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Former enemy controls Row future

by STEVE SCHROER

Citizen Staff Writer

KEY WEST - It is probably too late, but the city will lead the final fight to save Houseboat Row.

On July 28, Gov. Lawton Chiles and cabinet members will hear the city's arguments on saving Houseboat Row just days before a state-won ejection order against 26 boats on the South Roosevelt sea-island is enforced.

Houseboat Row ran out of legal options two

City leads the charge to save Key West attraction

weeks ago when Florida's Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal on the case.

Now, the Row is at the mercy of the governor.

Ironically, the city, which has fought the Row for years, will now back the floating neighborhood as directed in January's referendum vote using the same arguments against the state as Houseboat Row used

against the city.

Among the reasons:

1) Houseboat Row has existed for more than 40 years and has become an historic part of Key West.

2) Houseboat Row, while not a tourist attraction, represents part of the charm visitors have come to expect of Key West.

3) Houseboat Row is an affordable resi-

dential community in a city that can't afford to lose affordable housing.

To bolster its case, and prior to any lease agreement for Houseboat Row bay bottom, the city promises the following:

1) Row residents will hook up to the city sewer system, as promised, and the number of boats may not exceed 26.

2) The city will develop a management

plan for liveaboard vessels island-wide.

3) The city will complete a water quality study as requested by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

4) The city will seek approval from the state Department of Community Affairs to amend the city's comprehensive land use plan to allow Houseboat Row. The plan now does not allow the use.

The city will ask the state to postpone ejection for 18 months, until January 2000, so it can fulfill those promises.

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