



Your

Community Resource

The Woodlands Word

January 2024

Letter from the President

As the Co-Chair of the Sarasota County Traffic Advisory Council, I have filed the necessary documents for the installation of No Parking or Standing, Engine Idling signs on behalf of Rivendell. These signs will be installed on Rivendell Blvd. from Placid Lake Drive going west on the north side of the street into the cul do sac.

We will be required to have a vote of the HOA Board of Directors, to be noted in our Rivendell Board minutes to complete this. I also will have a petition form for any residents who would like to sign at the January 15, 2024, Board of Directors meeting. I realize this has been a long time coming; however, I have been assured by the Sarasota County Sheriff's Dept. that they will enforce the signage.

Upcoming Election

Please keep in mind that our upcoming election will be held in February. You will be able to vote electronically or by paper ballot. I urge everyone to vote. The candidates will be finalized by January 8 and nominations will be accepted up until that date.

Ballots will be mailed to all homeowners. In your ballot envelope you will also find two Amendments. One amendment covers an HOA Application Fee for all new buyers of

property in Rivendell. This fee would cover the costs that the HOA absorbs for processing their application. This fee also applies for property intended for rentals.

The second item is a Capital Contribution Fee. New Property buyers would pay into our reserves as an investment into our community. This will give us the future reserve monies earmarked for making ongoing improvements necessary for an aging community. None of these fees affect current owners. The two amendments are increasingly used in other residential communities, and we have been advised to add them to our community as well.

Mailbox/Light Posts

It has come to the attention of the Board of Directors and the Compliance Committee that there are over 100 mailboxes in disrepair in our community. Broken or missing doors; lights bulbs not in working condition; and missing address numbers all constitute "disrepair" as does a faded or chipped painting condition. The Board of Directors appeals to all homeowners to please correct these conditions that are making our community look unkempt. In the very near future, the Compliance Committee will be issuing fines to those residents who do not act.

2024

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Bat Banter - from Brazil to Your Backyard

One of the joys of living in Rivendell is sharing our neighborhood with wildlife. Occasionally, however, some of the critters get a little too close for comfort. Many people feel this way when bats decide to roost in their homes, a problem recently experienced by several Rivendell residents. What's to be done if you are "lucky" enough to have bats adopt your home as their own?

Florida has 13 native bat species. Chances are your visitors are Brazilian free-tail bats that love to roost under roof tiles, or perhaps Evening bats or Southeastern Myotis bats. These bats eat an enormous number of insects each evening! It has been estimated that the colony of free-tail bats living under the Congress Ave. bridge in Austin Texas consume close to 200 tons of insects on an average summer night! They do this using echolocation- one of the most sophisticated navigation systems observed in nature. **Contrary to common belief, bats are not common carriers of disease.** That said, they should not be handled because they will bite! Bats are protected under Florida law. It is illegal to harm or kill bats in Florida, as they are considered a vital part of the state's ecosystem. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) encourages residents to use humane home exclusion methods if bats are found roosting in your house. Hiring a licensed professional is recommended to ensure compliance with regulations and

to avoid unintentional harm to the bats. Exclusion should be performed outside of the maternity season, typically from April 15th to August 15th, to avoid separating mothers from their dependent pups.



How about a bat box? These are a great option for relocating bats. The boxes provide a great alternative to roosting in buildings. Florida recognizes the ecological importance of bats and has established rules and regulations to ensure their conservation while addressing concerns related to human habitats. This is because bats play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance within natural communities, offering numerous advantages. Bats are natural pest controllers, devouring vast quantities of insects, including those that harm crops and spread diseases. Their presence helps minimize the need for chemical pesticides, promoting a healthier environment. Appreciating the ecological benefits of bats and adopting humane, preventative measures to address concerns ensures a healthier and more balanced environment for both humans and wildlife.

A great source for information about Florida bats and regulations can be found at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website (myfwc.com).



Book Nook



Book Group I Starts a New Year

Book Group I continues to meet under its dual leadership of Leslie Glick and Adele Kellman. Many of the members have been part of the group for more than 10 years. As always, the group meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at a member's home for a discussion by a volunteer leader. We gathered at Beryl Nord's home in December and had an excellent discussion of Trevor Noah's memoir, Born a Crime. On January 8th, Judy Sokal will be leading a discussion of When We Were Young by Hazel Gaynor. Upcoming titles include Honor by Thrity Umnigar and The Dutch House by Ann Patchett.

