



Community Newsletter

The Voice of Condominium, Civic, & Homeowner Associations of Pasco County

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Council of Neighborhood Associations, Inc. since 1985

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CONA

Board of Directors

Officers

President

Mel Phillips 372-2610
philope@tampabay.rr.com

Vice-President

Pat Gorecki 846-0143

Secretary

Florence Weber 376-2001
*Newsletter hogan1@gte.net

Treasurer

Reynolds Smith 863-0734
reynoldssmithsr@msn.com

Directors

Ron Hubbs 863-0392

*Membership
msheahubbs@aol.com

Hans Kaehler 863-0368

HansKaehler@ij.net

Ernie Reed 869-8991

Dominick Scannavino 789-1284
X228

maph1@gte.net

Jim Turtle 938-3878

Director Emeritus

Charles Rifkin 376-7525

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

At the November 17 CONA meeting, we discussed the action taken at the request of the membership concerning code enforcement. We will go over this again, as some members were not present at the meeting.


Directors Ernie Reed, Jim Turtle, and your president met with County Administrator, John Gallagher and his staff concerning what we perceived as lack of code enforcement. As is our usual approach to meetings with county officials, in order to keep our meetings from becoming a gripe session, we try to present a problem and

CONA
Appreciation
Breakfast

Wednesday, December 15
9:30 a.m. at
Heritage Springs
Country Club
in
Trinity

Speaker for this festive occasion
is
Tom Jackson,
Columnist for the
Tampa Tribune

Mr. Jackson is a very witty fellow
so we should all have a good time.


Reservation deadline
for the Appreciation Breakfast
is December 9

Dignitaries will be seated at
each table.

This is a great opportunity to
meet and thank your
County Commissioners,
State Senators and State &
County Representatives
for assisting C.O.N.A. in
making
Pasco County a better place
to live.

suggest some possible answers to them.

On item we discussed was the public's inability to secure a PID number (complaint number) when a person reports a situation where action needs to be taken. At present, if the citizen wants this number so they

continued

can follow up on the problem, they are asked to call back in two days to secure the number. We suggested that a numbered form be developed for the operator to write up the complaint and thus could give the citizen the PID number immediately. Sounds simple doesn't it!

We discussed the fact that some, if not all, personnel arrive at work at 6:30 a.m. At this time they look up the owner of the property that a complaint is filed against. We think this is a waste of code enforcement officer's time when a clerk could look up this information and have it on the form when the officers arrived at work. We need the officers in the field, not sitting in the office.

We discussed the possibility of using volunteers, much like the highly successful snip sign group.

We also discussed the deterioration of neighborhoods since Joe Gross left. All one has to do is to drive through areas that a diligent code enforcement officer had, to see what a good job of cleaning up she did. Now that she has been transferred to East Pasco her previous areas are going back exactly as they were, or worse. What happened to the neighborhood sweeps?

We presented several cases that needed attention for a long time. One complaint had been called in three times over the last six months, with no action - Code Enforcement Supervisor, and the field man for that area, went out that afternoon and cited the individual. They gave him seven days to come into compliance. This is good, but why did it take six months?

We received a good reception from John Gallagher and his staff and we will return on December 6, 2004, to hear what improvements will be made. ■

STAY OUT OF COURT!

FTC Facts for Consumers - Resolving Consumer Disputes: "Mediation and Arbitration"

The latest buzz words!

Mediation and arbitration, a process known as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) - are gaining in popularity as many Americans reexamine the costs and time involved in litigation. Dispute resolution programs can be quicker, cheaper, and less stressful than going to court.

The two most popular types of dispute resolution are mediation and arbitration. In **mediation**, a neutral third party -- a mediator -- helps you and the other party try to resolve the problem through facilitated dialogue. However, it's up to you and the other party to reach an agreement.

Arbitration is less formal than court, though you and the other party may appear at hearings, present evidence, or call and question each other's witnesses. Unlike mediation, an arbitrator or panel makes a decision or award once you've presented your case. The decision may be legally binding.

Preparing for an ADR Program

The program will progress more easily and effectively if you are well prepared.

