Jennifer San Filippo of suburban Delray Beach pets her 80-pound potbelly pig, Yoda, in their living room Thursday. San Filippo got Yoda at a flea market when the animal was only a few days old and considerably lighter.

“I am really hopeful that we will get some sort of relief for the people that have pigs.”

Shelley Vana
Palm Beach County commissioner

The daily in front of her when the board discussed the regulations in April.

“I don’t know that they are really much different than big pigs, except that they don’t run,” Vana said. “I am really hopeful that we will get some sort of relief for the people that have pigs.”

A number of local governments across the state allow pigs as pets, including Jupiter, Wellington and Fort St. Lucie. Other communities have moved away from similar restrictions.

Martin County commissioners in 2006 agreed to allow a resident to keep two pigs as pets but turned down a proposal that would have permitted the animals in residential neighborhoods. Some Martin County officials said they were concerned that pigs would be kept as pets in densely populated urban neighborhoods or in condos.

Under Palm Beach County’s proposal, homeowners associations and condo communities would still be allowed to regulate the animals, similar to restrictions commonly placed on large dogs or other pets, Vana said. “What I was suggesting would not have any issue that way,” Vana said. “That doesn’t go away.”

Meanwhile, federal rules allow pigs to be kept in homes regardless of local regulations, as long as they are designated as service or therapy animals, county officials said.

Palm Beach County commissioners in 1988 agreed to allow a suburban West Palm Beach resident to keep two pigs, despite neighbors’ complaints about the smell. At the time, the commission ruled that no new pigs would be allowed to live in suburban homes.

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Sleep study continued on 4B

One local deaf couple was given an alarm that flashes “FIRE” and activates an intermittent bed shaker that is placed under the mattress.

To the Point

George Bennett

The Point program and at an Oct. 5 St. Lucie County League of Women Voters forum.

Murphy’s letter was similar in tone to West’s.

“You have spent far too much of your term in Congress distracting from the real issues, using hyperbole and partisan attacks, and not nearly enough time offering solutions to the critical issues facing the people you were elected to represent. Nevertheless, the voters debates requested by West are excessive — more meetings than President Obama and Mitt Romney will have this fall, Johnson noted.

And Johnson said he doesn’t want a formal debate format with designated rebuttal time because West “will use that for more of his outrageous remarks and quips. We’re not interested in having that kind of Sean Hannity talking points that he does. That’s what happens with Beach County voters stayed home for Tuesday’s primaries. Republican turnout was 19.2 percent, Democratic turnout was 18.5 percent and only 5.9 percent of independent and minor-party voters cast ballots despite several non-partisan races that were up for grabs.

Among voters who do turn out, it’s not unusual for some of them to skip a race or two on the ballot if they aren’t familiar with candidates or don’t have
Deaf volunteers needed for ‘livesaving’ sleep study

Sleep study

awarded, in which Palm Beach County Fire Rescue will sleep-test about 50 people who qualify because their hearing loss is greater than 90 decibels. McMahon, the president of the Florida Association of the Deaf, was born deaf and her hearing loss is greater than 110 decibels.

A profoundly deaf person can’t hear sounds below 95 decibels, which includes lawn mowers, noisy offices, vacuum cleaners or city traffic.

As Gerri Penney, the community education coordinator for Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, tested a smoke alarm that combines the usual piercing shriek with a strobe light, McMahon and her husband, Bob, who is also deaf, were unmoved by the brain-melting level of noise.

In her bedroom is a device that looks like an oversized alarm clock. When activated, a mechanical voice repeats, “Fire, get up!” in English and Spanish and a light display reads, “FIRE.” Better still, another device placed under a pillow or mattress shakes the bed repeatedly until the occupants wake up. McMahon said the bed shaker was the device that woke her up fastest when she did the sleep study.

Palm Beach County fire-rescue workers install all of the devices for free to volunteers for the sleep study. Penney’s results will be compiled by Florida Atlantic University and sent to the National Fire Protection Association.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security provided the money for sleep testing and devices donated to volunteers.

McMahon is one of 14 people who had the required level of hearing loss and were sleep-tested with the devices. Penney needs at least 36 more, but finding them has been slow-going, even with the help of McMahon, who is president of the Florida Association of the Deaf.

“Just spending an overnight could make the difference between life and death for somebody,” Penney said. “This is lifesaving research.”

McMahon is featured in three short videos on fire safety for the deaf. Using American Sign Language, she explains how the program works.

The study seeks people age 50 or older with profound hearing loss. An online application is available at www.pbcrf.org or by emailing Penney at gpenney@pbctv.com or calling her at (561) 616-7033. Those who qualify receive the devices installed by professionals, and safety brochures.

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