

GRAND OAKS NEWSLETTER

PHASE I JULY-AUG-SEP 2003

After a summer hiatus the newsletter is back! Hope everyone had a fun, relaxing summer. The following is summary of three meetings.

Treasurer's Report: The financial sheet received from Vanguard is reviewed at each meeting. It can be difficult to follow. The Board will be working with the management company to revise the one that is utilized. At the September meeting, the Board began its process of reviewing this year's expenditures and proposed increases for the coming year. It is the intention of the Board to adopt the 2004 budget at the upcoming Annual meeting.

Architectural Review Committee: The following is a summary of items submitted:

- A request for a fence was denied. Insufficient data was submitted. The ARC will reconsider when the homeowner furnishes all the required information.

- Request to change the color of a house was approved.

- Request to add shrubbery and extend a sidewalk was approved.

- Request to erect a lattice fence was disapproved

Any modification or changes to the exterior of your home or property must first be approved by the Architectural Committee. There is a request form that needs to be completed and then

submitted for review. You can obtain this form from Brenda at Vanguard (930-8036- ext 205).

Examples of exterior modifications include repainting your home a different color, extensive landscaping changes, erecting a fence and removing or planting of trees over 6' tall. If you have questions regarding your plans, contact Brenda for assistance. The ARC form specifically lists what is to be included with your request (ie lot survey, color samples). Your application will automatically be rejected until it is complete. The ARC will review your request as expeditiously as possible, but please note according to the GOA bylaws, the Committee and Board has 30 days to review a request.

Newsletter Committee: The committee is looking for someone with computer skills and time to assist putting this newsletter together on a timely basis. If you have the skills and time, contact Guy Walsh at 907-9659.

Maintenance Committee: The pond contract was awarded to Blue Water Aquatics. The owner "Virgil" is extremely knowledgeable and thorough in his area of expertise. If you see him in your area, he is very approachable and encourages you to ask questions.

Because Lennar's inability to honor commitments in a timely manner, Rich of the Maintenance Committee and the Board decided to replace the lights highlighting the Grand Oaks sign at our entrance. The sign was also cleaned to remove the iron stains. If

Lennar does not take measures to add the landscaping to the area around the sign, the Committee and Board will proceed with this project as well. The Maintenance Committee is currently reviewing contracts and needed additional items (ie mulch) for the upcoming year's budget.

Graffiti? The writing on the garage door of the Tolar House (Balsam) is not graffiti after all.

The Board reported that the writing on the door was placed there by the County Code Enforcement Office after it inspected the property for violations. The County has been slow in forcing either the homeowner or the mortgage holder in correcting the deficiencies. As we all know, having a "condemned" home in our neighborhood is not only an eyesore, but a liability. Call Judy Pumiello (Community Development) to voice your frustration about this situation. She can be reached at 813-996-7341 ext 3445. You can also call the County Code Enforcement or County Attorney's offices to voice your expectation of when this situation will be corrected.

Don't Fence Me In! As you may recall, there was a survey done several months ago. The Survey questions were abased on GOA deed restrictions and current practices. The ARC has requested the Board allow them to begin reviewing each item so better standards can be developed. High on the list of homeowners concerns, were basketball hoops and fences. The ARC will begin their review with these two items.

In the past it appears there has not been a consistent standard applied in approving requests. Consequently a number of different fences, made from different kinds of materials, can be found throughout the community. Some were erected with Board permission and others were not.

Additionally, regarding the basketball hoops, though the bylaws state that no permanent structures can be built, there is some leeway for portable units.

If this is of interest to you, please voice your opinion. The standardization of community rules should be high priority especially as this community ages. You can reach the ARC chairman, Ben, at 973-4577.

Special Meeting Called: A special meeting was called on 22 July to discuss the “stonewalling” or stall tactics used by Lennar. The meeting was joint meeting held with Phase II homeowners. In attendance was our County Commissioner Pat Mulieri.

It appeared few, if any, are happy with Lennar and they voiced those feelings to Commissioner Mulieri.

A variety of issues were presented to include the front gate, privatization of the roads, the five acre park, the clubhouse, improper representation by Lennar lawyers and deviation from the Grand Oaks Master Plan.

For those who have roots in Florida, they know only too well the controversy that follows Lennar from one community to another.

