



Orange Peel

CITRUS GLEN NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2012

President's Message

Annual Meeting. Probably the most important item we have coming up is the annual meeting on January 31st. In addition to electing two new Board members, we also need to vote on the proposed amendment to our documents. The proposed amendment simply asks that we change our procedure for future amendments to require approval by 60 percent of the homeowners who actually vote on any future proposal. This is the same manner as we amend the Florida state constitution and I think it is an extremely reasonable proposal. It is very important to our Community that we have the ability to meet the current and future challenges to managing and maintaining our community. **Please submit your proxy vote if you are not planning on attending the annual meeting.**

To segue from the annual meeting, as of that date I will be ending my second term as President of the Association. Although I have another year left on my term on the Board, I would prefer someone else be the President in 2012. I'm just a little burned out and frustrated with HOA politics. I also travel a lot and it's not always convenient for me to attend the monthly meetings. I would like to spend the next year working with the new President and then sort of just disappear into the sunset.

I had hoped to have some positive impact on the appearance of the community. We did plant more trees and replace some of the ageing and unsightly hibiscus plants. However, I am still frustrated with our fences and landscaping. I think the fences are the biggest appearance issue in Citrus Glen. We have spent most of the last two years struggling with declining housing prices, high unemployment, and the related issues that homeowners have had with paying both their mortgages and the HOA monthly assessments. In this period of financial struggle, we have also had to acknowledge that our houses are more than twenty years old and many had never been repainted since they were sold to the original owners. Thanks to the efforts and diligence of our ACC committee and the cooperation of our community, we did manage to paint almost 50 percent of our houses in the three years that I have been on the Board.

Property Inspection. The property manager has completed the annual inspection and sent out the notices. Most of the requested items relate to painting and or repairing fences and cleaning roofs. Many of our houses still have the original concrete roof tiles. These have become more porous over the years and therefore more prone to accumulating dirt and mold. I realize that some homeowners are concerned about having the pressure washing people walking on their roofs and the use of chemical cleaners. However, the people who provide this service do it day in and day out. You simply have to use a reputable contractor. We will insist that the dirty roofs be cleaned. This is specifically referenced in the HOA documents that you agreed to when you purchased your home.

If you have questions or concerns about the inspection, please don't ignore the inspection report. Our property manager will gladly discuss your report with you and make suggestions as to what you need to do. We have a process which includes follow up letters and then referral to the HOA's Attorney. Once these issues are referred to the Attorney, we have probably reached the "point of no return" as to discussion of the matter. Our Attorney charges us \$275 an hour and, at that point, we want both the requested repairs and/or cleaning to be made and also to be reimbursed for our legal costs.

Financial Update. Despite the previously referenced issues with collecting the HOA assessments, we are probably in better financial condition than at any time in the history of the HOA. Despite not having any increases in the monthly assessments for the last two years, we have increased our cash net of accounts payable from \$316,792 to \$416,091. This includes an increase in our operating reserves from a negative \$791 to a positive \$78,891 which is approximately the two months operating expenses recommended by our auditors. We have also increased our Reserves for Contingencies and Asset Replacement from \$334,600

to \$366,891 in this same time period. We still need approximately an additional \$35,000 before we can resurface our streets and another \$75,000 to restore the lakes. However, these items don't need to be done at this time and we are about where we should be as to planning for these items.

The Fences. I would like for the Association to take over the maintenance and enhancement of the fences. Although I think most of us try to take care of our fences, they still don't look very good. We have at least five types of fences. We have the masonry wall, we have the original wooden shadow box, we have some of the newer code conforming shadow box required for enclosing pools and spas, we have the board on board, and finally we have the plastic fences. Even when the homeowners try to maintain their fences, there are still issues. Although the fences may be adequately painted and structurally intact, they go up and down and in and out. They don't always line up or match the adjoining fence. I have attached another questionnaire asking if you would be willing to pay an additional \$10 a month to have the HOA take over the maintenance of all the fences running parallel to the streets and accessible from the limited common element front yards, the common elements, and Lawrence and Miner Road. I would like to see the masonry walls extended and all the fences to be conforming in appearance. Although it would probably take us ten years to reach conformity, I think it would greatly enhance the appearance our community and also remove an issue of frequent contention between the Association and the individual homeowners. This is the "question of the month" in the survey section in this newsletter. Please let us know how you feel about this issue.

Final Comments. Since this is my last newsletter, I want to make some comments as to going forward.