Book Group II

Book Group II begins 2024 welcoming some new members as well as a new schedule of interesting reads. It meets the 4th Wednesday of the month. In January the group will read The Tender Bar: A Memoir by J.R. Moehringer. The author is also known for his ghost-writing having written three other memoirs that were instant bestsellers – Shoe Dog about Phil Knight, Open about Andre Agassi and most recently, Spare about Prince Harry. Moehringer won the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for feature writing. Alexis Spaulding will be facilitating. In February the book is a historical novel, Lady Tan's Circle of Women by Lisa See. Barb Gahry will facilitate the discussion. Maria Ilioff is the facilitator in March for Remarkable Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. April brings another Moehringer book as we read Open. The discussion will be facilitated by Jane Stevens. And May's book is the historical mystery novel Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan, another Pulitzer Prize winning novelist. Kristine Nickel will facilitate.



From the Ponds and Preserves Committee: Managing Stormwater Ponds During Drought: A Delicate Balance

Rivendell experienced a significant drought in 2023. Rainfall averages about 52 inches per year in Sarasota County, but by the middle of December 2023, less than 32 inches of rain fell. According to the University of South Florida's Water Institute, this is the least rain the county has experienced going back to at least 1915!

The dry weather creates problems for homeowners trying to maintain their lawns and landscaping. In addition, Rivendell's ponds and preserves are stressed by the lack of rainfall.

We asked experts at Beautiful Ponds, Rivendell's pond management company, to discuss the challenges of caring for our ponds during the drought.

This is what they said...

Managing stormwater ponds during a drought presents a unique set of challenges. The current situation is exacerbated by the unexpected spread of seeds by the winds of Hurricane Ian. The widespread broadcasting of native plant seeds has led to the proliferation of native plants around stormwater ponds. The drought has produced barren pond shorelines that invite explosive growth of these plants. While these plants are native, their unchecked expansion can lead to imbalances in the ecosystem.

The drought has also provided fertile ground for invasive species to thrive. Torpedo grass, Primrose, Purple nut sedge, Barnyard grass, Day flower, and Alligatorweed have spread rapidly, outcompeting native vegetation, and posing a threat to the health of the stormwater ponds.

The lack of rainfall during the drought has not only affected the growth of aquatic plants but has also contributed to slower decomposition processes. As a result, shorelines are taking on a brown hue, affecting the visual appeal of stormwater ponds. This aesthetic deterioration is a clear indication of the ecological stress caused by the prolonged dry spell.

Faced with these challenges, Beautiful Ponds utilizes two-man crews and selective herbicides to limit damage to desirable native aquatic species. The approach is cautious, seeking to strike a balance between controlling invasive and nuisance native species while preserving the biodiversity of stormwater ponds.

Global weather patterns have shifted for 2024. If the transition from La Niña to El Niño occurs, there is hope for relief in the form of early spring rains and a return to a more normal rainy season. Adequate rainfall would not only replenish water levels but also support the recovery of stormwater ponds, assisting in the management of both native and invasive plant species.

Managing stormwater ponds during a drought requires a delicate balancing act. The proliferation of both native and invasive species poses special challenges to maintaining the function, health and aesthetics of these vital elements of our community.

We all look forward to a return of the rain in 2024. Until then, all we can do is manage the situation, watch and wait. The patience of Rivendell residents is appreciated during this time!



Potluck Dinner on the Pool Deck - Sunday, January 14th, 3-5 pm

After reviewing results from the neighborhood survey that went out to the Rivendell community, the Social Committee found that many people were interested in sharing a potluck meal by the poolside, a favorite community space. We want to welcome back the folks who have been away for the summer, too. So, please bring your chairs, place settings (unbreakable plates, plastic cups or glasses, napkins and utensils), beverage of choice and a dish to share. As always, no glassware is allowed on the pool deck. Tables will be provided for the food setup, but we will not be providing coolers or devices for heating food.

To help us coordinate the food offerings, and to be sure we have enough tables, please reach out by January 7th to Lisa Boggess at lbogg@msn.com to let her know how many will be in your party, and what you will be bringing. The number of people that can be accommodated in the space is limited, so remember to sign up early!

Ladies' Luncheon Debuts

This new activity, organized by Mirinda Roy, begins in January. Once a month, on a Wednesday afternoon, a group of Rivendell ladies will gather in a local restaurant for lunch. On Wednesday, January 24th at 12:00 noon, we will gather at Deep Lagoon, 482 Blackburn Rd. in Osprey. If you would like to join the group, please reserve with Mirinda Roy by January 10th. She can be reached at miriroy@aol.com. Two of the future luncheons will be held at Le Petite Jardin Café for February and Burgundy Square Café for March, both of which are in Venice.

