN



Sunshine lawsuit forthcoming

JOE HENDRICKS | SUN

From left, Commissioners John Chappie, Ralph Cole and Jake Spooner voted in support of the proposed legal action, and Mayor Bill Shearon opposed it during Monday's meeting.

Three of the four Planning and Zoning Board members involved have resigned, which means the board no longer has a voting quorum.

BY JOE HENDRICKS

SUN CORRESPONDENT | jhendricks@amisun

BRADENTON BEACH – Sarasota attorney Robert Watrous and legal consultant and Sunshine Law expert Michael Barfield have taken the initial steps in filing a Sunshine violation lawsuit against planning board member John Metz and former planning board members Reed Mapes, Patty Shay and Bill Vincent.

Barfield confirmed Monday that the intent was to name the four individuals as defendants in a lawsuit to be filed later that afternoon or Tuesday morning.

Former Mayor Jack Clarke and the city of Bradenton Beach have joined in legal action against the planning board members and will be co-represented by Watrous and his legal team.

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Snooty cause may be headed for courts

BY CINDY LANE

SUN STAFF WRITER | clane@amisun.com

Justice for Snooty organizer Denise Anderson said Monday she is planning to sue the South Florida Museum for what she calls negligence in the drowning of Manatee County's official mascot, Snooty the manatee.

Anderson organized a protest at the museum on Saturday, where Florida Voices for Animals members called for the dismissal of museum CEO Brynne Anne Besio and COO Jeff Rodgers.

If they are not fired, "I will personally file a lawsuit," Anderson told The Sun. "Snooty's death by drowning is 100 percent due to the negligence of the South Florida Museum, and we want those negligent employees removed."

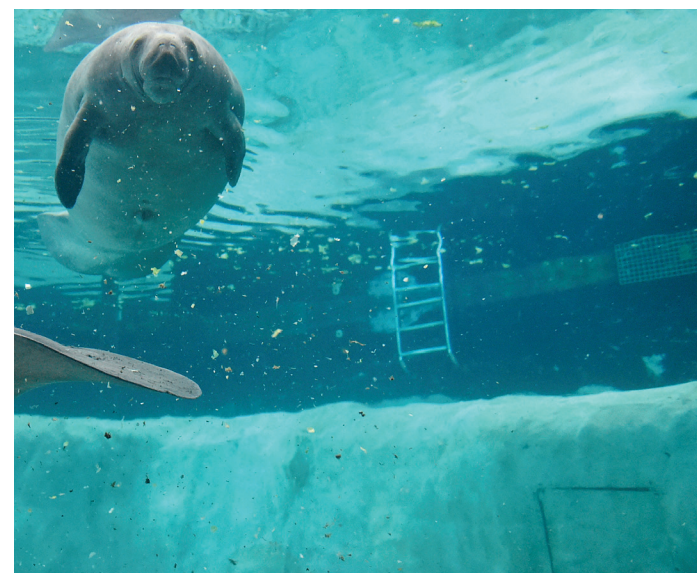
Snooty was discovered drowned the morning of Sunday, July 23, the day after his gala birthday

party and two days after his 69th birthday. He was trapped in a small area used to access the aquarium's life support equipment, according to museum officials, who said he entered through a dislodged access panel secured by four screws and inspected daily by divers.

The world's oldest known manatee, Snooty was too large to turn around in the confined space, and manatees are unable to swim backwards, officials said.

Photographs published by the Sarasota Herald-Tribune that apparently show the access panel attached by only one screw the day before the birthday party added to Anderson's resolve to stand up for Snooty.

"The reason I did the protest was that the COO said that divers checked that panel every day, and

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THOMAS BENDER/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE | SUBMITTED

A photo taken on Snooty's 69th birthday, Friday, July 21, 2017, shows what appears to be a loose access panel, which he swam through sometime after his birthday party on July 22 or 23. He became trapped behind the panel and drowned.

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