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The President's Report

2016 at Plaza de Flores

In January 2016 the new Board took over, made up of Anna Conway, Carol Carter and Harvey Garver all of whom live on site, while living up north were Constance Shaw and Gerald Ratzer.

All Board meetings were well attended by Board members and a quorum was always attained.

Gerald Ratzer was appointed President, Harvey Garver - Treasurer and Carol Carter - Secretary.

The model proposed and partially followed was to have each Board member be responsible for one area and have a Committee to report to the Board member as required.

Building and Grounds

The President is assigned to Building and Grounds – with the Landscape Committee as the primary responsible entity for dealing with the landscape contractor. This turned out be difficult with the President and the senior members of the Landscape Committee, Peter Jeffries and Jerry Brief, being off site for a large portion of the year. Peter and Jerry found this was not working to their satisfaction and resigned last Spring. Together they had done a great job and their contribution was not fully recognized by the residents at Plaza. As the outgoing President, I can confirm that this Committee did outstanding work and the Board and residents do owe them a big vote of thanks. Since then, Carol Carter has been doing the walkabouts with the landscapers. Among the landscaping improvements has been the parking peninsula in front of Building 1 (see photo). This will be a model for further landscape improvements in 2017. There may be a chance for residents living on site to help with the Landscaping Committee on 2017.

Finance Committee

Our Treasurer, Harvey, was one of the first to form his Finance Committee by co-opting Larry Leone and David Herman to help. This committee has been very effective in researching our expenses and highlighting where savings can be made. One of their first successes was the geothermal system installed three years ago for the Clubhouse, pool and spa (a \$78,000 installation). Since it was initially installed, no adjustments have been made and no check made on the ROI (Return on Investment). David Herman poured over the FPL bills and found out that small changes in the temperature settings for both summer and winter could be easily made. A meeting was set up with our contractor, Symbiot who helps make this improvement happen.

We continue to monitor the largest of our expenses – namely Water and Sewer – we now record the usage from the water meters every month. The top water users are sent a letter and a follow-up to check for toilet leaks – usually the primary problem. Residents are reminded that most of

the original toilets are close to 20 years old and can be expected to leak. We recommend that all toilets are replaced with the latest lo-flo toilets with the 2-level flush systems. Also in the same vein – the hot water heaters are also about 20 years old and many are starting to leak. Ditto for AC systems. A replacement now, may well be due and save you and your neighbors from any problems.

One of our other large expenses is insurance. We negotiated a good renewal for 2016/17 and with no major hurricanes in our area – we are hoping for an equally low renewal in May.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee has included a number of functions – namely the Plaza web site, handled by Anna Conway, the Newsletter written by Gerald Ratzler and the TOPS 10 database of owners run by PCM. This Committee and all the Plaza Board have been concerned about safety and security and the Board decided it was time to install a video recording system, with cameras in the Clubhouse, the Pool, the trash compactor and the front gate. The idea is to be able to verify who is entering and leaving the different areas; to store and search the videos for incidences; and stream the data to Board members, management and security services as required. This system has just been activated.

Social Committee

We are blessed with very outgoing, social members at Plaza de Flores who like to party! So there has been little problem getting people to step up to the plate and help out in this area. One of the prime movers in the area has been Carol Carter who walks the compound everyday and chats to all residents – encouraging them to participate in the Community activities. These activities include different parties, lunch out trips, a book club, card games and mah-jong, exercise classes twice a week and many more.

Leasing and Background checks

This Committee has been very efficient in ensuring that both future owners and future tenants meet our standards. These actions include background checks and also in-person interviews. Among those involved include Carol Carter and Greta Ingraham. Our complex now has a tenant ratio of 35%, which is a reduction from a high in 2015. This level is considered satisfactory and new owners can get any mortgages they need, from their banks.

Management

The current Board worked closely with PCM, our management company which supports the Plaza Association with the “back room” operations. The major ones are the monthly accounting, check writing and banking, which is professionally handled by Janet Clark. In cooperation with the Finance Committee, PCM helped prepare the Budget for 2017. Based on the work of this group, we are pleased to report that the 2017 budget was passed with no increase in the monthly maintenance fees or in the Reserve contribution. We think we will have a small surplus from 2016 operations.

Another area that has been a bit more of a problem was the daily maintenance of the compound. We have been contracting with South West Services for the staff to do this regular maintenance. There have been many individuals doing the work over the last years. The new Board may wish

to revisit this issue and one possibility is to use PCM to supply the maintenance staff – to reduce the turnover rate.

It would be remiss if I did not highlight the dedication of our Manager, Steve. Steve has worked long hours, including in over the weekends. He walks the property every day and knows what is going on. This hands-on approach has meant that Plaza is in excellent shape from a maintenance and operations point of view. The word in the area is that Plaza de Flores offers one of the best kept locations and value for money on Palmer Ranch.

