



Miami Herald, The (FL)  
2007-11-29  
**Section:** Neighbors  
**Edition:** Final  
**Page:** 3GR

## NOISE COMPLAINTS MAY CURTAIL BIG PARTIES

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BY DAVID SMILEY dsmiley@MiamiHerald.com Last Saturday's all-inclusive bash on **Virginia Key** Beach Park for the hundreds of people who shelled out the \$45-\$60 entry fee allowed them to celebrate into the early hours of Sunday morning.

It might be the last of its kind in the city, including the Miami island.

Spurred by the complaints of Brickell residents who say late-night parties on **Virginia Key** are keeping them up, Commissioner Marc Sarnoff and Mayor Manny Diaz said they agreed last week that parties permitted by the city need to end by 11 p.m. or midnight.

"We both agreed that quality of life is a lot more important than the ability to have a late-night concert," Sarnoff said Monday.

The new curfews could mean Brickell and other bayside residents will sleep well again but also could mean event promoters might look outside Miami to host their large events. And the owners of **Virginia Key** bars and the **Virginia Key** Beach Park Trust might need to look for new sources of income.

Tory Jacobs, president of the Brickell Homeowners Association and the recipient of many Brickell residents' complaints about all-night parties, said a midnight curfew sounds reasonable.

After events on Columbus Day kept some residents awake until 6 a.m., Jacobs and others officers of the association started their campaign against all-night events on **Virginia Key**.

The association sent a barrage of e-mails to city administration, resulting in an Oct. 11 response from Diaz, who wrote:

"It is absolutely unacceptable to me that the city permit any outdoor event to run through 3 a.m. or 6 a.m. I believe we dealt with this issue previously at Bayfront Park, and the hours were shortened dramatically. If these festivals find such restrictions unacceptable, they can take their festivals elsewhere."

But the city's curfews have been a source of some frustration for event promoters, said Lainie Copicotto, president of Aurelia Entertainment and former head of public relations for Ultra Music Festival, a major event held yearly in Bicentennial Park.

And if festivals decide to leave, Copicotto said, Miami would suffer.

"Ultra helps Miami. I don't think people understand that all festivals help Miami," she said.

Copicotto said the thousands of concert-goers that come for events such as Ultra and last year's Global Gathering fill hotels and restaurants for days.

Tim Schmand, who runs the Bayfront Park Management Trust, which also manages Bicentennial Park, said the parks instituted a midnight weekend curfew and 11 p.m. weekday curfew about three years ago when residents began complaining.

"We haven't had a complaint since," he said.

That curfew hasn't been much of a problem, said Alex Omes, president of Ultra Music Festival. Omes said though an extra hour or two would be nice, Ultra has always ended at midnight in its seven years in Miami.

Diaz said the curfew policy is a good one.

"I don't see why **Virginia Key** shouldn't have the same kind of standards," he said.

But by limiting the hours of events on **Virginia Key**, the city is hindering the ability of the **Virginia Key** Beach Park Trust to attract event promoters and subsequently operate without subsidies, Trust Executive Director David Shorter said.

"We've had major promoters come and ask to use the park for events that go past those hours" proposed as a curfew by Diaz and Sarnoff, Shorter said.

Shorter said the park finished its new parking lot and is now ready to host events.

Last weekend's event, called Stage 3 and held by promoter Absolute Adventure, was planned since August and ran from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m., though Absolute Adventure applied for a 4 a.m. closing time.

Shorter said he wants to sit down with the residents upset with the late-night parties and find a compromise.

"I think 2 a.m. on the weekends or some other time like that on the weekends would help," he said.

But Jacobs said the problem with **noise** has nothing to do with who is hosting a party -- **noise is noise**.

"I submit to you that Brahms' Lullaby at 3 in the morning with their customary speakers is still **noise**," he said.

