

# COLONIAL HILLS 2020 NEWSLETTER

December 5, 2020

The HOA Board hopes that all community members are well at this writing and continue to stay safe. This has been an unusual year for all of us. A special thanks to our neighbors who are “Essential Workers” and have contributed to keeping us and our families safe this past year. Hopefully, 2021 will bring some much needed relief.

## --Projects completed this year:

- All three ponds were bush hogged and cleared of overgrowth. This was necessary in order to pass Phases 2, 3 & 4 in accordance with Southwest Water Management District requirements. The final inspections were approved for all Phases and thus, no fines were assessed. (Note 1 to Homeowners whose property includes a drainage ditch. The ditch must be kept free of debris, equipment, structures, etc. Also, the grass must be cut regularly so as not to impede drainage. Note 2. As the ditch is part of a homeowner's property, it is private property and should not be used as a byway for motorcycles, golf carts, and such by others. Please respect your neighbors' property.)
- A bid for a new lawn care company was placed on our web site last Spring. Two bids were submitted and the Board selected Falcon Hauling Lawn Care.
- The Community Notice Box was repaired and the structure was repainted. The cost was minimal as the labor was donated.
- The stucco caps on the columns at the entrance were repaired and painted. Most were damaged and needed caulking prior to painting. Cost was minimal as the labor was donated.
- Both roundabouts were re-landscaped, edged with large rocks (donated by the Crays on Lynnetree), and filled in with landscape stones. A solar lamp post was added to the one on the main part of Colonial Estates Lane. The materials' cost will be noted in the end of year budget report. Labor was donated. (Homeowners who use a lawn service that tows an equipment van are asked to remind their service workers to be cautious when going around the large roundabout on the main part of Colonial Estates. Damage to the large rocks has occurred several times by these vans. They run over the curbing and into the roundabout. Nearby homeowners have reported seeing this happen.)
- The planting beds at the entrance were given attention. Some of the old, non-productive or dead plants were removed and new plantings added.
- The 2019 Fall Festival held in the Lynnetree Court was a great success. The children enjoyed crafts; a Bounce House; a magician who performed tricks and created balloon hats and “sculptures”; food; and received a treat bag to go. Thanks to the Teens who helped set up and monitor various activities. Each received a \$20.00 Amazon Gift Card for their service. We are fortunate to have such responsible young adults who are interested in participating in this community favorite. A special “Thank You” to Daniella

Crays for planning the Festival, arranging for the various activities and for ordering items for the treat bags. Thanks also to the Rowes who cooked hot dogs and distributed water and to Gina Thompson who made the sno-cones. Finally, Thank You to those who helped to clean up the area. We appreciate the understanding of the Lynnetree Court residents for the use of the street and walks for the Festival.

- Due to the Covid 19 and adhering to the advice of the CDC, the Board decided to cancel the Fall Festival 2020. In order to give the children something fun and safe, a Trick or Treat Truck meandered through the neighborhood on Halloween delivering treat bags to children 1-13. The treat bags were filled to be age appropriate. A Board member canvassed the neighborhood earlier that week “counting heads” of kids in the 1-13 age range. Families could also sign up on the Community web-site to receive a bag for each child. The expenditure was less than half of that spent on the 2019 Fall Festival.
- The Board submitted a grant request to Hillsborough County Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program for financial assistance to repair/replace certain components of the sprinkler system at the front of the Community to restore it to working order. An update will be noted in future communications when a decision is rendered.
- After several communications with the company that purchased the burned house on Colonial Estates Lane that resulted in no action to complete the renovation in a timely manner, the Board filed a complaint with the Code Violation Office of Hillsborough County citing numerous issues. The Company was cited and directed to correct/complete the issues in the complaint. They then responded in a timely manner and cleaned up the site and re-started repairs. (Update: The house has a new owner in occupancy.)

Regarding reporting Code Violations, there have been a number of complaints filed with the Code Violation Office that could have been addressed neighbor to neighbor. An example is an “Anonymous” complaint filed last Spring regarding cars with no current license plate on four homeowners’ property. None of the vehicles were derelict in appearance per the Code Officer’s opinion. Two of the vehicles were awaiting pick-up as they were being donated to people in need. A simple conversation would have revealed this good deed. Another car was a project where a father was teaching his son how to rebuild/repair an engine so the car would be ready when the teen was ready to get his license. A valuable life lesson! The Code Officer was very kind in responding to these instances and gave the homeowners some advice. These type of complaints do not foster good will in our community and take up valuable time on the part of the Code Officer. In both of the above noted instances, the neighbors on the court were unconcerned about these vehicles. The complaints were not filed by residents of the court in question.