Disaster Plan

Director, Constance Shaw is an insurance adjuster working in Massachusetts and along with the President, they have been active in starting the process to develop a Disaster Plan, which she assures us is an absolute necessity. Over 2016 we have met a few times and worked on a document (currently about 13 pages), which will be the main framework for the Plan. The important point to understand is the division of responsibility between the County, Palmer Ranch, the Plaza Condo Association, the unit owners and any on site residents. All of these groups do have different things they can and should do. For instance, Sarasota County has implemented a “Code Red” system, which allows individuals to register with the County, who will send messages by voicemail, email and SMS messages if there is a hurricane warning or other imminent disaster in the area. All owners and residents are recommended to sign up for this service. Having a phone landline or smartphone is all that is required. Our manager Steve completed a Resident Roster in 2016 with extensive details on all 200 units at Plaza, including phone numbers and emails, where available. Again you are asked to check that the data on file for you is correct and can be used to contact you. The same also applies to PCM and their TOPS 10 system, which is used for tracking owners of record and any tenants. Last, but not least all residents at Plaza have a responsibility to be aware of their situation and any possible threats in the area. One concern with a hurricane is flying debris – so the Association part of the Plan has all pool furniture cleared and stored inside once a warning is issued. This same warning would be a signal to residents that all furniture and other items are cleared from their lanai. Since many (76) owners are seasonal – there may be a requirement for all units to clear their lanais if the unit is empty for more than 30 days. This is a sensible suggestion, but may be made a Plaza Rule by the next Board.

I am pleased to report that the previous President, Jim Atherton, has shown an interest in the Emergency Management Plan exercise and volunteered to assist in the plan development and implementation. This is a 2017 project.

It has been a difficult year in some respects, but we hope to continue to make progress in 2017.

Gerald Ratzner
January 9th, 2017

2017 Annual General Meeting – AGM

While the President was delivering the 2016 report above, the votes for the election held on the 9th January 2017 were counted. Here are the results

Brian Glabb	44
Robert Ingraham	59
Gerald Ratzer	73

The results were read out at the AGM, and the chairman thanked all those put forward their names. As there were two positions open for the Board, the two with the top votes were declared to be elected for a two-year term.

Also counted were the votes of those present in person (33) and by proxy (46), and as there were less than the needed 101 votes, the main part of the AGM could not take place due to lack of a quorum.

Since there were no further items that could be considered, the AGM was terminated and it was time to celebrate with a party. A special thanks to the Social Committee, some members are in the photo below, and all those who contributed to this event.



February 21st, 2017 Board Meeting

This two-hour meeting was the longest one in anyone's memory, but we did cover a large number of topics. Here is a short synopsis of the main points.

- Our Treasurer, Harvey Garver presented his report on our financial status to the end of January. There are basically just four numbers which are important for the owners to know. These are the Cumulative Expenses, the Cumulative Income, our Reserve fund and Equity account balance. All four numbers are within the expected range and will be on the Plaza web site soon. The Association is on budget so far this year and there are no fiscal problems.

- Our Vice-President, Bob Ingraham presented two documents associated with the installation of the surveillance and video recording system. One was a Resolution explaining all the problems that have been witnessed at Plaza and why we need to improve the surveillance. The second one was a Surveillance Camera Policy, so residents and owners know what to expect. Both documents were approved by the Board, signed by the President and will be sent to the membership along with this Newsletter. The Board has also agreed to have signs close to all four camera sites.
- Florida Statute 718 governs condo operations in Florida and insists that all Associations have a Hurricane Shutter Policy, that defines the color and style. One was passed by the Plaza Board on 24th May 2005 and copies are on file and also the following Action Item Log confirms that this was minuted and passed by the Board. However, we have not been able to find a copy signed by the then President! Our legal expert suggested that the current Board instruct the President to now sign this Policy while any changes are considered. These will most likely be discussed by the Board in March. The “new” version of the policy (with no changes, but signed) is available from the Manager. The issue revolves around what is *reasonable* for ground floor owners, may not work for second floor units. There are just two ground floor units that have provision to deploy shutter panels, once a hurricane warning is issued – can you find the units? The 2005 Board stated that no major changes should be made to the external appearance of the buildings. The two units respected this part of the policy. By the way, the installation of any form of hurricane protection is optional. This is a decision and cost of each owner.
- A last minute addition to the Agenda was requested by Jim Atherton to discuss the EMP – Emergency Management Plan. Most of the Board did not have sufficient time to read all the documents and were not in a position to come to any decision that needed a vote. Jim reviewed the meeting he had with the Sarasota County emergency group and was impressed with their 911 system and their professional operation. He also reported on the meeting the Committee had with Tracy Smith from Palmer Ranch.
- Bob Ingraham has noted that the Plaza Resident Handbook now has many errors and he volunteered to update it.
- Harvey Garver has agreed to take over the Landscaping Committee and has had walkabouts of all the courtyards with Kathleen from Natural Designs. We have received quotes for most of the suggested improvements and we look forward to seeing this work being done in the next few months. There now is a new, large corkboard in the Card Room just for Landscaping and some of the plans are posted there. We will be happy to get more suggestions for making Plaza the best looking condo complex in the area.
- David Herman submitted a detailed report of the expenses associated with the geothermal systems, which heat/cool the Clubhouse, Pool and Spa. The adjustments that were made last year have been effective in reducing the FPL charge for power, but one problem is that all the power for all three locations appears to be on a single meter and a single invoice, so it is hard to tell the exact saving for just the pool. One suggestion has been to install three meters – one for each location and see if that would give us better cost control. Thank you David for your excellent analysis.

Social Committee Events

The Social committee has been very active with the following groups

- An exercise class with Sel Rom on Mondays and Wednesdays at 2:00 pm
- A Book Club, card games and Mah-Jong
- Aquasize in the pool on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 am
- An International Night buffet on Saturday 18th March
- A lunch outing to a local restaurant once a month
- The next TGIF party will be on Friday 24th March

All these and more events are displayed on the noticeboards above the mailboxes. Please check there for any additions or changes.



Improved Parking peninsula



South end of large pond