

Wildwood faces lawsuit over beach events contract

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By MICHAEL MILLER, Staff Writer

WILDWOOD — The company the city hired to develop beach bars, an RV park and other attractions is suing Wildwood for allegedly interfering with those plans.

Point Break Group Management LLC, of Medford, Burlington County, filed a lawsuit last week in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia alleging the city conspired to undermine the company's efforts to enact its comprehensive beach plan.

The two sides sued and countersued in 2013 in state Superior Court. Now, Point Break is taking its complaint to a federal judge.

City Solicitor Mary D'Arcy Bittner said Point Break failed to live up to the terms of its contract in 2013. As a result, the city filed a notice of breach of contract in 2013, its second with Point Break in as many years.

"The lawsuit is baseless and frivolous and defamatory, and it will be dismissed," she said. "The city is moving forward to develop its beach as a world-class destination."

Mayor Ernie Troiano Jr. could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Point Break's business plan was designed to generate revenue for the city by offering new amenities and events on the beach, including surf lessons, outdoor movies, cabanas, fire-pit rentals, organized activities and other attractions.

Chief among these was a new beach bar like those that have become popular in Atlantic City. But the



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company also intended to organize music festivals featuring RV beach camping.

“Point Break envisioned making Wildwood the East Coast center of surfing and music festivals,” the lawsuit states.

The new suit accuses city officials of undermining Point Break’s efforts to create the attractions it promised. In one example, Point Break said city officials approached Coca-Cola about beach concessions despite Point Break having already negotiated terms that would have paid the company \$75,000 in the first year.

The city also gave a contract to a rival company for water-gun battles on the beach, despite Point Break’s having exclusive rights to those concessions, its lawsuit contends.

The lawsuit accuses rival company Beach Buddy LLC, of using connections with city officials to undermine Point Break’s contacts and relationships with the city and the beach utility Wildwood created to oversee the plan.

“We remain frustrated. This is an enormous opportunity for the city. As laid out in our lawsuits, the leadership has gotten in the way,” said Point Break attorney Eric Weitz, of the Philadelphia firm Messa & Associates.

“We remain hopeful the leadership in Wildwood will allow Point Break, a team with a proven record of putting on these family-oriented events, to move forward,” he said. “The city never gave us our chance to make it happen.”

The company sued the city in 2012, which resulted in an amended five-year contract in which the two sides agreed to collaborate on a comprehensive beach-revenue plan with beach bars, an RV park, paintball courses, music festivals, waterslides and outdoor movies.

The city solicited new proposals for a beach bar this summer.

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