

HistoricCity News, Posting of Public Notices on Websites, (2.18.12)

Florida Association of Counties Public Safety Advocate Lisa Hurley reported that Thursday, the Florida Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously approved SB-292, on a 7-0 vote, substantially amending an antiquated law pertaining to methods of publishing legal ads.

Public notices and legal ads provide notice of activities and events that influence citizens' lives because of governmental actions or requirements. They include actions such as government hearings and meetings, zoning, annexation and land use changes, election notices, municipal budgets, tax and special assessment information.

Also, public notices cover requests for bids on government construction and service contracts; permit and licensing applications; land and water use regulations; judicial and executive sales; disposal of foreclosed and abandoned property; and many others.

As a result, statutes require that public notices and legal ads be published in newspapers to effectively disseminate this important information throughout the relevant communities.

SB292 – Legal Notices;

Requiring that, after a specified date, if a legal notice is published in a newspaper, the newspaper publishing the notice shall also place the notice on a website maintained by the newspaper; revising physical requirements for proof of publication affidavits; authorizing electronic affidavits that meet specified requirements; limiting the rate that may be charged for government notices required to be published more than once in certain circumstances; requiring that website publication of certain legal notices include maps that appear in the newspaper advertisements; making it optional for the Chief Financial Officer to advertise the availability of the governmental efficiency hotline, etc.

.These changes should lead to reduced costs to counties for publishing such required notices.

The Senate bill has one more committee stop as does its House companion HB-937 — but neither are on the agenda yet.