



City of North Port

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-03

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTH PORT, FLORIDA, REGULATING THE STORAGE AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY BY AMENDING THE CODE OF THE CITY OF NORTH PORT, FLORIDA, BY CREATING SECTION 46-3 – STORAGE AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

1 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission of the City of North Port, Florida has a significant governmental interest
2 in promoting the health, safety, and security of citizens and visitors by regulating potentially hazardous
3 conditions on private and public property including public rights-of-way; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission recognizes that the City has a significant governmental interest in
6 ensuring that pedestrians have access to public sidewalks with minimal obstructions; and
7

8 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission recognizes that the City has a compelling governmental interest in
9 complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act which include sidewalk access
10 with minimal obstructions for those with disabilities; and
11

12 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission seeks to maintain a safe, orderly, and pleasant environment on public
13 property and public rights-of-way; and
14

15 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission recognizes the need to restrict keeping, leaving unattended, discarding,
16 storing, or placing personal property upon public and private property, which can obstruct vehicular and
17 pedestrian traffic, contribute to a disordered and unpleasant environment in the City, and/or present
18 public health, safety, and security hazards; and
19

20 **WHEREAS**, Florida Statutes Chapter 705 prescribes provisions for governmental entities to identify and
21 dispose of only what is defined as lost or abandoned personal property, and law enforcement officers
22 shall continue to follow the procedures set forth in Chapter 705 for the removal of lost or abandoned
23 property on Public Property; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, in *Catron v. City of St. Petersburg*, 658 F.3d 1260 (11th Cir. 2011), the United States Eleventh
26 Circuit Court of Appeals found that an ordinance of the City of St. Petersburg utilizing the same definition
27 of “unlawful storage” as found herein, under the terms “store or stored,” was not unconstitutionally vague
28 on its face because it failed to define sufficiently the term “unlawful storage,” and was likewise not
29 unconstitutionally vague on its face because it failed to define sufficiently the term “unattended;” and
30

31 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission finds it necessary in the interests of public health, welfare, safety,
32 security, tranquility, and quality of life to adopt this ordinance regulating the placement of personal
33 property kept, left unattended, or stored upon public property and private property and to establish a
34 process for removing the property in a lawful manner; and

35
36 **WHEREAS**, the City Commission has determined that the proposed amendments serve the public health,
37 safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of North Port, Florida.

38
39 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF NORTH PORT, FLORIDA:**

40
41 **SECTION 1 – FINDINGS**

42
43 1.01 The recitals outlined above are incorporated by reference as findings of fact as if expressly set
44 forth herein.

45
46 **SECTION 2 – ADOPTION**

47
48 2.01 Section 46-3 of the Code of the City of North Port, Florida is hereby created to read as follows:

49
50 **“Chapter 46 – OFFENSES**

51
52 **ARTICLE I. – OFFENSES INVOLVING PROPERTY**

53 . . .

54 **Sec. 46-3. – Storage and removal of personal property.**

55
56 (a) Definitions. The following words, phrases, and term shall have the meanings ascribed to them
57 in this section, except where the context clearly indicates otherwise:

58
59 (1) Custodian. An owner of personal property or another person entrusted with the care and
60 possession of the personal property by the owner.

61
62 (2) Public property. Includes but is not limited to, public rights-of-way, parks, lands,
63 government buildings, and government facilities.

64
65 (3) Reasonable charges. The process under which the city takes into consideration the
66 owner’s ability to pay a charge.

67
68 (4) Store or stored. When referring to an item on public or private property, shall be broadly
69 interpreted to include any action to place, store, park, display, keep, locate, or set an item
70 upon the property.

71
72 (b) Storage of personal property. It is unlawful, subject to the provisions herein, for any person

73 to store unattended items of personal property on public property, or store attended items
74 of personal property on public property for more than twenty-four (24) continuous hours, or
75 store items of personal property on private property without the authorization of the private
76 property owner.

77

78 (1) *Warning required.* A person shall not be charged with a violation of this section unless
 79 and until they have been given verbal, written, or posted notice, under the provisions
 80 herein, to remove the prohibited items, and then fail to do so.

