

Martin County Commissioners will consider amendments to local ordinances on Tuesday that will give up local control over shark-fishing on County beaches and speed limits on local roads and will hear a staff presentation on the fiscal impact on the County's fire rescue services if the proposed homestead tax exemption is approved by voters in November.

Commissioners also will approve acquisition of more than five acres of land for preservation, using nearly \$1 million in proceeds from the conservation land sales tax.

Agenda Item PH-2 is a public hearing to amend rules and regulations for Martin County Parks and County ordinances that eliminate "chumming" while fishing for sharks or other species from County-owned parks or beaches. Chumming involves the use of ground fish, meat or other scented materials to entice shark, tuna, redfish and other predatory fish toward the shore where fishermen cast their lines. The proposed amendment also removes the prohibition against fishing in the ocean after a lifeguard or local law enforcement officer issues a warning that the activity endangers public health or safety and also removes the local ban against shark fishing near a full-service beach park.

The staff report says the revisions are required to conform with state law which gives the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission authority to regulate fishing. But the law allows local governments to maintain regulations which protect public health, safety and welfare on County beaches and parks. The agenda item fails to explain why it is necessary to remove local regulations which specifically cite public health and safety on County beaches and parks by banning chumming, shark fishing near full-service parks and fishing in the ocean after a warning that public health or safety is endangered.