Further, be advised that the Board is active in having face to face conversations with homeowners, when warranted, to correct something. To date, we have had positive reactions and cooperation in these instances and the Board is appreciative.

## --UPDATES:

- The Board is continuing to request removal of the larger of the two alligators in the front Retention Pond. To date, three permits have been issued. Each one is good for 45 days. So far, Alligator 3 and Alligator Trapper 0. Please note, neither alligator should be fed by humans as this lessens their fear of humans. The smaller alligator (approx. 3 ½ feet long) stays in the south part of the pond. A homeowner reported that her eight year old grandson was at the water's edge and the alligator swung his tail out of the water very close to the boy. The gator is clearly territorial.
- This neighborhood seems to be a favorite place for stray, and sometimes, dumped dogs. People have asked about the little white dog that was around the front of the community last Summer. Regrettably, the dog became food aggressive (probably due to being overfed by residents) and when the County Animal Control Officers came to take the dog away, the white dog attacked the other dog seen with her. The Officers couldn't separate them and the white dog was shot and killed. The dog was clearly malnourished and leaving food on the sidewalk and feeding it "people food" complicated matters. We now have another dog "living" around the Retention Pond. Please do not feed him. Animal Control will handle capturing him. He runs away when anyone approaches, so beware.
- **Good News!** The new Fire Station at 301 and Rhodine Road is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2021. The Fire Station will be 4.8 miles from this community which removes us from Protection Class 10 (the worst) for Homeowner's Insurance Fire Rates. This should result in a cost saving for your insurance. Check with your provider for specific information.
- Rhodine Road is finally scheduled for resurfacing from Greenland Drive. to Balm Boyette Road according to CIP#69631186 . The link is added below for further information.  
[https://maps.hillsboroughcounty.org/cip\\_documents/factsheets/\\_69631186.pdf](https://maps.hillsboroughcounty.org/cip_documents/factsheets/_69631186.pdf)

## --FUTURE PROJECTS:

- The gazebo at the entrance is due for repainting and a few repairs. The Board hopes to address this in 2021.
- The Live Oaks along the front fence need to be trimmed and culled. The two Laurel Oaks at the entrance are dying and will be removed. They will be replaced with healthy trees (genus undetermined at this time). The other two Laurel Oaks near the Retention pond will also be trimmed and culled. Additionally, the Crepe Myrtles along the front fence will be trimmed or cut, as needed.
- The Board did not schedule a Community Clean Up Day this year for the Common Areas due to Covid 19. We hope to be able to have one in the Spring 2021 as well as a Community Yard Sale.
- The Board has discussed adding new sections to the Community web-site. One is a page where our pets' (licensed dogs and cats) pictures and pertinent information can be shown. The purpose is to avoid those pets who escape their property and are found wandering from being picked up by Animal Control. Information with a pet's picture would include a phone number or email so the owner could be contacted to retrieve their pet.

Please remember that dogs and cats should not be out free to roam the community at any time of the day or night. Some neighbors have complained about scratches on their vehicle(s) from cats (seen on security cameras). Cats also dig into flower beds and pots to do their “business”. Dogs should be on leash when not on the owner’s property. Hillsborough County Animal Ordinances require dogs to be on a leash no longer than 6 feet when the dog is off the owner’s property. Refer to the Hillsborough County Animal Ordinances to protect your pets and to avoid possible fines.

Hillsborough County Ordinances also prohibit keeping any farm animals in residential neighborhoods. The Ordinance is incorporated in our Regulations and By-Laws.

Another web-site addition under consideration is one where community members may advertise their businesses. A person’s business card would be added to this section for the community’s information.

- In November, a notice was sent to all homeowners regarding the election of Board Members. The notice requested that any homeowner in good standing who wished that their name be included on the Election of Board Members ballot should return the notice with their name in a timely manner. As no resident returned the notice, a ballot was not sent for voting. In accordance with the HOA’s Regulations/By-Laws, the current Board will remain for 2021.