- **Understand and follow the program's rules.** Make sure you meet all the preliminary requirements. First try to resolve the problem with the resident or company.
- **File your claim promptly.** The earlier you submit your claim or written statement and have the meeting or hearing, the less likely you are to forget important details.
- **Outline the important facts of the case.** You'll need to be able to tell when, where, how, why, who, and what the specific problem is, and what you've done to try to resolve the problem.
- **Document your claims.** Make copies of all correspondence and telephone calls, if any, and in the case of a company have receipts, repair orders, warranties, canceled checks, contracts, or any other supporting documents.

- **Ask if you are allowed witnesses.** If so, make sure you know what they'll say or submit in writing.
- **Know what you want from the resident or company.** Decide on your expenses before arbitration.

In the case of a company or contractor, decide whether you want a refund, exchange, repair, or reimbursement on expenses you've incurred, including repair costs. At the same time, be flexible. You may have to compromise.

- **Is the program voluntary or mandatory?**

The NEW Florida State Statutes say it is mandatory as far as homeowner associations are concerned.

- **What's required and how long will it take?** It varies. Mediation requires meetings; arbitration uses hearings. Either may take place in person, by phone, or by video conferencing. However, some programs resolve disputes based solely on written statements -- sometimes called "desktop" arbitrations. In some cases, you'll begin with mediation, and if no decision is reached, you'll progress to arbitration. One of the benefits of ADR is that disputes are usually resolved more quickly than court proceedings.

- **Can I help select the mediator or arbitrator?** Maybe. Many programs offer lists of neutral third parties from which to choose. Be aware that your ADR provider or your state may have ethics rules for third parties to assure impartiality. For example, the third party cannot get personally involved in the dispute or benefit from the resolution. Ask the program administrator for a copy of the rules. If confidentiality is important to you, make sure you get the specifics before committing to the program.

- **Is the decision binding -- that is, must both parties accept it?** Mediation is nonbinding; arbitration may be binding on both parties, or neither. If the arbitrator's decision is nonbinding, you can reject it and try other avenues, including small claims court in some areas.

Going to Court

If a dispute resolution does not settle the problem, you may be able to sue. If you enter into an arbitration program that's binding on both parties, you've given up your right to sue. Agreements to resolve disputes through binding arbitration are generally enforceable.

Don't forget...this article is for both resident problems and/or contracts or companies you are dealing with. ■

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Don't forget CONA's Party on December 15th. Deadline for reservations is December 9.

MISCELLANEOUS

A big THANK YOU to Tami Turner, President of Magnolia Valley HOA, for making the new CONA logo on her computer for this and future Newsletters. Thanks Tami!

We had sixty-nine, including board members, in attendance for the November Annual meeting. Five individuals joined CONA at that meeting. Thanks everyone for attending and supporting our speakers.

It's grapefruit season again!

You say that washing all those grapefruit is a chore? Well try this! Put them in the washing machine with a couple of old towels, and enough water so they have enough room to move around. No soap...just water, and, wash on slow.

NEW MEMBERS - Welcome all!!

Individual membership

- Silvana Perez of Bear Creek
- William Tiller of Heritage Lake
- Paul Bryant of Sabelwood at River Ridge
- Loretta Bolender of Estates of B/Woods East
- Charles Tabone of Jasmine Trails
- Richard Method of Ponderosa Park

Association membership

Fox Wood at Trinity - William Humphrey



DO NOT SPIN! They only need a short time in the washer...watch them closely...it doesn't take long.

While we are on the subject of washing machines, if you want to wash a whole head of lettuce...separate the leaves, wash the lettuce and place on a clean dish towel. Place another dish towel over the lettuce, fold the edges of the bottom towel over the edges of the top towel and place in the wash machine and set on spin. Voila! you have nice dry crisp lettuce. Beats using the hand spinner. It keeps fresh longer doing it this way.

"TOW



GO"

by Matt Nasworthy

AAA Auto Club South and Budweiser are launching "Tow to Go" to help make the holidays safer for everyone. "Tow to Go" fights drunk driving by offering a **free** ride home and a **free** tow to adults who drink alcoholic beverages and may have imbibed too much. This year, "Tow to Go" will be available throughout the entire state of Florida. The program runs from Thanksgiving 2004 through New Year's Day 2005.

