

# BRENTWOOD HILLS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER...SEPTEMBER, 2012

Folks,

It's been a while since we put out a newsletter. We obviously, must do better and will make that a focal point as we go forward. We have been utilizing the general membership meeting & our monthly board meetings to keep those in attendance informed. Lot of good feedback by doing this. Though these are board meetings, we have changed the structure to allow for Q&A during the discussion times [within a prescribed format] or at the end of the meeting. We appreciate those who have been attending.

Along with these events, we are posting information on our website: [www.MyBHHOA.com](http://www.MyBHHOA.com) to keep you updated on some of the key events or projects worthy of sharing. This is an ideal place to start before contacting the Management Company, staff or board members. Once again, we will need to work on improving our website to include new and updated information.

It is always good to state our vision and continue to remind each other as to the focus of our goals & efforts. We adopted in 2010 an interest in showcasing Brentwood Hills (BH) to help maintain property values, provide a safe & secure family environment and establish a financially sound community that would be able to sustain itself over the next 30 years or more. Several months ago, unsolicited, the Tampa Tribune featured an article on your community for these specific reasons. This is only the beginning, but that vision remains with us today and as we look forward.

We are moving our monthly board meetings to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month for September, October, November and December. Meetings will be from 7:30 pm to 9:15 pm with a Q&A (if time allows) at the end.

So what has been happening in BH and what can I look forward to in the coming months?

- For those who live on the pine forest (located adjacent to the soccer field), have seen a two year clearing of dead & fallen trees; the association continues to monitor and will work to restore some of the downed trees;
- The pool facility parking lot has been recently resurfaced, restriped, repair of curbing and new bumper guards placed; lighting has been improved;
- The tennis courts have been resurfaced & upgraded with new fencing, a new membrane surface and colors to match the existing pool facility; new signage will be put up on the courts; the board will consider lighting of the courts at some future date;
- All pool furniture has been reconditioned and we have added new umbrellas, chairs and tables to be more user friendly; picnic tables have been resurfaced.
- The security system has been upgraded to allow for more visibility to areas in and around the pool area; these include some high visibility, motion sensing cameras; bathrooms have controlled access to minimize vandalism.
- Walkways & entrance ways have been cleaned of mildew and mold for those joggers, walkers and regular users;
- New fence has been installed along the Dew Bloom-Tuscanny retention pond; this is fence that was removed earlier this year and will be a part of a larger project that will be adopted for the entire development;
- New signage is being reviewed for the entrances & in front of the pool facility to complement the new amenities & correspond with the signage at each of the BH sections; this will update the 25 year old signs currently in place;
- The landscape company has been putting new sod down on Mt. Carmel, mulching, new planting around the flag pool/tennis facility and at various other places throughout the community; we will work on the entrance shrubs and appearances over time; trees are being trimmed to new heights to allow for minimum clearance and overhang;
- Expansion of playground equipment and replacement of obsolete or damaged with new commercial, heavier duty pieces; consideration for a small children's play area, putting greens, volley ball and/or basketball court;
- Plans are underway for a fenced off grill area adjacent and accessible to the picnic tables on the east side; new grills installed and possibly a tent area for those that want to bring their personal portable canopies;

- Expansion of the soccer field amenities to add benches, a jogging track and permanent lining of the field.

Events held this year: Spring community wide garage sale and another scheduled for October 13th; annual BBQ (August) which was free to residents and guests; pool opened for lap swimming in the early morning hours, water aerobic classes started one day a week, craft activities for Mother's & Father's Day at the pool facility; movie night every Friday night during the summer months; Easter Egg hunt, 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and upcoming, will be our Christmas event which includes Santa and his elves.

In 2010, 2011 & early 2012, we partnered with one of the local schools to be their home field for their soccer and flag football games. These were sponsored by members of the community and did not cost the association anything while providing an opportunity to showcase BH. We were able to utilize our staff & volunteers to assist with parking.

We have met with the ownership of Child Haven Day Care center to partner on some important things that we feel benefit us both. The school is one of our most important property owners and offers something that few communities can. This is a great opportunity to help each other and again showcase what we have in BH.

