

Davie activist won't be charged

Self-defense cited in assault case

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Prosecutors won't file charges against an activist accused of threatening to kill a registered sex offender, saying she acted in self-defense, according to documents released Tuesday.

Valerie Parkhurst, 52, faced felony charges of aggravated assault with a firearm and carrying concealed weapons after she pointed two guns at Dale Weeks, 49, in Davie on Dec. 1. Parkhurst and her attorney, Eric Schwartzreich, met with prosecutors in early January, and the State Attorney's Office decided Friday not to file formal charges.

"The defendant appears to have acted in self-defense having knowledge of Weeks' prior violent sexual offender conviction," Assistant State Attorney Jules R. Cohn wrote in a memo. He added there would be "no likelihood of conviction."

Weeks said the decision is biased.

"The bottom line is they're taking her side of the case," Weeks said. "They're sending a message that allows somebody to break the law and point or fire a pistol at anybody. It's vigilante-style law."

Police had said Parkhurst threatened to kill Weeks and his girlfriend,

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Maria Rodriguez, when the couple drove onto a street where Parkhurst was handing out sex offender warning fliers. The street was a couple of miles from Weeks' home, where Parkhurst had passed out fliers about him earlier and had words with Rodriguez.

During the confrontation in the 4600 block of Southwest 66th Avenue, a dead-end street, Parkhurst said she thought the couple was following her and asked them to back up. The couple, who told police they were heading to a store and made a wrong turn, said they had trouble backing up.

Parkhurst said she became scared for her life and took a pistol out of her truck to scare them off. Another heated exchange followed, and when Parkhurst retrieved a shotgun, Weeks called police.

In his memo, Cohn said Parkhurst's actions were legally acceptable under the Castle Doctrine, which allows people to protect their homes, and

themselves in public places, if they feel threatened with death or bodily harm.

Weeks' and Rodriguez's credibility is also weak, the memo said. He is a felon and she has outstanding warrants for a pending worthless-checks case in Jacksonville.

Ron Ishoy, a spokesman for the State Attorney's Office, said the concealed weapons charge was dropped because "it appears the defendant's firearm was securely encased in a holster before it was removed for purposes of self-defense."

Possessing a concealed weapon without a license is lawful if the item is not readily accessible for immediate use, Ishoy said.

"We're very pleased with the State Attorney's resolution of the case," Schwartzreich said.

Parkhurst applied for and is enrolled in classes to qualify for a concealed weapons permit.

"I'm up in arms over this," Weeks said. "They're allowing her to get a permit, after the fact. I find that very upsetting."