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Volunteers Needed

As we roll into 2024, consider volunteering on a committee of the Homeowners Association. There are many wide-ranging possibilities from reviewing plans as part of the ARC — the Architecture Review Committee to the Communications Committee where you can write, edit or promote. Discover new talents or put your professional acumen into play while making your community a better place to live. Think about and then learn more. Reach out by emailing Kristine@nickelcommunications.com.



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Editor's Note



The year ahead of us looks to be eventful. In addition to our national elections, we have a very local homeowners association board election scheduled for February. There are three out of five seats to fill. As this goes to press there are three candidates and you will have an opportunity to read about the three candidates who have already stepped up to the plate; however, there is always room for more. While people often think of being on the board of the HOA as a thankless job, it certainly has its upsides, too. It gives people an opportunity to use skills and knowledge they refined in their professional career or to build skills that might have lain dormant. The bottom line is that the board is an important responsibility. Its decisions help to shape the culture of the community. So, make sure that you vote and if you have any inclination about serving on the board, please make your intentions known soon.

Our social events are in full swing. Everyone is invited to participate in these events regardless of where they reside in Rivendell. Please see the listings below. Hope to see you around and about.

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Let's Get Social

Social Committee Events for January 2024

- Thursday, January 4, 1:00 pm. Bridge Group meets. For more information contact Barb Loe at bjloe@earthlink.net.
- Monday, January 8, 7:30 pm. Book Group I meets to discuss When We Were Young and Brave by Hazel Gaynor. Contact Adele Kellman at adele.kellman@gmail.com
- Sunday, January 14, 3:00 – 5:00 pm. Potluck Dinner on the Pool Deck. Contact Lisa Boggess at lbogg@msn.com for details and to sign up.
- Wednesday, January 17, 9:00 am. Kayaking at Manatee Park, 10901 Palm Beach Blvd., Ft Myers. Contact Jane Stevens at janie0441@gmail.com for details.
- Thursday, January 18, 1:00 pm. Bridge Group meets. For more information, contact Barb Loe at bjloe@earthlink.net.
- Wednesday, January 24, 12 pm. Ladies Luncheon Group at Deep Lagoon, 482 Blackburn Point Rd, Osprey. Contact Mirinda Roy by January 10th at miriroy@aol.com to reserve a place.
- Wednesday, January 24, 7 pm Book Group II meets to discuss The Tender Bar: A Memoir by J.R. Moehring. Contact Kristine Nickel for more information Kristine@nickelcommunications.com
- Saturday January 27th, 9:00 am. Kayaking at Longboat Key, Bayfront Park Recreation Center, 4052 Gulf of Mexico Dr. Contact Jane Stevens at janie0441@gmail.com for details.

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Kayaking is a Popular Event with Rivendellers



Our Sunday, December 3rd paddle at Turtle Beach was well attended event, with 14 paddlers enjoying a beautiful morning with little wind -- ideal paddling conditions! We have a good schedule of events for the coming year, starting with a new venue – Manatee Park, 10901 Palm Beach Blvd. in Ft. Myers. We will gather there on a Wednesday morning, January 17th at 9:00 am (leaving Rivendell by 8:00 am, as the drive is about an hour), with paddles in the water at 9:30 pm. Paddlers saw a manatee at the Turtle Beach put-in, and if the water stays below 68 degrees, we may be lucky enough to see one at Manatee Park, too. There are rentals available through Manatee Kayaking Company at (239) 913-9993. And, to replace a cancelled paddle in December, another January paddle has been scheduled at Bayfront Park Recreation Center, 4052 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key for Saturday, January 27th (with a rain date of Sunday, January 28th) at 9:00 am and paddles in the water at 9:00 pm. Rentals at Longboat Key are available from Happy Paddler.com.

On Wednesday, February 7th, the group will be paddling closer to home at the South end of Manasota Key, 900 Gulf Blvd., Englewood. There will be rentals available there as well. The group uses the TeamReach app (a free application) to announce the paddle events. For more information contact Jane Stevens at janie0441@gmail.com.



Rivendell Bridge Players

The Rivendell Bridge Group, led by Barb Loe, is looking for new members who are interested in joining them. To join, you don't need to be an expert player, but you should at least have played bridge, whether in college or later, and be available to play on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, beginning at 1:00 pm. If you would like to know more about the Bridge Group, contact Barb at bjloe@earthlink.net.