81
 82 (2) *No citation for first violation.* A custodian retrieving personal property pursuant to
 83 subsection (e) herein, which was unattended when removed by the city, shall not be
 84 charged if it is the custodian's first violation of this section.

85
 86 (3) *No citation if compliance.* A person shall not be charged with a violation of this section if
 87 the person removes or causes to be removed all prohibited items from any public
 88 property or private property immediately, and does not return any personal property to
 89 any public property or to private property without the permission of the private property
 90 owner. Moving unlawfully stored items from one location on public property to another
 91 location on public property shall not be considered removing the item from public
 92 property.

93
 94 (4) At the option of the city and where applicable, the provisions of this section may be
 95 utilized as an alternative to the provisions of Chapter 62, Article II, entitled "Litter
 96 control," of this Code.

97
 98 (5) If requested by a person in violation of this section, and in consideration of public health
 99 and safety, a law enforcement officer or code enforcement officer must remove, or cause
 100 to be removed, all items of personal property to a secure indoor or outdoor location at
 101 an available social service organization or similar entity if the person in violation does not
 102 have a permanent abode or other available location to store the personal property. The
 103 social service organization may establish reasonable rules and guidelines for the use of
 104 any storage space in accord with any applicable governmental laws and regulations.
 105 Whenever it is determined that personal property has been abandoned at the social
 106 service organization, the procedures set forth in Florida Statutes Chapter 705 shall apply
 107 and be followed.

108
 109 (c) *Removal of personal property unlawfully stored on public property.*

110
 111 (1) *Attended property.* If the city identifies items of personal property that are and have been
 112 stored continuously on public property for more than 24 hours and the items are
 113 attended by the owner or other custodian, the city must give the owner or custodian 24
 114 hours to remove, or cause to be removed, the items to another location that is not on
 115 public property or on private property without the private property owner's
 116 authorization. If the owner or custodian fails to remove any item of personal property
 117 unlawfully stored on public property after receiving verbal or written notice as required
 118 by this section, the city may cause the removal of the unlawfully stored item.

119
 120 (2) *Unattended property.* If the city identifies unattended items of personal property being
 121 stored on public property, and the items are not determined to be lost or abandoned
 122 property under Florida Statutes Chapter 705, the city must affix written notice to the
 123 personal property that gives the owner 48 hours to remove or cause to be removed the
 124 items to another location that is not on public property. If the property owner fails to
 125 remove any item of personal property that is unlawfully stored on public property after

126 receiving written notice as required by this section, the city may cause the removal of the
 127 unlawfully stored item.

128
 129 (3) *Property that is a threat to health, safety, or welfare.* If the city identifies attended or
 130 unattended personal property being stored on public property, and determines that the
 131 stored item is a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the public, the city may
 132 immediately remove the stored item. A threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the
 133 public includes but is not limited to a fire hazard, an explosive hazard, a noxious odor, an
 134 infectious or pathogenic hazard, or an infestation of vermin, including rodents, lice,
 135 roaches, and/or fleas, to which the public would be exposed due to the unlawful storage.
 136 If prior notice is not or cannot be provided before the item is removed, written notice of
 137 removal must be posted at or nearby the location of removal, and at the city police
 138 department.

139
 140 (4) *Unattended property where proper notice of no storage is posted.* If the city identifies
 141 unattended personal property being stored on public property, and a sign conforming to
 142 the notice requirements of this section is properly posted, then no additional notice is
 143 required, and the unattended item may be immediately removed by the city or by
 144 someone under the authority of the city.

145
 146 (5) *Written notice requirements.* Any written notice provided pursuant to subsections (c)(1),
 147 (c)(2), and (c)(3) must include:

- 148
 149 a. A complete description of the item(s) to be removed (which may refer to an attached
 150 photograph);
 151
 152 b. The unlawful location of the item(s);
 153
 154 c. The location where the item(s) will be located once removed;
 155
 156 d. The date and time by when the item(s) must be removed from the public property;
 157
 158 e. The last date the item(s) must be claimed once removed; and
 159
 160 f. Identification of the section of this Code being violated.

161
 162 (d) *Removal of personal property unlawfully stored on private property.* If the city identifies
 163 personal property being stored on private real property without the permission of the private
 164 real property owner, the city may immediately remove the unlawfully stored item at the
 165 request of the private real property owner.

