

January 31st, 2025 - Notes to the Community

Hi everyone,

Well, the month has flown by, and a lot has gone on in Bell Tower Park. So, let's get to it.

The January POA Board meeting was held on Tuesday. Unfortunately, due to a "glitch" in the Cardinal Caliber system, which is the largest of *the platforms* used to disseminate email to the Community, the message that Brandi sent on Thursday afternoon with the date, time and agenda was never received by many of owners. Only the follow up message, sent on Monday as a "friendly reminder" was received by everyone. So – apologies to all. Brandi has inquired as to the reason for this problem but has yet to receive a reply. Several important issues were discussed, however, and here is a recap:

- Due to the resignation of our accounting rep at Cardinal, the **December financials** were not available for the meeting. These are the year-end reports as well, so they do take longer to process than the normal monthly reports.
- The **Tennis Court renovation** was discussed at length. Sports Surfaces is now here and working on the completion of this portion of the project. The asphalt is being prepared for surfacing and fencing is being installed. The basketball court will also be resurfaced during this phase. The other portions of the project – resurfacing,



cement work needed, painting of the lines and other ancillary work is still ahead. It is hoped that the Courts renovation will be completed by the *end of February* or before.



- The status of the **Bocce Court** is still being researched. We are again waiting for notification from Sports Surfaces about the amount of additional money that will be needed if it is necessary to go through more steps: for instance, an engineering study, environmental study, surveys, etc. to satisfy Lee County requirements. Once these numbers are available, your Board will evaluate what needs to be done on our end to pay for these unexpected expenses, as outlined in the last Notes to the Community. The net of this is that we'll find a way to have the Bocce Court project completed unless these costs are way too exorbitant.
- The cleaning out of our **Preserve areas** was next on the agenda. Aquatic Weed Control has been working diligently to fix this mess that's been neglected for years, as previously mentioned. At the last Board meeting we discussed their

proposal to maintain the 16 smaller preserve areas in the Community. Their representative, Rebel, suggested that we forgo that for 2025, since they were just cleaned out, and focus on the larger preserves in the Community – behind the Kensington Loop homes and along the Boulevard, as well as behind homes on Avon Park Circle. This seemed like a great idea, given the limited budget that we have for this work.

- The crews are allowed to clean three to four yards into the preserves. These areas have apparently never been touched. The undergrowth is extremely thick, with a lot of dead trees, limbs and the like in them.
- But even more disturbing was what else the crews found ---- Mounds and mounds of dog manure piled at the edges, hanging from trees and so forth, lying in the preserves. **Disgusting** is just one word to describe what they found. Obviously, the practice of throwing dog “leavings” into the preserves has been a common practice by some of our apparent dog-loving, but not community-loving residents, for some time. The Board discussed putting back “doggie stations” – where residents could deposit their bags of “goodies”, rather than disposing of them in the preserves and any other areas that they can find (except in a proper receptacle. It would be an expensive proposition -- money that could be utilized for better purposes around here, rather than trying to appease irresponsible residents, so the Board decided not to set them out around the Community. The cost to provide enough of these stations to be effective would have been over \$20,000, plus the cost to have someone visit the “stations” to periodically clean them out. This is a very revealing look at some of the practices and thought processes of at least a few of our owners and renters. The Board will soon be discussing measures that will be taken to help prevent this. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, should you see anyone doing this – or just leaving the “droppings” of their furry little friends where they shouldn’t be – or not picking up the “leavings” at all, please report it to the office. A picture would be even better. This is again a finable offense, and the fine will be levied immediately, should we detect any of this going on. Also, again these preserves are full of dead materials and the like (as well as a lot of wildlife, as we know). A question came up about them being a fire hazard – especially after the fires in California this month. They are indeed a fire hazard, in fact we had a small fire that occurred last year behind a Courtyard II home on

Avon Park Circle that was caused by a lightning strike. It was called in by one of our residents and was quickly extinguished by San Carlos Park Fire before it spread. Thus, the Board is investigating to determine if we can obtain some assistance from Lee County, since they seem to be focusing on this issue of late.

