

# How the Habitat (Bella Terra) Community Development District (CDD) Works

By Mark Novitski, Chairman, Habitat CDD

Typical of any government agency, the Habitat CDD is run by an elected board with staggered 4 year terms. Lee County Supervisor of Elections verifies those full time Estero residents running for a seat (the CDD has 5 seats). If the individual running for a specific seat is unopposed, they are elected/seated. If 2 or more candidates are running for a seat, they appear on the November ballot. The individual with the most votes is elected. Every 2 years, the board elects a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The elected board must determine how the District will be managed – by employees of District, or contract out management of the District. The developer – who at that time controlled the 5 seats on the board - contracted with a CDD Management Company for the management of the District. The resident elected Board hired a new management company on 01 Oct 2016 that was more in sync with the resident Board requirements for management.

Premiere District Management provides: District Manager; Field Manager; maintenance worker; support staff (official documentation); financials; and contract support. These are not full time positions. The District Manager hires – at the direction of the Board – Legal counsel, Engineering support, and an independent auditor.

For the day to day operations and maintenance of the District, the management team solicits proposals from vendors for the tasks required. Currently we have annual maintenance contracts for: 6 Irrigation pump stations; 2 Irrigation wells; 25 miles of irrigation main lines; Clock tower; Clock tower fountains; Lakes (22) weed control (~= 400 acres); Lake aeration; and 6 Retention area mowing.

The Field Manager and the Resident Board monitor the effectiveness of these contracts and ensure they are performing the contracted functions. Most of our contracts have “30 day and out” clauses where if they are not performing we can terminate the contract. The Board reviews the contracts annually before we renew.

The Developer controlled board signed an agreement with Florida Power and Light (FP&L) for the 111 street lights. The agreement is up for renewal in 2018 (every 5 years). This agreement is basically a contract and when a light is out or down, we report the information to FP&L and they place the request in their queue to fix. We are working with FP&L to change out some of the lights to LED and place shields on others.

A point of clarification – **the Habitat CDD does not own or maintain the 6 sanitary sewer pumping stations or sewer lines.** They are owned and maintained by Lee

County Utilities. Their website is <https://www.leegov.com/utilities> Their e-mail is [utilities@leegov.com](mailto:utilities@leegov.com), and phone 239 533-8845.

All other maintenance, repair, or improvements are identified, prioritized, and voted by the Board to undertake. Once approved by the Board, the management company solicits proposals from various vendors/contractors. The bids are evaluated, and ranked before submittal at a monthly board meeting. The Board then votes to select the vendor/contractor.

As required by any government agency, the Habitat CDD has emergency operations plans and vendors/contractors to perform required functions in the case of emergencies. Each year these plans are evaluated and updated as necessary.

To see the Board in action, you can attend the Habitat CDD Monthly meetings, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of Each month, 1600 (4pm), Bella Terra Clubhouse. For more info visit our website: [www.habitatcdd.com](http://www.habitatcdd.com).