In the discussion some homeowners raised the

possibility of taking Lennar to court. Picketing again was also raised as a possibility to get Lennar to honor their commitments and to start focusing on the homeowners and not so much on how much profit they can extract from the community.

It also appeared that everyone was in consensus that Lennar would continue to stall, make promises that they have no intention to keep, build on smaller lots, and disregard the concerns of the GO residents.

As a result of this meeting, Commissioner Mulieri agreed to once again arrange a meeting with Lennar and County officials in an effort to force the developer to live up to promises. She also indicated there were three other “Lennar” communities in Pasco County that are struggling with issues similar to ours. As has been said in the past, Commissioner Mulieri has been very supportive to our community and has played a role in “righting several wrongs”.

Highway 54 Upgrade Number IV approved.

The Pasco Engineering Department notified GO that the commissioners approved Alignment No IV. Alignment No IV will begin north of SR 56 and begin transition from east to west with a sharper curve north of Grand Oaks subdivision to avoid residential impacts while still avoiding the Airport parcel. The alignment will remain predominately along the west side and will have no residential impact on GO.

A copy of the route study is available for viewing in room 320 of the West Pasco Government center at 7520 Little Road, New Port Richie.

Mr. Widman, the chief County engineer, was invited to attend the last homeowners meeting (9/23/03) but he elected not to attend..

Marion, the GO Highway 54 Committee Head, agreed to get copy of the proposal and keep the board updated. Marion also stated that it was only because of the hard work dogged determination of the GO residents that this upgrade went in our favor. It could have very easily gone a different way.

You can run but you can't

hide: We recently had two accidents at our front entrance. In the first incident, a drunk driver took out a couple of trees and left his tracks all over the front island. Prior to initiating formal action to have the driver repair the damage, he independently elected to replace the trees that were downed. In the second incident, the driver apparently took the entrance too fast and ended up in the middle island, injuring one tree. That tree was replanted by our board member, Richard.

So where are those “no parking” and “no fishing”

signs? A contractor was found and the signs should be shipped within a few weeks. The delay has been originally due the fact that a no contractor could be found to make the limited number of signs to our specifications.

Need a place to sit?

Several GO residents requested the Board consider placing benches throughout the neighborhood. Residents taking evening walks quite often like to sit and enjoy the area. The Board agreed to look into the purchasing of several benches.

Oaks for Grand Oaks: The Board also set up a committee to look into a plan to add additional oak trees (or other trees) to the community, especially in the front along the highway. The committee is tasked to determine what kind of trees will be suitable for this area, find a grower to sell them to us at a reasonable price,

The committee is headed up by Marion and Guy Walsh.

The ideal situation would be to have the oak trees, especially along the front, reach a height and mass that they would help block out some of the road sounds that will be made by the new highway 54 upgrade. To do this, the trees would have to be planted soon. Trees planted throughout the area would not only fit our "Grand Oaks" image, but also help absorb sounds.

Don't be late on your homeowner dues! Board member Ken Duncan raised concerns about the current collection process. He voiced concern that new homeowners have been saddled with fees that should have been paid by the original owner. Current procedures require that a warning letter be sent if the homeowner is 30 days late, another warning at 60 days, a letter from the attorney at 90 days (includes attorney fees) and a lien at the 120 day time. The Board will consider doing away with one of the warning letters, thus moving the time frame up 30 days.

There was also discussion regarding the requests of three homeowners to waive the attorney fees associated with their late payments. The Board denied the requests of two

homeowners, indicating they had both knowledge of dues owed and had ample time to respond. In the third instance, the Board is requesting Vanguard absorb the attorney/s fees since the new homeowner provided evidence that she made attempts to pay and dues in a timely manner.

Are you interested in running for the Board? If you are, the 6th of November meeting should be on your calendar. That will be the day that community will elect new board members and approve the budget. You should consider putting together your resume and garnering your support.

This is your opportunity to make changes in your community. You don't like the way things are currently done??? You have ideas on making things better??? Get Involved! Become a Board or Committee member.

Commissioner Mulieri brokers meeting. As a result of the 22 July joint meeting and a letter GO received from Lennar accusing Phase I of holding up the gated entrance, Commissioner Mulieri brought all three parties together. She included John Gallagher the county administrator manager and John Goldstein the county attorney.