- 1. Your Responsibility.** Every owner should be looking at the financial statements. If you don't care, why should the Board or the Property Manager care? I think the key number to look at is "cash net of accounts payable." This is how much money we have to spend on operations, replacements, and enhancements. Although I am now retired on a full time basis, I am still a licensed CPA and I worked for the IRS for 35 years and at a Miami CPA firm for another five years. In my opinion, the budget and the financial statements are subject to manipulation by using the reserve accounts to pay expenses. However it is much more difficult to manipulate the cash accounts.
- 2. Future Challenges.** Our biggest cash challenges in the future will be restoring our lake beds and resurfacing our streets. It is estimated that the lakes might cost as much as \$120,000 and the roads \$200,000. I don't think either of these projects should be undertaken without first being studied by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board but independent of the Board and the Property Manager. I'm not sure if we even need to do anything with the lakes. When I look at the aerial photographs from Google Earth and compare the distance from the edge of lakes to the houses now and ten or fifteen years ago, I don't see any significant erosion of the lake beds. At a minimum, before we undertake any expenditure of this magnitude, we should have an analysis prepared by an engineering firm which would discuss what we need to do, when we need to do it, and how we should do it. The engineering firm should not have any financial relationship with any potential contractors or any of our current vendors including the property management firm.
- 3. Don't stop the annual audits.** The Florida statute requires all HOA's with gross receipts of more than \$400,000 to have their financial statements audited by a CPA licensed to practice in the State of Florida. Most accountants are not CPA's and not all CPA's are licensed to practice in the state of Florida. Only recently have we reached the \$400,000 gross receipt criteria. The 2010 statements were audited and approved in 2011 by our CPA firm. Although some of the other Board members think we may have had an audit in the past, it was not required and I can find no reference to any audit in the minutes of the prior year board meetings. However, our historical records are not the best and we may have had an audit and I just didn't find any reference to it. In any event, we are now required to have an annual audit unless "a majority of the voting interests present at a properly called meeting of the Association" agree to waive the statutory requirements. Prior to 2011, we were paying the CPA firm \$2,700 a year to review our accounts, prepare financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and prepare our income tax returns. We paid an additional \$900 in 2011 to have the accounts audited. Although this was certainly not a forensic audit, it does give us some assurance that the assets and liabilities reported on the Association's balance sheet are basically correct. It is my opinion that we have enough money on hand, and coming and going through our financial accounts, to need some independent review and verification. Anyone who suggests that we can save money by waiving the annual audit is being "penny wise and pound foolish."

Jim Taylor

Gate Reminder

At that time, the gate can be opened either by using the dialer and having the resident open the gate or by using the following 5 digit access code –

*4106

If you have problems with the gate after this date, you should email Bob Moreno at bob@citrusglen.org or call at 561 733 5422. If you send an e-mail, please be sure to include your name, lot number and telephone number.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY

MAILING ADDRESS

Gulfstream Services Management, Inc.
P.O. Box 24-4225, Boynton Beach, FL 33424-4225
Tel # 561-733-5550 Managers: Scott Straleau.

E-mail: scott@citrusglen.org

You may continue to use the website facility and it will forward to Scott

Hours at Citrus Glen

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Board and Working Committees and Activities During 2012

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Chris Aramondi
Marilyn Kelly

Orange Peel Distribution Team

Inez Guglielmo, *Team leader*
Elizabeth Meramo
Monique Owens
Harry Eichenlaub
Amanda Guglielmo
Teresa Moreno

OTHER FUNCTIONS

Welcome Interview/
Clubhouse Activities
Inez Guglielmo

Don't Miss our Annual Meeting on January 31st

What Do You Want?

We are attempting to start a new section of the newsletter which will provide some additional feedback to the Board as to the opinions of the homeowners on various issues impacting on our community. These questionnaires are merely opinion polls and are not "owner votes" as referenced in our documents and do not commit the HOA to any specific course of action. Our questionnaire last month asked about the gate. Although participation was not as high as I would have liked, this is something new.

Thirty homeowners returned the questionnaire. Fifteen voted to keep the current "universal code" system, ten voted to return to the "card" system, and five voted for a new "Sun Pass type" system. Although the "status quo" received the largest number of votes, an equal number of homeowners indicated a preference for more aggressive restrictions on entry. And apparently a large percentage of the homeowners don't care one way or the other. A more optimistic observation might be that most of the homeowners assume the Board has the most information and they trust us to make the best decision.

The question for this month is whether you would be willing to pay an additional \$10 a month to have the Association maintain the fences running alongside our streets and Minor and Lawrence Roads. **This would be as of January 1, 2013. This in no way impacts on your obligation to make any requested repairs to your fences as a result of recent property inspection.** You can either mail this to the Association or come by the clubhouse and drop it into the mail slot on the office door. Our mailing address is

Citrus Glen HOA
195 Temple Avenue
Boynton Beach, FL 33436

Homeowner name _____ Address _____

- 1 Yes, I would be willing to pay an additional \$10 a month to have the HOA maintain, standardize, and enhance the fences visible from the streets.
- 2 No, I prefer the current system where each homeowner is responsible for maintaining their individual fences and where we have a variety of different fences in our Community.