

**April 4, 2025 3:10 p.m.**

Hello fellow owners and residents,

As we know, the Bell Tower Park POA held its **Annual Owner's Meeting** last Tuesday. It was great to see that the Annex was nearly full of stakeholders that were interested in what's going on in the Community. And there were numerous others that joined in via "zoom". So, thanks to all that participated.

The event combined the Annual Owner's Meeting, the Board Organizational meeting and the regularly scheduled March Monthly Board meeting, so a lot of material was covered.

The **Annual Meeting** was official in that the total number of proxies received and members in attendance far exceeded the minimum number required by BTP By Laws. While the ballots for the two Board seats that open for election were being counted, a recap of changes and improvements around the Community was discussed:

The first item was the replacement of our **Property Manager** last April, and the succession of **Brandi Wells** as our new CAM. Her commitment to customer service and willingness to help residents provides a great addition to the culture of the office. As does that of Jeannemarie Kane, our Admin Assistant.

**Landscape contractor - Greenscapes'** arrival as new provider on May 1<sup>st</sup> was highlighted. They have introduced a new level of customer service thanks to our client service manager Leslie Casandra, and crew Supervisor Kenny Giona. Also, their "zen desk" allows owners to contact Greenscapes and get a quick response to requests and questions, avoiding any intermediary contact.

**Community communications** have improved significantly with first the quarterly Newsletter, Notes to the Community, frequent email blasts from our office, and the introduction of our new Bell Tower Park owned and operated, official web site.

There was a terrific addition to our **Amenities** package: four brand new pickle ball courts and a renovated tennis court. The basketball court was resurfaced as well. This addition not only provides a needed venue for our pickle ball enthusiasts, but it also helps keep the neighborhood competitive with others in our area and helps increase our property values.

In addition, all **five common area buildings** – clubhouse/annex, cabana, small pool building, the guardhouse and the front monument were **re-roofed**. This not only allowed us to actually insure these buildings again, it reduced our insurance exposure from a cost standpoint.

**Financially**, the POA essentially spent our entire budget amount (\$1,939,026) in fiscal 2024, with a slight overage of \$456. An agreement was made with **Edward Jones** to manage our Reserve Funds. Instead of holding several bank CD's that yielded much less, we combined these funds "under one roof" with a guaranteed rate of 4.5% annually. This will help the growth of our Reserves.

**Bell Tower Park Committees** were very active.

The **Social Committee**, led by **Kim Walerius**, provided a variety of events for our enjoyment with their schedule for the 2024-25 season. And they did a remarkable job of planning and executing more and new activities than have ever been done in BTP.

The **Landscape Committee**, first led by **John Woodard**, and now **Dan Kernick**, has worked with Greenscapes to beautify the community: developing a long-range plan of action, then making improvements i.e.

- screening the south wall, refurbishing numerous yards at Courtyards and working on best landscape practices throughout.

Activities for the **Amenities** Committee, headed by **Keith Miller** and the **Communications** Committee, led by **Nina Anderson** and **John Fuller** were mentioned previously. But a new committee – **Holiday Decorations** – coordinated by **Nancy and Mike Enos** -- did a remarkable job in late November by bringing the holiday spirit to BTP.

There were several areas that had been neglected for several years that were addressed. Other than County required exotic plants/trees preventive maintenance, the sixteen small **Preserve areas** and three large Preserves on property had not been touched since 2016. **Aquatic Weed Control** returned last year to clean and clear the small Preserves. They also worked on small sections of the larger Preserves. This will be an ongoing, expensive undertaking over the next several years until we gain control of the conditions of our Preserves.

Recently, we learned that equipment that operate our **entrance gates, security cameras and software** had been neglected, and in some instances was obsolete. Then the calamity with the inoperative gates due to a computer “hack” of the Envera system occurred and lasted for weeks. We are currently investigating alternatives to the existing system and should have a solution sometime in early summer.

Finally, we found that the four **large pumps** used to move **irrigation** water through the system that keeps the Community green were original equipment (20 plus years old) and close to the end of their useful life. **Hoover pumps** had spoken with management about this over the last several years, but to no avail. We are now in the process of replacing some of this equipment to help stabilize the situation. More on this will be available soon.

At that point, the **results** of the **POA Board election** were announced by Brandi and **Mark Trail** and **Ron Mc Ewan** were named as Board members.

The **Organizational/Board Meeting** was held immediately thereafter: Ron Mc Ewan was re-elected as Board President, Paul Niss was re-elected as Vice President, John Scardella was re-elected as Secretary, and Michael Lewis was re-elected as Treasurer. Mark Trail will be the Board member at large.

**Old Business** – Items discussed included an update on the treatment of our **lakes and ponds** by **Lake Doctors**, as outlined previously. The outcome, the amount of reduction of the silt and “muck, will be determined when their technicians visit BTP next week. We will forward it as soon as the information is available.