The board is very serious about our financial condition. These have been tough times. We have operated within our budget in 2011 and are on schedule to repeat the same in 2012. It comes with its challenges as costs continue to rise, reserves must be developed for the long range outlook, incomes have been lesser than anticipated and delinquencies have been greater. The association has looked for ways to overcome all these challenges and make them into opportunities. The delinquencies continue to improve and the association foreclosures addressed. The board is looking for matching grant funds to pay for some of the projects and upgrades. The key remains being good stewards of our monies, collecting the past dues, making good, sound decisions, utilizing our available resources, and negotiating properly for goods and services.

Please keep in mind that the association takes vandalism and offenses very seriously. We have experienced a multitude of infractions involving vehicles running over our sprinkler heads, tapping into the BH water system for personal usage, damage to the amenities and common areas, failure to respect association staff and follow the community guidelines/rules. If you see or hear of these issues, please report them to the Management Company, staff or myself so that we can address such and/or take corrective action. These things consume your dollars needlessly and we must all do our part to end such.

Violations continue to be a challenge. Realistically, we inherited a mess. We started on the journey in October 2010 to enforce the covenants and deed restrictions. The violations are vastly improved, but are still far from being favorable. Some of the issues are mere maintenance that just require some TLC; others are in need of monetary outlay. It is important that everyone do their part. It will ultimately improve property values for you and your neighbors. This is still a part of showcasing BH. There are still many violations that will take time and effort. They will be costly to some if they are ignored, but the association has chosen to address them fairly, consistently & immediately. Here are the more grievous:

- All exterior changes require ACC approval; not doing so, could mean a redo or corrective action; the ACC meets monthly and are very responsive to your timeline; appearance at the meeting means an immediate decision; the ACC operates independent of the board.
- Exterior changes to landscape or homes must be submitted and approved with the ACC before undertaking the work; this includes painting whether the same color or not, fence installs, etc. Please see the ACC page on the website for some of the requirements.

- Boats, RV's, trailers may not be stored onsite except in a garage;
- Sheds have not been approved and may not be erected; the board is determining a course of action now to address this;
- Commercial vehicles are restricted to a specific size, weight and configuration;
- Yards must be maintained and trash cans, basketball goals & like items may not be stored in front of the home or in plain sight.
- The association does not maintain the inside of the community fence; it is each property owner's responsibility; the association does provide paint & materials at no cost to the property owner.

So what should you know about?

The biggest project before us is our current fence. There is 3 miles of fence within BH and the board has been working for more than 12 months to address this issue. For years, the association has thrown tons of money at maintaining the fence with minimal success. Here is what I can share with you:

- The association has adopted a regular fence maintenance program;
- The association is planning on replacement of the current wood fence with PVC; a contractor has been selected and the board will meet with them to discuss the details;
- The Dew Bloom-Tuscanny retention pond fence is the beginning of the project and will likely be the prototype of what will be installed throughout; a sample will be erected at the pool so you can see, touch & feel the project;
- Another phase will be the Playground-Citrus Orchard fence; this will give more visibility to activities in and around the playground and create a safer environment for our children while possibly adding additional parking;
- The board is contracting to have the pillars all repaired or replaced as needed and a regular maintenance program will be a part of the overall contract to include cleaning, graffiti removal, etc. and possible resurfacing;
- The initial main phase will likely start along BH Blvd, followed by Mt. Carmel and/or Lumsden, then to the outlying areas of the development.
- The project should be completed within 3 years and be fully funded from association reserves.

The efforts of this board are not about "we" and "you", but about "us". The board sees itself as merely an extension of "us" all. The board members are property owners the same as each other property owner. Their ambitions and desires are the same as every other owner. They have high standards of ethics and moral character and try to consider every decision with the "us" in mind. I applaud them for making the difficult decisions that make this association and community successful. I hope you will share your appreciation with each one as well.

As I stated at the beginning of this newsletter, we have to do better in communicating. Our goal is to work toward doing a newsletter every quarter. Hopefully, this will meet with your expectations and allow us to work toward a better community. We look forward to your participation at the monthly board meetings where you can get more of what we are accomplishing and gain a better understanding of the challenges. If you would like to be considered for a board position and join this professional group of men and women to help build this community, please contact me via the website. We would be interested in interviewing those who have the right qualifications, aspirations and vision to make BH a better place to raise a family or retire.

Thank you for your presence in BH and look forward to meeting each and every one.

On behalf of the board,

*Tom Leavitt, President*

*BH Homeowners Association*