

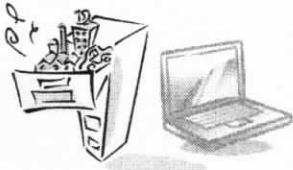
Royal Park Newsletter

(Handwritten initials: JOK)

Special points of interest:

- > Safeguard our Documents
- > Revitalizing Royal Park's dismal entrance
- > What's new at the Royal Park's Office
- > Selling your home or condo

(Handwritten signature: Fred Bailey)



Which shall it be?

Special Issue 1

Paperweight—Typewriter—Computer?

Dear Residents,

I was asked by your President Bob O'Kon to produce a newsletter for Royal Park after Darren Waaland, the editor, resigned his position. Since I have a personal agenda that is very dear to me, I agreed to produce a special edition.

Before I go into my reason, I want to provide you briefly with a snapshot of my background. I was a property manager for many years. Following that, I went to work for the State of Florida as an Investigator, specifically investigating Condominiums and Cooperatives until I retired and returned to the private sector.

Back again in the mainstream of property management I have noticed a trend that I personally find wonderful, exciting and exhilarating; it involves the use of computers. Many of our residents may groan now, but before you dismiss me, please allow me to plead my case.

I don't know about you, but I pay just about all of my bills on the internet; I might write only a check or two a month. In addition, I've observed that we have gotten used to cell-phones, a fact that is evident when I go grocery shopping and see seniors (I am also one) using cell phones. I can remember when cell phones first came

on the market, the out cry over the new technology, it was deafening. The same thing happened when banks began to issue ATM cards to their account holders. But I ask you, who does not use them now? When you can pay with your ATM or credit card at a fast food place, your doctor's office and post office, doesn't that tell us of the universal acceptance of the ATM or credit card, which wouldn't have been believed twenty-five years ago. We all change, adapt and reluctantly learn the technology foisted upon us.

Which now brings me to the *raison d'être*. Most large associations have websites that allow unit owners to access their accounts, as well as a multitude of other things, such as downloading all the necessary forms for a prospective buyer or renter, the association's rules and regulations including the declaration of condominium, the articles of incorporation, the by-laws, the Frequently Asked Questions, the monthly financial statements, the budget, the manager's report and the newsletter, if they have one. The owners can also review the minutes of the last board meeting, e-mail individual board members and make maintenance requests. In other words, the computer is a management tool that links the board, manager, office

staff and unit owners together and serves to enhance communications.

In addition to the association website, computer files must be created for every document or item the association is required to keep and/or maintain. Example: Pool Heaters. This file should include a digital image of the heater(s), along with the serial number, model number, age, maintenance specs, warranty information, manufacture, etc. By doing this we will have a system in place that is easily maintained, updated and allows us to track contract renewal dates, projected replacement requirements, etc. Also work orders requested by unit owners should be on the computer so at the end of the month, a report can be generated that informs the board as to the total work orders. The report would list the completed and open work orders. This could be done with violations, pets, renters whose lease would expire during the coming month, decals for cars, and whatever else the Association's needs to become efficient.

I am asking that the Board of Directors approve a **WEBSITE** for ROYAL PARK with all the above referenced functions. **WHY?** Remember Wilma? Safeguarding several back-up CDs containing Royal Park's perti-

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Paperweight—Typewriter—Computer

nent information beats trying to protect years of paper files! Businesses now scan their documents and convert them into a PDF file. Copies of the file can easily be printed should the need arise.

What does all of this cost? Let me break it down. First we will need someone who can design our website. This will be the biggest expense, but will only be a one-time expenditure. Then we will need someone to host the website. This will be a recurring, relatively inexpensive monthly fee. Finally we will need someone to revise and up-date our web-site as needed. The charge will be minimal and per up-date. (Please note as a unit owner I

“Safeguarding several back-up CDs containing Royal Park’s pertinent information beats trying to protect years of paper files!”

am not permitted to obtain bids for the Board unless specifically instructed to do so.)

I am also aware that in the beginning, this will not go smoothly since I am a firm believer in Murphy’s Law which states ‘what can go wrong will go wrong.’ But the pay off! Just think, you can access the Association’s records right from your computer, no matter where you are, read the newsletter, review a the minutes, read the manager’s monthly report, scan the financial email your board and should a disaster happen, we have proof of how everything was before Mother Nature decided to pay us a visit.

Monika Conroy



Organization at your fingertips

“I am sure the way our entrance looks is not what Broward County had in mind when approving our plans for a grant.”

As I drive into our complex I can not believe that we paid so-called professional thousands of dollars to beautify the entrance of Royal Park. Granted the mulch our maintenance men put down helps, but that cost \$2.00 a bag at home depot. The trees and plants look like weeds to me and should never have been planted knowing that our sprinkler system up front did not work. Many of the trees and plants in the interim have died.

I am sure the way our entrance looks is not what Broward County had in mind when approving our plans for a grant. I do not believe they will give us the money when they come and see the work our landscaper did.