The meeting resulted in the following:

- Lennar agreed to reimburse GO for legal fees incurred between Nov 2002 and Sep 2003.

- The 2002 maintenance agreement was signed (this time, by Lennar) with two minor revisions.

- The county will allow Lennar to begin placing the gating hardware. Operation can not begin until Lennar compiles the required

signatures from Phase II and III owners.

- Lennar will build a 5 acre park back to a more convenient location. They will also,, if possible, expand the park to 10 acres rather than the 5 originally agreed on.

Because of her assistance, many of our issues were resolved. We still have our opposition on the 40' lots planned for Phase 3. This community has been opposed to this lot size from the beginning. The county chose to allow them despite our opposition. Commissioner Mulieri knows this. This issue will be coming to head in the very near future as Lennar is anxious to develop Phase 3 Please continue to voice your opposition to her at Commpat@aol.com.

Commissioner Mulieri asks for help. Commissioner Pat Mulieri is involved in the American Cancer Society's "First Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer". This is a 5k Walk to be held at the Little Everglades Steeple Chase, Dade City. The Date is October 18th. She has asked residents to contribute and walk with her at this event. We are putting together a Grand Oaks team. If you would like to be part of the team., Please contact our Team Leader, Judy Potts at 973-7862 to pre-register. You can also contact Judy to sponsor our team with a donation if your cant attend. The walk starts at 9 AM. There will also be on-site registration at 8:30 the day of the event. The venue is a beautiful place to walk. Let's support this important cause with our Commissioner.

GO Annual Fall Garage Sale set for 18 October. Mark

your calendars. Clean out the garage. Make a few bucks and then take your spouse out for dinner that night with your earnings.

Any unsold items can be left at the end of your driveway, clearly labeled "DONATION" for pick up by the Pasco Food Bank truck. The truck usually comes around mid-afternoon. Items picked up are sold at their thrift store to help the needy. Call Judy 973-7862 or Pat 973-3840 for more information.

Incorporating Wesley Chapel...Questions??

As you have been reading in the news, there is a local group wanting to research the possibility of incorporating the Wesley Chapel area as a city. Since the boundaries will stretch to SR 56, Grand Oaks residents will be included in this important decision. In this preliminary phase, there appears to be many questions about the "pros and cons" of such an undertaking. If you'd like to ask questions or hear more information, you are invited to attend the next CONA meeting. CONA (Council of Neighborhood Associations) will have a presentation by members of this committee. You will be able to hear first hand what this will mean to you as a tax-paying resident. The meeting is Thursday October 16th at 7pm. It will be held at a Carpenter's Run Clubhouse located on State Road 54.

Grand Oaks is a member of this organization. We currently have a resident serving on their Board of Directors. CONA meets monthly and covers a wide range of topics.

Call Judy Potts at 973-7862 for more information or directions.

PERSERVE PASCO TO HOLD FUNDRAISER.

Preserve Pasco, a local group dedicated to the preservation of green space will be holding a fundraising event Saturday, November 22nd at Starkey Ranch, SR 54 in Odessa. If you would like to hear local musical talent perform while relaxing in "open space", consider attending. There will be food and drinks as well as speakers on this very important topic. The price of your ticket is \$15. All proceeds will go to the campaign for the Penny for Pasco referendum, which included environmental land program. The environmental lands program is important if we want to save any of Pasco County before it is completely paved over. For tickets or more information, call Kathy (973-1990) or Judy (973-7862).

PENNIES FOR PASCO.

Again, as you may have heard there is a push to increase the sales tax by a penny. The monies generated by this tax increase would support various projects such as country roads, environmental land acquisition, etc. The County Commission recently voted 4-1 (dissenting vote was Commissioner Mulieri) to place this important referendum on the March ballot (typically low voter turnout). There will be numerous "voter education" hearings held soon. Whether you are for or against this increase, you should be educated before you place your vote. Watch the newspaper for scheduled education dates. If there is interest, we can request an educational offering be held specifically for our community.

NO OCTOBER MEETING.

There will be no October HOA/Board of Directors meeting. Our next meeting will be held Thursday, November 6th. At that meeting, officers for 2004 will be elected. The 2004 budget will also be adopted.

As always, the Board is always looking for volunteers to serve on the committee. This is your association. Be part of it!