Rivendell Community Association, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2023

A Board of Directors meeting was called on November 15, 2023, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 275 N. Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, FL 34276 as well as virtually via zoom

Call to Order - Bruce Lorie called the meeting to order at 6:01

Proof of Notice - Notice of the Board of Directors meeting was delivered to each director and posted on the property according to the requirements of the association documents and Florida State statute 720 including a sign posted out in front of the community. In addition, all residents were mailed the agenda and proposed budget with the required 14-day notice

Determination of a Quorum - A quorum was established with board members, Bruce Lorie, Greg Volak, Cathy Daignault, Mary Angell and Kevin Boggess all present at the meeting.

Minutes - Greg made a motion to accept the October minutes. Kevin seconded the motion, all voted yes, and the motion was passed 5-0

Presidents Report – Bruce discussed the need for volunteers at Rivendell for the nomination committee.

Manager's Report - Fred Marks of Casey Management notified the board that he received notification from Cincinnati Indemnity that insurance for liability will be reduced on January 1, 2024, to 1 million dollars.

Treasurer's Report:

We received a copy of Rivendell Community Association's (RCA) September financial statement on October 20th, the date required by our contract with Casey. The statement shows the association with \$581,452 in assets (not counting capital assets). These assets consist of \$217,667 in operations and \$363,784 in reserves per the financial statement. Casey has chosen to correct the errors from the June, July, and August Financial Statements by an adjusting entry on the September Statement transferring \$49,523.16 from the Operating Assets to the Reserve Assets. They do not plan to revise the prior months statements.

Accounts Receivable: Our accounts receivable account from owner balances as of 9/30/23 was reported to be \$17,715.61. Two owner account balances are still questionable dating back to RealManage accounting reports from May.

Operations: Through the end of September per Casey our total operating income is over budget by \$8,578. Total expenses for the year are \$19,847 under budget.

Reserves: There were no disbursements from our reserve accounts this past month per this statement. Due to the fact that Casey relied on the May Financial Statement from RealManage and then used their own account #s rather than the ones from our prior statements the Reserve Schedule is very difficult to make any sense of. I do not believe that the ending balances as shown on this statement are accurate for several Reserve account. Several reserve disbursements from prior months were misclassified as operating expenses and have been corrected. Since the date of this financial statement we have been in contact with Casey Management and I believe that the balances as shown on our revised budget for 2023 are correct.

Secretary Report – Mary discussed the need for a half-year audit because there have been 3 management companies involved for the first half of 2023. Cathy spoke to Miller & Co about this, and the cost is usually \$4500 but they agreed to lower the cost to \$3000.

Cathy made a motion for a half-year audit through Miller & Co in the amount of \$3000. The motion passed 5-0

Committee Reports

1. **ARC-** Bruce reported that they received 16 ARC requests, and all were approved.

2. **Maintenance Committee** – Greg reported that there is a new cover on the pool. Greg also reported that he is waiting for estimates for upcoming maintenance work on the shrubs & grass at various areas in Rivendell. Greg reported that he has 4 estimates to eliminate the bats in the gazebo area. It is possible that they may have to replace the old gazebo with a new one.

(Continued on Pg. 13)

(Rivendell Community Association continued)

Greg made a motion to approve the Treescape bid of \$19,433 for new mulch. After some discussion on the color of the mulch the motion passed 5-0.

Bruce made a motion to approve \$720 for power cleaning at the pool. All approved.

Bruce made a motion to approve \$9865 for repainting the pool. The motion passed unanimously.

With the pond maintenance contract up for renewal, Greg made a motion to approve the Beautiful Ponds contract of \$49,000. All approved.

3. Social Committee – Maria Iliof discussed the results of the social committee's survey including where to have future events. There was a lengthy discussion about having alcohol at these events and the possible liability risks faced by the association if the event was held at the Rivendell pool. The board decided that they would contact the county, their attorney, and their insurance company for clarification of the rules and law.

Old Business

1. 2024 Budget - Cathy reported that the committee met to discuss the 2024 budget, The budget was mailed to all residents and then opened the floor for questions. There were questions on the increased cost of mulch, tree trimming & removal and the increases in electric and irrigation costs.

Greg made a motion to accept the 2024 proposed budget, Cathy seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

New Business - There will not be a board meeting in December.

Next meeting date – The next board meeting will be on January 17, 2024.

Adjournment - With no further business Bruce made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41. Cathy seconded. Motion passes 5-0

Respectfully Submitted By Fred Marks
Casey Management

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