When our President

How much is Mulch?

Bob O’Kon approached the landscaper saying that he guaranteed the plants, the president was rebuffed, with the landscaper putting the blame on us for not having a sprinkler system that worked. It seems pretty odd since this particular individual gave us a bid to fix our system and started the work until the City of Oakland Park stopped him because he was not a licensed sprinkler man. If he knew the system did not work, WHY DID HE PLANT? He should have waited until the problem was fixed. I was told since he was such a small business he had no where to keep the plants and trees he had ordered. I’m sorry but that is not Royal Park’s problem. I believe by planting before he should have, he accepts full

responsibility for his work and must be made to honor his guarantee and replace all the dead or dying trees and plants.

Royal Park has been known for spending too much money on attorneys in the past. But this is one time I feel the board of directors should take legal action in order to rectify the entrance way situation.

If we are going to spend thousands of dollars, let’s make our entrance way look like something we are proud for others to see as they drive in to visit or just drive by our complex.

Harvey Ross
A very concerned owner

My Position at Royal Park Condo Association



In the latter part of (the foundation of the Office). January 2007, I accepted the Office Assistant/Secretary/Receptionist position at Royal Park. As a few unit owners may have notice through phone conversations and walk-ins. I am the Liaison between the Property Manager Ron Westrope, the President of the Board Bob O'Kon, other Board members and of course Linda the Office Administrator, banks that call and their requests must be answered in a timely manner as well as fax them promptly. Then there are the selected few owners that need to visit the office and vent their opinion—especially if there are circumstances that required attention—yesterday to their specific problem. When I arrived at RPC it was a hectic time due to the Board of Directors

pending election. There were papers and forms all over, just like in any other condo during elections. But this is behind us and the condo office resembles a clean well organized front office, ready and willing to assist.

My credentials and work history was in Account Administration in an Investment Banking firm, in New York

State. The department that I worked for 12 years was the nuts and bolts of the company. I had clients such as Jackie Kennedy, the Haas's, the Plimpton's and Dreyfus's. It was a wonderful organization, especially the President of the firm, Mr. George Johnson, was an old school gentleman. He knew all his employees not only by sight but by name and the department

they worked in. The Lord had better plans for him. My other work history included mortgage companies, condo and even a time in the cemetery and funeral business (that's for the sympathetic side of me). In all I am here and with great determination I will serve Royal Park residents and their quests to the best of my abilities.

Victoria Agnello

From the desk of Linda Humphreys

Just a friendly reminder to all residents - those of you that have any complaints, they must be put in writing. If you have complaints concerning your neighbors, please identify the building and apartment number. You will remain anonymous. Complaints of any nature will be handled by our Property Manager.

We have some new faces in the Association Office. Our new Property Manager, Ronald Westrope has replaced Michael Shegota, our new Receptionist/Secretary, Victoria Agnello has replaced Christine Mac-

chione, and our new Bookkeeper, Stephanie Taylor has replaced Marie Mazzeo.

All seasonal residents please remember to notify the office of your departure and let us know of any address change and who to contact in case of an emergency while you are out of town. Your attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns you can e-mail to our new address: royal-parkoffice@comcast.net



Real Estate Realities

Florida experienced the real estate boom since 2003 like never before, however, by 2006 the market had drastically simmered down. The price surge was more than cyclical and attributed to many factors including heavy speculation by local and foreign investors and this in turn shortened the supply and fueled buying fever. Banks and lending institutions were com-

peting with each other to write adjustable loans with 100% financing resulting in a high ratio of first time home buyers to become home owners with no money down. Just before hurricane Wilma in 2005, for the real estate professionals there were signs that the market may slow down and by early 2006 it was a reality. The status quo has resulted in a market that could

be described as 'stabilizing' which in other words adjusting to the realistic ratio of supply and demand. With the abundance of inventory in almost all areas, the market has definitely turned into a buyer's market. The competition resulted in sales and price adjustments of 10 - 20 percent of 2005 highest sold comparables. This does not mean



New, improved hurricane resistant door.

"... it will just take longer to sell and the contract price has to justify the upgrades."

Association of Realtors (FAR) about November 2006 Florida market trends:

Existing Home Sales: 30% down from November 2005

Existing Condo Sales: 36% down from November 2005

Existing Home

that the high priced property will never sell, it will just take longer to sell and the contract price has to justify the upgrades and support an appraisal with comparable prior sales, usually in the previous six months.

Here are some facts according to Florida

Median price: \$242,500 down from \$250,400 in November 2005 a 3% decrease.

Existing Condo Median price: \$206,000 down from \$215,100 in November 2005 a 4% decrease.

The median is a typical market price where

half the homes sold for more and half sold for less.

In January 2007, the above figures were revised as follows:

The encouraging news is that Ft. Lauderdale has fared better than the rest of Florida.