166
 167 (e) *Disposal and retrieval of personal property that has been removed by the city.*

168
 169 (1) The city may dispose of personal property that has been removed pursuant to subsections
 170 (c)(1) and (c)(2) if the item has not been retrieved by the custodian of the property within
 171 30 days of the item's removal. However, the custodian of the personal property may
 172 retrieve the property by presenting the city with adequate proof of ownership and the
 173 payment of a reasonable charge for the storage and removal of the item, if applicable.

174 (2) The city may dispose of any personal property that has been removed pursuant to
175 subsection (c)(3) upon determining that the property is a threat to the health, safety, or
176 welfare of the public as described in subsection (c)(3) above. The removal and disposal of
177 any personal property under this section may be accomplished either by the city or by
178 someone under the authority of the city.
179

180 (f) *Posted notice.* The city must post, or cause to be posted, notice of the prohibitions provided
181 by this section on public property, pursuant to and including but not limited to the following:
182

183 (1) *Preplanned event.* Temporary signs warning of immediate removal of unattended items
184 at least 36 hours before a preplanned event, such as a parade or other event that is likely
185 to attract a large crowd.
186

187 (2) *Specific area.* Temporary signs at a specific area where the clean-up or removal of
188 unattended items is needed. Signs must be posted at least 36 hours before performing
189 any clean-up or removal of items. Any item remaining at the specific area when the clean-
190 up or removal begins may be immediately removed.
191

192 (3) *Pedestrian traffic.* Permanent signs warning of the immediate removal of unattended
193 items from public property that is frequently traveled by pedestrians in order to facilitate
194 access, or when required to ensure access pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
195

196 (4) *Targets of terrorism.* Permanent signs warning of the immediate removal of unattended
197 items from public property that could be the target of terrorism.
198

199 (g) *Notice requirement.* All notice authorized by this subsection must:
200

201 (1) *Be readable to pedestrians traveling in or upon the public property;*
202

203 (2) *Be prominently displayed on the public property where the prohibition applies;*
204

205 (3) *Prominently state “NO storage of unattended personal property on public property*
206 *allowed;”*
207

208 (4) *State where personal property removed under this section may be recovered; and*
209

210 (5) *Cite to this section of the Code.*
211

212 (h) *Exemptions.* The following items are exempt from the prohibitions of this section, unless any
213 exemption creates and/or causes a hazardous condition or threatens public safety:
214

215 (1) *Medical emergency.* Items stored or activities conducted pursuant to a medical
216 emergency until the medical emergency is addressed.
217

218 (2) *Permitted event.* Items stored or activities conducted pursuant to and as allowed under a
219 city-permitted event, including but not limited to parades, festivals, assemblies, or
220 concerts for the duration of the permitted event, at the discretion of the city manager or
221 designee.

- 222 (3) Permitted property. Items stored pursuant to a city-issued permit or express permission
223 from the city manager or designee.
224
225 (4) Government property or activity. Items stored or activities conducted by a government
226 entity or pursuant to direction from a government entity, at the discretion of the city
227 manager.
228
229 (i) Penalty. Any violation of the foregoing provisions of this section are punishable by a fine not
230 exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00), or imprisonment for a term not exceeding sixty
231 days, or both fine and imprisonment.”

SECTION 3 – CONFLICTS

3.01 In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this ordinance and any other ordinance or provisions thereof, the provisions of this ordinance shall prevail to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 4 – SEVERABILITY

4.01 If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or provision of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

SECTION 5 – CODIFICATION

5.01 In this ordinance, additions are shown as underlined and deletions as ~~striketrough~~. Any additional codification information and notations appear in *italics*. These editorial notations shall not appear in the codified text.

SECTION 6 – EFFECTIVE DATE

6.01 This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the City Commission of the City of North Port, Florida.

READ BY TITLE ONLY at first reading by the City Commission of the City of North Port, Florida in public session on the 12th day of January 2021.

PASSED and DULY ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of North Port, Florida on the second and final reading in public session this 26th day of January 2021.

CITY OF NORTH PORT, FLORIDA

GISELE "JILL" E. LUKE
MAYOR

ATTEST

HEATHER TAYLOR, CMC
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CORRECTNESS

AMBER L. SLAYTON
CITY ATTORNEY