

COLONIAL HILLS Spring/Summer Newsletter

June 26, 2019

HOA Regulations

The Board, under the guidance of Attorney Brian Bowles, has undertaken the task of updating the regulations specific to our Association. These regulations are outdated as per the Florida State HOA Statute. Last January each homeowner received a mailing which consisted of three pages, two set out three revised regulations and the cover sheet contained a brief explanation of the proposed changes. To date, the response has been less than 30%.

A workshop was held on February 6 with Mr. Bowles who provided further explanation of the proposed revised regulations. Homeowners present had the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the impact of the regulations on the community. Mr. Bowles explained that the current regulation that requires 75% of the homeowner to vote "yes" to affect a change is not in keeping with the State standard of 30% (for HOAs). Currently, If a homeowner chooses not to vote, that counts as a no. The new regulation would change that to be a non-vote and would have no impact. It should be noted that the current 75% votes needed is a higher standard than that of the United States Senate. Everyone in our community would still have an opportunity to vote.

Another proposal is to limit the number of rentals to ten. The reason is twofold. Banks that provide mortgage services are setting their own standards for writing new mortgages that have too many rentals in a community. The percentage of rentals varies and is not regulated. The bank can deny a mortgage based on an arbitrary number of rentals in a community. In short, if we have "too many" rentals, a mortgage may be difficult to obtain for new home buyers. Current homeowners would have difficulty in selling their house.

A third proposal would protect against AirBnB and Vrbo purchasing houses in our community and turning them into vacation houses for rent. These organizations have been attempting to get legislation passed in Florida to allow them to purchase homes in

family oriented communities. This would bring a steady stream of strangers (with no background checks) into our community. Not an ideal situation for our homeowners!

Board members will be canvassing the community in the coming weeks to discuss voting on these regulations and to answer relevant questions . If you have not already voted, please consider doing so by downloading and printing the amendments at the end of this newsletter. Please sign and mail them to **Colonial Hills HOA, PO Box 3644, Riverview, Florida 33568 by July 30th**. Thanks to those who have already voted!

Transportation Issues

Due to safety concerns regarding the public school busses picking up and dropping off both elementary and middle school students on Rhodine Road (north side) and on Colonial Estates (near the pond), an effort is underway to change the stops. The Hillsborough School Transportation Office has been contacted regarding these stops. A follow-up letter will be sent to request considering changing the stops. Middle school students should not have to cross Rhodine Road to board the bus in the morning, nor when they disembark in the afternoon. Especially since the bus makes a turn around further west on Rhodine Road and travels east after all stops are made passing the entrance to our community. The elementary bus (Dawson) stop is supposed to be next to the gazebo not where Colonial Estates splits east and west.

Family members are reminded that it is illegal to park within 30 feet of a stop sign when dropping off/picking up children. In the morning, especially when it is still dark, parking too close to the entrance of the community creates a traffic hazard for those trying to enter or exit the community.

PET ALERT!

In the past few months, we have experienced some wandering pets. As many pets are kept behind fences, neighbors don't always recognize your pet to return him/her. **PLEASE** get your pet microchipped to avoid losing your pet forever! Any veterinarian, PetCo, PetSmart, Humane Society, to name a few resources, will implant the microchip and help with registering your pet

in a database for safety. It doesn't hurt your pet and will help you to recover your pet if lost. Fees range from \$30. to \$70. depending on the breed. Further, check out the Humane Society's website for inexpensive services. They will spay or neuter Pitbulls or other Bully Breeds for \$10.00 if you meet certain qualifications. Link follows.

<https://humanesocietytampa.org/spaying-neutering/> Phone: 813-870-3304.

The Humane Society has been given a grant to offer low cost medications for pets. Go to their website (above) to learn more about this program.

Also, as a friendly neighbor tip, Hillsborough County Law states that pets cannot be left outside barking or howling for more than 20 minutes nonstop. Such behavior creates a noise nuisance, so please monitor your pets. The link below explains the ordinance fully.

<https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/animals-and-pets/pet-related-ordinances-and-citations/nuisance-animal-noise-ordinance/animal-noise-ordinance-faq>

New Lawn Service

The Board has entered into a one year contract with Lawn Masters to service the common areas. Three bids were reviewed and Lawn Masters was chosen based on monthly price and the services offered. Improvements will be ongoing to make the entrance more attractive and to clean out Detention Pond overgrowth which is a haven for all kinds of wildlife. The Retention Pond will also receive some weeding to unblock the inlet pipe. The Board would like to thank James Gearhart for his years of lawn service to the community.