Also, we finally received the updated **Reserve Study** from the Sedgewick Group. After they implemented the several changes suggested by your POA Board to components of their original evaluation, the estimated shortfall of this year’s contribution to the Reserve Fund was reduced from \$62,000 to \$19,136. How the Board will address this more manageable shortfall will be determined within the next several months, after the anticipated costs for our new Safety/security system are evaluated.

Over the last five plus years, the contribution to the Reserve Fund was a static \$120,000, which did not take into consideration inflation, cost of living increases, etc. In the fiscal 2025 Budget, prior to receiving the results of the Reserve Study, the Board proactively raised the contribution to \$130,000 which helped mitigate the shortfall. We can expect another increase to the fund of another \$20,000 in fiscal 2026, to stay current with recommended Reserve levels for Bell Tower Park.

**New Business** – An ARC and more detailed plans for a modification to the pavers between two driveways on Cambridge Dr. will be required from the owner that requested the change.

A group of artists that reside in BTP, led by Marsha Wulpi, requested that they might replace the hanging banners in the Annex that have been there since the days of the developer.

Their plan is to display up to ten pieces of art, or professional quality photos of a like theme on the wall. They would hang by wire from a rod placed above and would be there for sixty days until a new series is introduced. The Board felt that this project would add to the décor of the Annex and approved the project. There will be no cost to the POA for this venture. It will be installed in September

One of the projects on our Reserve Schedule to be completed this year is **painting the common area buildings**: the clubhouse/annex, the pool cabana, the building at the Avon Park pool, the guardhouse and the monument building at the US 41 entrance. Since the roofs were replaced last year, and all of the homes in the community are freshly painted, for consistency, the Board approved the project. Again, this is a Reserve item expense and will be paid for through the Reserve Fund. Brandi is working on bids from at least five companies, and we will hopefully have the project completed before the start of rainy season.

Lastly, it was discussed that three of our four **irrigation pumps**, that again provide water for our irrigation system, were inoperable, at least for some period of time during the previous week. As mentioned earlier, we have secured a quote from **Hoover pumps** to replace these old pumps with new, state of the art, more efficient versions. One of these new pumps has the capacity to replace two of the older, original pumps. Thus, the Board elected to move forward with the replacement of two of the older pumps with one of the newer ones as soon as possible, to begin the process of modernizing our pump irrigation system. This too is a Reserve item and will be paid for through the Reserve Fund.

Other notes – There were a couple of things that were quite disturbing that should be brought to everyone’s attention:

Last week an owner on West Hyde Park contacted the office concerning significant damage caused by **armadillos** around his home. PurCor, our “pest control” supplier, was notified and they set traps to catch the critter(s). Apparently, several have been spotted in the area. Traps were set, and an armadillo was caught. PurCor’s process is to trap these animals and then transport them to a wilderness area and release them. But before the PurCor technician could arrive and remove the cage and the armadillo was caught, a “neighbor” decided to take matters into her own hands and release the animal – while in the process, damaging the trap. Thus, the POA is responsible for not only the cost of the removal of the armadillo, but the cost of a new trap. It would really be nice if this person would step forward, do the right thing, and reimburse PurCor for this damaged piece of equipment.

Also, one of our so conscientious and valuable owners that is involved in the garbage/debris pick up around the Community has notified us that they are finding an inordinate number of cigarette butts along our streets and in the grass and bushes. This is irresponsible, and obviously a real hazard given our dry conditions this time of year. Please, smokers, don’t throw these objects out of your vehicles while driving through our Community, or anywhere else for that matter, as Smokey the Bear said “It only takes a spark to start (forest) fire”!

Finally – we all know that the last six months have been a busy time around BTP. And several unfortunate happenings have occurred, like the unnerving outage of our security gates.

However, we’re hearing of several incidents when owners/residents have been phoning in or visiting the office and being less than polite and cordial to our office staff.

Regardless of what the issue is, there is no reason for this. These ladies try very hard to provide the best customer service possible to all of us. As we know, the culture here has changed dramatically since the change in office management that took place last April. It seems that at times though, that this more pleasant and helpful attitude has now been taken for granted. And the demands for “service” have escalated exponentially, perhaps due to this new direction. Let’s try to put our requests in perspective in terms of importance everyone. Occasionally something can fall through the cracks, but things have been addressed more readily in Bell Tower Park than ever before. And a lot has gotten done over the last year. So please, remember the old phrase “you can get a lot more done using honey than vinegar”, with your individual issues.

Thanks everyone. The next POA Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6PM in the Annex. Have a great weekend, and for those that will be leaving us for the north, SAFE TRAVELS!! See you once again in the Fall!

**Ron Mc Ewan, Board President**  
**Bell Tower Park Property Owners Association**