## --REMINDERS:

- Per Hillsborough County Ordinances, trash cans are to be placed above the curb, not in the street. Also, when placing more than one can, they must be at least 3 feet apart to facilitate ease of the lifting arm to pick up the can, dump it and then replace it. Overfilling the can with the lid not seated properly causes spillage. The driver is not permitted to leave the truck to pick up the remaining trash. It then blows into the street or onto your neighbors’ property who then has to pick it up. If, however, the driver drops a lot of glass containers causing a hazard or other trash, you can call **Waste Connections, Inc. at 813-248-3802** to report the incident. The company will send someone to remove the debris.
- As we enter the dry season, please take the opportunity to repair fences that need attention. They are not only unsightly, but can be dangerous if severe weather occurs.
- Several mailboxes are missing numbers. The U.S. Postal Service requires that each dwelling be identified by a number for mail service purposes. Please correct if this applies to your mailbox/post .
- When having repairs or construction work done on your home, often the company will ask the homeowner to allow a “commercial” sign to be placed on the property. The community’s Regulations/By Laws prohibit this practice. The only signage allowed involves Home for Sale or Rent signs. Most contractors are aware that placing their sign

on your property is not allowed by HOA's, but ask to do so anyway. Please tell them no. The sign on their work truck will advertise their business (and it will drive away at day's end.)

- The Board has been made aware of two traffic issues within our community. Speeding, more than 25mph, is still happening on the main section of Colonial Estates Lane. Also, STOP signs are being ignored. Please consider the safety of all residents and visitors by obeying these traffic signs/laws. If necessary, the Sheriff's Office will be contacted and asked to monitor our streets closely at certain times. SAFETY FIRST!

Further, as home deliveries increase at this time of year, please be aware of how those drivers are moving around the community. Last year, it became necessary to call the Traffic Corporal at the Ruskin Station (813-247-0455) regarding the drivers' habits. She acknowledged the problem and agreed to call Amazon to bring the matter to their attention. Other neighborhoods had made the same complaint as well. Feel free to report any such instances to Amazon or the Traffic Corporal.

Additionally, with delivery theft on the rise by "Porch Pirates", please be on the look-out for any suspicious activity around the neighborhood. You may wish to arrange for alternative delivery options to protect your packages. Amazon will let you pick your delivery day for some products so you can be home to receive your order. Other delivery options are available on Amazon's web site.

- Finally, as a result of a thief stealing money and personal belongings from several vehicles last July, the Board cautions everyone about making sure to lock your vehicle, even during the daytime when you are home. Also, be sure to close your garage door when leaving. If you notice any suspicious activity, notify the Sheriff's Departments.

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#### **"Prospective Enforcement – Signs/Flags & Generally:**

The Board of Directors for the Colonial Hills Homeowners Association, Inc. ("Association") wanted to also take time to remind owners and occupants to adhere to all rules, regulations, and covenants including but not limited to those listed in our Declaration, which was recorded under OR BK 0987 PG 0906 in Hillsborough County September 28, 1999 as amended from time to time. Specifically, the Board wants to remind owners they should not be making exterior additions or alterations to property without either ensuring it complies with Association design standards and/or going through the application process with the Association as outlined under Article VII of the Declaration, and this includes flags or other alterations. The Association will honor the Florida Statutory provisions regarding flags as specified under 720.304 of the statutes, regarding the American flag and other specified flags, but all owners should first submit applications to the Association before installing any flags. Signs are also barred under Section 11 of Article III of the Declaration, for the exception of specific "for sale" sales and similar signs as specified under this applicable section of the Declaration.

We hope all owners will continue to follow the rules and covenants of the Association. The above provisions and all provisions will continue to be enforced going forward. Please also note that these

statements are only summary in nature. Parties should refer to the governing documents in their entirety for the full and exact restrictive language. All of the governing documents which detail the Association's restrictions can be reviewed by requesting them through the Association's Board of Directors. Feel free to request a free copy as needed."

Thank you,  
Brian Bowles, Esq.  
Attorney

Please note that the HOA's Regulations/By Laws are on the community web site for your review.

**The Colonial Hills HOA Board**

Sheena Wooley, President

Sue Mays, Vice President

Donna Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer

HAPPY NEW YEAR !