YARD SALE

The community yard sale was held on Saturday, April 27. A dumpster was rented at the request of homeowners and was placed on Lynnetree on Friday. When it was picked up on Monday morning, it was overloaded as some people did not heed the overfill line painted on the dumpster by the company. There was some contention when people were asked not to overfill it. The Board had to pay an extra fee due to the dumpster containing too much weight. The HOA will not be ordering a dumpster any time in the near future. Thanks to Manny Martin and James Gearhart who helped to manage the placement of items in the dumpster. As only a few people held yard sales, the one normally held in October may not be scheduled.

Updating the Community Web Site

There is interest in updating the community web site. Suggestions are welcomed by the Board. Please submit your suggestions to our post office box by the 30th of July.

Some suggestions are to create a list of students who need to earn community service hours. Projects for service hours would be outside work only, mowing grass for the ill or elderly; raking leaves; weeding; helping to repair fences; etc. Forms to be signed would be signed by any Board member at the homeowners recommendation.

Other suggestions include a section listing community members who have their own businesses and are willing to do jobs in our community. Fees would be decided by the contracting parties.

Perhaps a photo gallery of pets, their owners information, etc. might be helpful to avoid calling the county to come pick up strays.

A "For Sale" page where homeowners can list useful items they wish to sell (with photo) is under consideration. The process for posting would have to be worked out.

Fourth of July Celebrations

Homeowners are reminded that fireworks are illegal unless you have a special license. More information can be found at the following link.

<https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/newsroom/2018/06/27/fireworks-celebration-safety-tips>

The following link lists what is approved by the State Fire Marshall.

<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/sfm/BFP/2018-2019SparklerList.pdf>

If a store sells you fireworks that explode or leave the ground and have you sign a paper that the fireworks are going to be used for legal purposes, that only protects the store, not you. You could be charged with a misdemeanor and face a \$1,000. fine and up to a year in jail. Be safe, attend a fireworks event that is supervised by professionals.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), fireworks typically account for two out of five of all reported U.S. fires every Independence Day. Each year, fireworks start an average 18,500 fires, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires, and 16,900 outdoor and

other fires. Additionally, yearly Independence Day fireworks also account for 40 civilian injuries and \$43 million in direct property damage.

The link below contains a monthly calendar of fun activities for the family. Check it for 4th of July events towards the end of June. <https://fun4tampakids.com/calendar>

Community Tips

Trash cans are to be placed at the curb, not in the street, per Hillsborough County (See link below for more information.) If the trash truck does not replace your trash can at the curb, you may call: **Waste Connections, Inc., 813-248-3802** to complain. If the trash truck driver leaves trash strewn around your street, you may also call to let the company know. They will send someone to clean it up, especially broken glass from a blue can. If your trash can is damaged by the collector, you may request a replacement from them as well. <https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/newsroom/2016/06/27/5-steps-for-using-your-curbside-roll-carts>

Grass clippings should not be blown into the street to go into the pipes. The pipes empty in the ponds and the clippings (with grass and weed seeds) cause overgrowth in the ponds and the build up eventually will block the pipes.

Homeowners whose property includes a drainage ditch have the responsibility to keep the grass cut in the ditch and to keep the ditch clear of any objects (toys, junk, etc.) When there is heavy rain, objects in the ditches are carried away and cause blockage at the drainage grates by the ponds. Also, homeowners who have a fence adjacent to a pond should not throw yard waste (weeds, branches, grass clippings, etc.) over the fence onto the berm around the pond. This creates a problem for the lawn service that cuts the grass around the ponds. It can also create a habitat for unwanted critters!

Storm season is here! The rain and wind started a bit earlier than usual this year. To ensure the safety of homeowners and to prevent property damage, please remove lightweight objects from your property when they are not in use. Remember the May 30, 2014 tornado? Please make sure fences are in good repair and lawn furniture is safely placed. Keep our neighborhood safe!

Further, trees with dead branches should be culled for the health of the trees and to prevent deadfall that can become a hazard during a storm. Also, trees that have low hanging branches over the sidewalks should be trimmed. These branches are hazardous to walkers, delivery people, and kids on bikes. Leaves that accumulate on sidewalks need to be removed as soon as possible. Yard refuse pickup day is Monday.

As a reminder, there should not be overnight street parking per the HOA's regulations. It may create access issues for emergency response vehicles. Please park in your driveway.

NOTE: Homeowners who have a suggestion for the Board, or an issue for the Board to address, should do so in writing and send it to the above noted P.O. Box.

Attachments for the proposed regulations are on the next two pages.

**Submitted by: Colonial Hills Association HOA Board - Sue Mays, Vice President,
Donna Rowe, Treasurer, Sheena Wooley, Secretary**