"Tow to Go obviously helps those drivers who find themselves in a dangerous situation, but more importantly, it keeps a major hazard off our

roads,"said Ed Shatzman, senior vice president of Automotive Services for AAA Auto Club South. "This program protects countless motorists who may otherwise be left in the path of a potential drunk driver."

"Tow to Go" is very simple to use. Adults who need a ride home from bars or restaurants this holiday season can simple call 1-800-AAA-HELP. AAA will dispatch a tow truck and take both the driver and the vehicle home, **free of charge**. AAA and Budweiser encourage individuals to plan for a safe celebration this holiday season by being or choosing a Designated Driver.

AAA Auto Club South is located on Route 595, also known as Mile Stretch Road in Holiday, Florida, Pasco.

Lost & Found

Two items were found in chambers after the November 17 meeting.

One, a yellow lined tablet, the other was a booklet...

"Home Owner's Associations Florida Tax Requirements. Call 376-2001 if you want them back.

Great Article

There was a great article in the Suncoast News, by Carl Orth, about speaker Don Peyton's update on deed restrictions at our November 17 meeting. Check it out if you still have the paper. It was in the Wednesday, November 24, 2004 issue, page 13.

I'm going to attach it to my minutes so I don't have to do all that typing. Thanks Carl!



*Your Board of
Directors send all
Happy Holiday
wishes!*



HELP !!

I need your help! I need suggestions for newsletter articles. "Ask an Attorney." Send me your questions for this spot.

I'm guessing at what information interests you.

Also, who do you want as speakers? What are your problem areas? e-mail me at hogan1@gte.net
Thanks, Florence

CONA East Quarterly update - Larry McLaughlin (edited for space)

We have had a very busy fall continuing our work for higher school impact fees, and better planning for commercial development in Wesley Chapel.

During the summer months, boards of both CONA East and West met with county and school district officials to urge them to review and adjust Pasco County school impact fees. The boards of both CONA East and West carefully researched this issue and agreed that fees should be brought in line with the demand new home construction is placing on our schools. School impact fees are for the purpose of building schools where development is resulting in higher school enrollments. They are assessed on new construction only. The number of new students added to the districts' total enrollment has risen dramatically over the three years since school impact fees were first approved. Some of our newest schools are seriously overcrowded. The Pasco School District has been conducting the requisite study and, we are told, a report will be ready for our review very soon. We'll let you know what it tells us.

CONA East members are concerned about the commercial development in Wesley Chapel, i.e. car dealerships. CONA is asking Pasco County to establish a special overlay or planning district to ensure a more diverse and compatible form of commercial growth. Such a district would address the intensity of land use near our residential communities, adequate buffering and setbacks, smoother transitions between subdivisions, high-impact commercial development, and better road access management.

CONA East held their annual meeting on November 11 and the new directors are Larry McLaughlin, President; Dennis Smith, Vice President; Joe Worrell, Treasurer; and Bonnie Shulman, Secretary. Directors are Jim Bovis, Larry Cymment, Jerry Lynn, Cass Peters, and Judy Potts.

Editors Note: CONA West and East are working together to make Pasco County a better place to live. We are proactive! If you know anyone who lives on the East side of Pasco County, encourage them to join the East CONA membership. Contact telephone number is (813) 779-0089 for Larry McLaughlin, President.

Holiday Pumpkin Bread - makes 2 loaves (delicious)



3 1/2 cups flour	2 teas. cinnamon
*2 2/3 cups sugar	1 teas. cloves
1 1/2 teas. salt	1 teas. nutmeg (fresh ground)
1/2 teas. baking powder	*2 cups canned pumpkin
2 teas. baking soda	*2/3 cup cooking oil
*4 eggs	*2/3 cup water
1 tab. Hazelnut liqueur (optional)	2 cup nuts coarsely chopped

Mix eggs with sugar until creamy. *Add all wet ingredients. Stir. Mix all dry ingredients together in one bowl. Stir. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients. Mix gently until thoroughly mixed. Bake one hour at 350 degrees. Watch closely toward the end of time. Depending on your oven...it may be done sooner than an hour. Enjoy!