



The Royal Saxon

Royal Saxon Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2016

Board News

In an effort to make the building more user friendly, the Board agreed to extend the **Social Room hours** to coincide with the **Fitness Room hours**. They are both open **24 hours a day**. They also adjusted the **pool hours** to be from **Dawn to 9:30 pm**. If these changes turn out to be a problem for the community, the Board will re-evaluate the situation and make adjustments as necessary.

The **2017 Budget** was approved by the Board and the question of reserves will be put to a vote of the residents. The budget information and vote on Reserves is included in this mailing. The Budget meeting is scheduled for December 15th, 2016.

Text regarding **glass and food at the pool** was simplified and now reads:

NO glass or food on pool deck. Food may be consumed at the high top tables on the wood decking or by the grill at the social room.

A **floating dock will be installed** in boat slip #8 for all residents to use. A storage rack will be installed on the ground (placement to be determined) and residents can rent a space on the rack for their personal kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. A list has been started of those interested in storing a light weight craft on the rack. If you would like to be put on the list, please contact the office or front desk.

The **Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **10 am on Thursday January 19th**. All unit owners who are considering running for the Board must have their Notice of **Intent to Run** into the Association office **before December 12th, 2016**. Please consider serving your community and help your neighbors make the Royal Saxon an even better place to live.

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Management News

We have begun dressing up the building for the winter season. Flowers are planted (with more coming), the marble floors are being repaired and polished, poinsettias are being delivered, the lights will be put out after Thanksgiving, and the tree is scheduled to be decorated on **December 8th at 6pm**.

Please join the ladies in decorating the tree. Decorating the tree is not a religious ceremony but a wonderful time for the community to **come together and celebrate joy and beauty of the season**.

The November staff meeting included **CPR and AED training**. With the new **AED device located in the entrance to the fitness room**, we thought it would be helpful for all residents to have the same opportunity so we are working to schedule at least one day and time with the Fire Dept. to come back out and offer the same training to any residents interested. The proposed dates will be in January when most residents are back in Palm Beach. Future notice will be posted.

EVENTS to be scheduled this season.

January—Welcome back with possible meet the candidates cocktail party

February—Super Bowl LI Party

March—St. Patrick's Day

April—David Pearl Concert poolside

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BOARD MTG's

Meetings of the Board of Directors are scheduled for the **third Thursday** of each month between October and April. Upcoming dates are:

December 15

January 19

February 16

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“Gratitude
is not
only the
greatest of
virtues,
but the
parent of
all the
others.”

— Cicero

There was a groundswell of opposition to a conversion to underground utilities in a Town-wide project that occurred at the south fire station in the Town of Palm Beach on Wednesday, November 2nd.

Town officials were swamped with frustrated and angry property owners who have become educated and enlightened, (I was told from articles in *the Condo News*), about the consequences of the Town-wide undergrounding project. These residents have learned the true facts about all the disadvantages and consequences of converting to underground utilities on a flood prone barrier island.

In a September, 2014, *PB Post* article, listed among the **"Potential Disadvantages" for "underground electric systems" are: environmental damage including soil erosion, habitat disruption; longer duration outages and more customers impacted by outage; susceptible to flooding; storm surges and damage during post-storm cleanup; life expectancy is 30 years vs 50 years for overhead systems."**

Steve Weigert, a Palm Beach property owner and resident, attended this forum and said that, "... of the 40 attendees, 2/3rds were property owners with objections to funding an extensive, costly and probably ill-advised \$152.4M project to bury Palm Beach's utilities." Mr. Weigert said, "The Town uses what they cite as 'FPL's own data' to establish their claim that undergrounding performs better than overhead facilities," but he points out that, "... what is left out of that assertion, is that the data referenced by the Town's surrogates, offers no statistically significant data for underground conversions in flood-prone areas." He said that the supposed data the Town is referencing is "system-wide" which includes new developments that are not in flood areas, plus overhead poles that have not all been upgraded yet to hardened pole smart technology.

Mr. Weigert said he has done extensive research on the subject and that "the majority of FPL's underground utilities are within inland new housing developments. FPL admits that there isn't much experience in conversion of older communities on flood prone areas, especially coastal barrier islands. FPL openly warns of the potential problems with undergrounding in flood-prone areas." He concluded, "The data the Town is supplying to the residents is misleading, and often inaccurate."

Susan Watts, a Palm Beach property owner who resides in midtown, also attended. Mrs. Watts said, "... when property owners expressed their concerns to the Town Manager, **they were told that property owners NEVER HAD ANY SAY in the decision made by the Town to convert to underground utilities. They were told that the Town Council made that decision when they voted 5 to 0 to convert to underground utilities. Therefore, Town property owners never had a say in it in the first place.**" Mrs. Watts emphasized, "... the Town had a 'bad process' in this entire endeavor to convert to underground."

Mrs. Watts described the majority of attendees were overwhelmingly against a town-wide undergrounding conversion project and the Town Manager's revelation appeared to upset the crowd. She described a great deal of "push back" from the property owners at the forum. The residents appeared emboldened by their opposition and expressed a variety of issues that they felt the Town had imposed on them without giving them a say. Mrs. Watts said that regardless of what the Town Officials and their surrogates said to justify the Town's actions, the audience had objections and were not dissuaded nor convinced by the Town's justifications.

Susan Watts said, "... property owners expressed their objections that a conversion project to underground utilities was neither safe nor reliable on their flood prone barrier island." They opposed the process taken, the financing methodology with its flaws and the utilization of a special assessment that they felt has no merit. There were objections that property owners were never informed by the Town of the disadvantages of undergrounding on a flood prone barrier island. They had concerns about likely cost overruns. The surge of opposition that was voiced was against the Town's repeated refusal to allow straw ballots for property owners who are not PB voters, but are impacted and will pay the annual special assessments. Property owners said that, due to the lack of communication by the Town, registered Independents were unaware that they could vote on the Town's referendum during a Primary Election.

Mrs. Watts said the Town had a "bad process" in this entire endeavor to convert to underground utilities. Mrs. Watts said that beside the unreliable and unsafe power that we will have Town-wide with underground utility conversion, "... the efficacy of using fiber optics, means the Town is using an old technology which will assuredly become obsolete with the cutting edge technology of wireless systems."

Linda Essig, a realtor and property owner in the Town, was present at the forum.

Mrs. Essig said that as a result of all the disadvantages to undergrounding on a flood prone barrier island, plus the 30 year annual special assessment, which are not tax deductible, **"As a realtor, full disclosure, which is a legal responsibility, will in many cases definitely make it MORE DIFFICULT FOR PROPERTIES TO MAINTAIN THEIR VALUES!"**

Let us not forget that, including 10 years of construction or more, each Palm Beach property owner/**taxpayer will be paying a not tax deductible, special assessment annually for 30 years!** However, **the life expectancy of the outdated underground system is only 30 years**, as verified by the Quanta Technology Report for Florida Electric Utilities!

Beyond all other reasons, converting to underground utilities is clearly, neither cost effective nor a safe and reliable endeavor on the flood prone barrier island in the Town of Palm Beach.