



Fall 2004



Vol. 2 Issue 3

D E E R W O O D COMMUNITY NEWS

President's Message

Tom McConnell, President

As we all know, this has been a year of the hurricanes. The north Florida area has been quite fortunate that none of them so far have been direct hits on the First Coast. We have, however, had significant impact from heavy winds and rain. Hurricane Frances and Jeanne were particularly damaging and at this writing, Deerwood is still in the process of removing debris. We understand that over 30 trees were lost on the golf course and about double that number in the rest of the community. Fortunately fallen trees damaged only a few homes.

Our sympathies go to those who did suffer damage and we hope that recovery is swift. It might be a good idea for all to assess the condition of remaining large trees that are close to homes, and, if appropriate, consider requesting removal approval from the Architectural Review Committee.

On another issue, one of the DIA Board's primary concerns is the frequency of speeding through our neighborhoods and the failure of both residents and their guests to adhere to stop signs and no-passing double lines on primary streets. Recently I was passed by a car going over 50 mph on Hollyridge Road. All know that we have walkers and joggers as well as children and adults riding bicycles on many of our streets. They deserve to feel safe while doing so. It is the responsibility of all of us to obey the speed limits and other traffic regulations. I appeal to each of you to take the lead out of your feet when driving through Deerwood. Speed limits are 30 mph. **Slow down.** A good slogan might be "think first and save sorrow". Any ideas as to how to do more to address this problem would be most welcome.

Those of you who are also members of the Club know that the new golf course opened over the Labor Day weekend. Virtually everyone who has played the course has raved about its beauty and track quality. Unfortunately, several animals with their owners on leash have also been observed on the course. The golf course is off limits for dog walking at ALL TIMES. Please don't walk your animals on the course, and wherever you do walk them, recognize that it is your responsibility to pick up after them. We don't spend as much as we do in maintaining the beauty of our Deerwood common grounds to provide a pet depository for a few residents.

Finally, I hope everyone has supported the rebuilding of our playground – either by volunteering to help build it or by making donations to help with the funding. It isn't only the residents with children that benefit from the new playground – we all benefit by enhancing our community's value and commensurately the value of our individual homes.

Sincerely,
Tom McConnell
President, DIA



Grounds Committee

Les Bealing, Chairperson

The 2004 work on our drainage infrastructure has begun. There are a total of eight projects to be completed; four of which been awarded to DeMay Inc. It is our intension to see that these four projects are completed by December 31, 2004, leaving the remaining four projects to be completed in the near future. The first project, 415 feet of pipe connecting the outfall from Lake Gaffey with the south end of Pine Lake, under Pine Lake Road has already begun. This pipe carries the overflow from Lake Gaffey preventing the lots around the lake from flooding in a heavy downpour. The three remaining projects for this year are as follows:

1. Approximately 131 feet of pipe from the outflow of Lake Leisure on golf hole #1 to a connector on Leisure Lane is to be replaced. Failure of this pipe could cause flooding in Villas One.
2. Approximately 200 feet of pipe crossing under Hunters Grove road near the intersection with Little Fox Lane,

draining into Lake Willowtree. Failure of this pipe could result in flooding of those lots located near this intersection on both Little Fox Lane and Hunters Grove Road.

3. Approximately 148 feet of pipe from a catch basin located next to the island at the intersection of Crosswicks Road and Hunters Grove Road crossing under Crosswicks Road and draining into Lake Soady. A new catch basin may also be added on Crosswicks Road. Failure of this pipe could result in flooding along the west end of Crosswicks Road.

Florida has endured four hurricanes so far this year. Fortunately for Deerwood the paths of both hurricane Charley and Frances were far enough to the south that we were spared their full fury. Nevertheless, we did endure significant wind and rain. The wind was the bad news causing four of our houses to incur damage when nearby trees were blown over onto their roofs and tree debris littered our yards and roads. The rain was conceivably a blessing allowing our lakes to fill to normal for the first time in several years without sustaining any flooding

Public Relations Committee

Katie Kight, Chairperson

We have lots of great activities happening around Deerwood. As you receive this newsletter, our community build playground project is in full swing. If you haven't already signed up to help, please feel free to stop by the site, there will be plenty of work to be done.

The official celebration for the grand opening of Phase I of the playground will be Saturday, November 6, 2004, in con-

junction with the Deerwood Community Fall Festival. An informational flyer with volunteer opportunities, and ticket reservations is included in this newsletter.

Finally, please mark your calendars for our annual Yard Sale, to be held, Saturday, April 9, 2005. As always, the most up to date information on events and happenings can be found on the website at www.mydeerwood.com.

www.mydeerwood.com

Dennis Derby

Go surfing on the Deerwood Website! Take a few minutes and a whole new world of Deerwood will come up on your screen.

Visit our Home Page and see what is going on in Deerwood this month. Notice the new sections, including an e-mail opt-in, and a new opinion poll area. Each month we will bring a new topic of interest to the site and ask for you input. The first poll is regarding safety, and the speed limits within our community.