- Our **Lakes/ponds, Fountains and Aerators** were discussed next. The Lake Doctors tested all nine of our lakes/ponds and early this month and found that temperatures and oxygen levels were in “good shape for man-made lakes”, basically due to good performance by our aerators system. They also measured the depth of each lake/pond - of course they are low January levels as opposed to levels during rainy season. (A copy of the report is attached to this Notes). They also measured the “muck” levels or mount of sediment at the bottom of each body of water. The recommended level of “muck” in lakes/ponds like ours is one inch. After, apparently no attention paid to this situation again for years, they found that “muck” levels were between 12 inches and 24 inches. Our lakes in total cover 20.6 acres within our community. To give one an idea of the impact of “muck” in terms of displacement of water storage capacity, one acre of water, only one inch deep represents 326,000 gallons of water. With 20.6 acres of water with one inch or “muck” displaces 6,716,000 gallons of water that could be stored during storms, etc. If the “muck” is 12 inches deep, it displaces 80,580,000 gallons of rain and runs off into our lakes. Rather than dredging the lakes/ponds, an astronomical expense, Lake Doctors proposed providing a new product called Muck Digestor Pellets to be put into the water. Two applications would reduce the levels of silty or ground sediment (muck) almost completely. The process dissolves the “muck” and clears the water. After the two applications are completed, the water will be re-tested, as done this month, to determine the results. The Board felt that this is a very worthwhile project, and while the cost of \$19,270 is not in our budget, we can rearrange a couple of line items to cover it. The motion was approved.

Other items that were discussed:

- **Signs required by the Lee County** Health Inspector that are missing at the Avon Park Pool. They are very costly, so more work is being done to solicit prices to produce them that meet County standards.

- **Mailings for Annual meetings**, special meetings and the like are costly. We are doing a cost analysis as to whether it would be less expensive to have our own postal meter and compare costs for doing the mailings internally as opposed to sending them to Cardinal for processing and mailing.
- **Landscaping** – During our monthly meeting with Leslie Cassandra on Monday, she reviewed with us, her monthly Request Sheet. This is a report on each request for service that she receives from BTP residents for landscaping and irrigation work. She produces it for us every week. In January, a “light month”, she had over 20 requests. The vast majority of these come to her through their Zen Desk, and she makes a point of responding to these requests within 24 hours, unless it’s over the weekend. Prior to bringing on Greenscapes, we never enjoyed this kind of response time from our previous contractor, Green Heron. Many times the requests *never got* to Green Heron. So, this capability is a huge improvement, and should be used by those that are in need of landscape or irrigation help. For those that haven’t used the Zen Desk yet, the instructions are clearly outlined on the new BTP POA website, or there is information available in the office as well.
- **Other items of interest** – The Board held a Zoom meeting with two representatives from the Sedgewick Group to discuss the issues that we had with the original **Reserve Study** report, as discussed in the previous issue of Notes. The Board had over twenty issues to be clarified. And in about an hour and a half all of them were discussed and resolved. Brandi provided some additional data that they needed to finish the report, so hopefully the final edition will be submitted to us within the next few weeks. At that point again, the Board will determine the next steps on dealing with any shortfall in our Reserve Fund/Account that we may have.
- The announcements for our series of **Annual Meetings** went out recently. In them, a request was made for owners to submit their names to run for open Board of Director seats for the POA, as well as each individual sub-Association (Carriage Homes, Courtyard I and Courtyard II).

****There are two (2) seats available for the POA Board, two (2) available for the Carriage Homes Board, one seat available on the Courtyard I Board and three (3) open for the Courtyard II Board. Please consider running for a seat on either the POA Board (open to all residents) or one of the seats available in the sub-Association in which you live****

Also – several Committees need some “fresh blood” as they say. Attrition has depleted the ranks of several of our committees. The Communications, Landscape and Safety Committees could all use additional help. So please consider stepping up and serving in one of these capacities. There are several of our owners with expertise and have the time to help. So please consider getting or being involved. Bell Tower Park is only as strong as our owners/residents make it. Thank you!!!

In closing, the next three months will be very busy around here. Brandi and Jeannemarie will be handling many, many owners’/residents’ requests, while doing the great work that they do to help move things forward with the operation of BTP. So please – when you drop in, keep your visit as brief as possible.

February is a short but very busy month, so continue to enjoy our great amenities, the events planned by our Social Committee and the great SW Florida weather!

Next POA Board meeting will be held on February 25th – 6PM in the Annex