

Town Fails To Sink Raft Race

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ESSEX — The Coast Guard turned down Essex officials' request to bar the Connecticut River raft race from taking place this summer but promised instead to patrol the river during the race to keep order, First Selectman Richard Riggio said Wednesday.

The Coast Guard had already issued a permit for the popular event, which starts in Deep River and ends at Knott Island in Essex Harbor.

Town officials and Main Street businessmen and residents tried to block the race, which thousands of spectators watch as 100 homemade rafts race downriver.

The opponents complained that the spectators also trespassed on private property and crowded the town without shopping at local stores.

Because the Coast Guard has turned down the town's request, officials will work on plans to restrict parking and discourage spectators this year, Riggio said.