In the Community Section you'll find a wealth of information. Events and Happenings highlight community events like the playground rebuilding, the Fall Festival, and other upcoming events. Neighborly notes shares the kind of information helpful to all residents: how to prevent water damage, best way to treat some types of weeds, and other homeowner hints. In the DIA

Official News you'll get advance meeting dates, the Fine System Guidelines, and other official DIA information. For those with young families looking for babysitters, you'll find the Deerwood Babysitter list with their experience levels very helpful. The last part of the Community Section has a copy of all the forms that you may need to download for further use.

Over 11 phone numbers are in the important numbers area. A quick reference to reach out to the most frequently called Deerwood numbers.

The Board and Committees Section lists the nine committees that play an active part in managing our community for the benefit of all of our residents. We encourage participation by everyone in our community, and these committees are a great place to start your involvement. By comparing the Map section of the

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website with this section you can readily identify which district you live in and who is your representative. Please feel free to contact your Board Representative on any issue. Likewise, feel free to attend any DIA meeting to ask questions or to present your view. The first few minutes of all DIA board meetings are open for resident comments.

Not only for new residents, but for all of us, you'll find the FAQ section (Frequently Asked Questions) to be very beneficial. In

addition, the covenant area is extremely informative. You'll note that each district has specific covenants, which vary slightly from district to district. It is to your benefit to know what is and is not allowed.

Finally, you will notice the Contact Us button, which conveniently allows you to let us know your comments, concerns, or kudos. Please let us know what your thinking or how we can better serve our community.

Architectural Review

Lee Evans, Chairperson

Through August, the committee has reviewed 115 requests from residents, 110 have been approved, and five were not approved and/or are pending revisions. Included in this period were two approvals of resident's requests to tear down the existing structure and build a new home. This is the sixth such request and demonstrates the unique character and value of the Deerwood community.

Hurricane Frances is behind us. Deerwood came through the storm in generally good shape; although, several residents had damage to their roofs from falling trees. Immediately following the storm, DIA, MAY Management, and First Coast Security implemented a procedure to expedite requests to remove dead, diseased, or trees leaning that might threaten a home.

We can all prepare better for future tropical storms by having professional tree surgeons do preventative hurricane pruning on our property. This thinning process, a) strengthens the remaining tree by reducing the area the nutrients have to

supply, and b) reduces the thickness of the canopy to allow winds to pass through more easily.

The beauty of Deerwood is provided in substantial part by its trees. Deerwood would not be Deerwood without them. This year, prior to Frances, 54 tree removal requests have been approved, mainly as dead or dying trees or because of proximity to the home. If the property has a goodly number of trees already, removing a few is not a problem. At residences that have a small number of trees, the committee has approved removal subject to other trees being planted in other areas of the yard.

Homeowners need to be very specific about the location of a tree for which removal is being requested. It helps to mark them with ribbon and to state the reason why they want to remove the tree(s). If a tree is claimed to be diseased and such disease is not discernible to the naked eye, an arborist statement is required.

Legal Updates

Lee Evans

In August 1999, Gate transferred its duties, responsibility and authority as "developer" for the common area of the community to the resident controlled Deerwood Improvement Association, Inc. Having now completed five full years, a review of legal issues faced by the Board during this period is in order.

With 918 residential properties in Deerwood, we are pleased to report that less than a dozen have created any material issues over this five-year period. Most disputes have been resolved in a cooperative manner, and only a few required the assistance of the Association's attorney.

1. The first legal issue faced involved two "unplatted" parcels sold by Gate shortly before the August 1999 turnover. The

new owners desired to build homes on this land. The issues were resolved in mediation.

2. A resident filed a complaint with the Jacksonville Housing Authority claiming discrimination when the Board advised him of several covenant violations and billed him for having to have the lawn cut while the resident was out of town for a prolonged period of time. After a full investigation, JHA did not find any evidence to support the claim and issued a "No Action" letter in our favor.

3. Two disputes involved unapproved structures on property. Both were settled out of court with formal agreements being executed by the parties and recorded.

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4. The Association was sued by a resident for its refusal to approve construction beyond the Building Restriction Line. The Association received a favorable ruling at Summary Judgement. The resident is currently appealing the court's decision. The Association has filed a motion with the Court for reimbursement of its legal fees.

5. In 2003, after calls, meetings, and letters, the Association was forced to file a legal action to obtain an injunction to stop the unauthorized building of a structure. At a hearing for Summary Judgement, the Association received a favorable ruling. The resident has filed a motion for rehearing, but also submitted architectural plans that were approved, and has restarted the construction. The Association has filed a motion with the Court for reimbursement of its legal fees.

Our legal costs, on average, are running about 3% of the total annual budget or roughly \$48 of your annual assessment. We believe a substantial amount should be recovered based on the successful outcome of the last two cases.

Board of Directors

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