According to RAGFL, Realtors Association of Greater Ft. Lauderdale Single family homes

sold by November 2006 were 665 versus 623 in 2005, a 7% increase. Condominiums and Townhouses were (minus) - 28% and the Median Home price was \$352,500 in the same period, which was \$110,000 more than the rest of Florida.

Surprisingly the bull market in commercial real estate made

2006 a record year, and many analysts believe 2007 will be just as good.

This article was written in January 2007 and market factors remain similar at the time of going to press.

By Naim Naqi / Realtor-Broker.



ASK A QUESTION ????

1. May the board appoint an individual to fill a vacated position on the board without conducting an election?

Unless the association documents provide otherwise, any vacancy on the board occurring before the expiration of the term, except a vacancy caused by recall, may be filled by the affirmative vote of the majority of the remaining directors, even if the remaining directors constitute less than a quorum, or by the sole remaining director. In the alternative, a board may, hold an election to fill the vacancy.

Section 718.112(2)(d)8., F.S.

2. What are the duties of the board of administration?

The board of administration administers the affairs of the association, sets policy, assures proper property maintenance, and may appoint committees to manage various

affairs of the condominium.
Section 718.112(2)(a), F.S.

3. What are the powers and responsibilities of the board of administration?

Directors have a fiduciary relationship with the unit owners, and must use the highest degree of good faith in placing the interests of the unit owners above their own personal interests. Essentially, the board of directors is the decision-making body for the condominium. Their powers are in essence, the powers of the association, which include the power to manage, maintain, and operate the condominium property.

Section 718.111(2)-(13), F.S.

4. I thought that as a unit owner and a member of my association I had the right to vote. Why is it that most of the decisions of the association are made by the

board of directors?

Every unit owner has the full voting rights appertaining to his or her unit as provided by the documents of the association. The powers and duties of the association include those set forth in Chapter 718, Florida Statutes, and those set forth in the association documents, and Chapters 617, Florida Statutes, corporations not for profit acts. Further, the association documents shall specify the powers and duties of the officers and the board of administration. The Condominium Act requires unit owner approval of many issues. To waive or reduce the funding of reserves, use reserve funds for any other purpose, and to amend association documents are some of the issues that require unit owner approval. Also, the association members must elect members of the board of administration.

Sections 718.106(2), 718.111(2), and 718.112(2)(a)1., F.S.

Hurricane Preparedness

What Should I Do?

BEFORE HURRICANE SEASON STARTS

- Protect your windows.
 - Permanent shutters are the best protection. A lower-cost approach is to put up plywood panels. Use 1/2 inch plywood - marine plywood is best - cut to fit each window. Remember to mark which board fits which window.
 - Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for screws. Do this long before the storm.
- Develop an emergency communication plan.
 - In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.
 - Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

DURING A HURRICANE WATCH

(Hurricane Watch is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours.)

- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for hurricane progress reports.
- Check emergency supplies.
- Fuel car.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.
- Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles, and cooking utensils.
- Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.
- Review evacuation plan.

DURING A HURRICANE WARNING

(A Hurricane Warning is issued when hurricane conditions (winds of 74 miles per hour or greater or dangerously high water and rough seas) are expected in 24 hours or less.)

- Listen constantly to a battery-operated radio or television for official instructions.
- Avoid elevators.
- If at home:
 - Stay inside, away from windows, skylights, and glass doors.
 - Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
 - If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored.
- If officials indicate evacuation is necessary:
 - Leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
 - Secure your condo by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve.
 - Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going.
 - If time permits, and you live in an identified surge zone, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding or better yet, move it to a higher floor.
 - Take pre-assembled emergency supplies, warm protective clothing, blankets and sleeping bags to shelter.
 - Lock up home and leave.

AFTER THE STORM

- Stay tuned to local radio for information.
- Return home only after authorities advise that it is

safe to do so.

- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company, police, or fire department.
- Enter your condo with caution. Beware of snakes, insects, and animals driven to higher ground by flood water.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage.
- Take pictures of the damage, both to the condo and its contents for insurance claims.
- Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges.
- Use telephone only for emergency calls.

INSPECTING UTILITIES IN A DAMAGED CONDO

- Look for electrical system damage--If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.
- Check for sewage and water lines damage--If you suspect sewage lines are damaged avoid using the toilets and call a plumber.

- Water** - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- Food** - at least enough for 3 to 7 days — non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices — foods for infants or the elderly — snack foods — non-electric can opener — cooking tools / fuel — paper plates / plastic utensils
- Blankets / Pillows, etc.**
- Clothing** - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes
- First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs**
- Special Items** - for babies and the elderly
- Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes**
- Flashlight / Batteries**
- Radio** - Battery operated
- Cash** - Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.
- Keys**
- Toys, Books and Games**
- Important documents** - in a waterproof container — insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- Tools** - keep a set with you during the storm
- Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- Pet care items** — proper identification / immunization records / medications — ample supply of food and water — a carrier or cage — muzzle and leash.

BE PREPARED, BE SAFE

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