

VHA Town Hall Meeting
Laurel Manor Recreation Center
January 21, 2020

The VHA thanks the following people for providing answers for VHA members and Villages residents at the VHA Town Hall meeting: Dr. Gary Lester – Vice President Community Relations; Richard Baier – Villages District Manager; Sam Wartinbee – Director of District Property Management; Lt. Robert Siemer – Villages Lieutenant from the Sumter County Sheriff’s Department.

- 1. Please provide an update of Villages development south of SR 44 and projected timeline of:
a. Commercial and residential properties.**

Dr. Lester: Publix and two restaurants are coming to Magnolia Plaza next to Everglades Recreation Center. Fifteen businesses for this location are in discussions and announcements will be coming in the Daily Sun this spring and summer. Residential sales are up 14% over the previous year.

- b. Connectivity with multi-modal path bridges.**

Dr. Lester: The expected timeline for these bridges to be up is mid-2020.

- 2. At the Villages shopping areas, can the larger parking lots have rows labeled to assist residents in finding their vehicles?**

Dr. Lester: There are no plans at the time to add additional signage.

- 3. Golf cart traffic backs up at the traffic signal on the multi-modal path near Colony Cottage Recreation Center, can a right-turn lane be added when facing north; and a left-turn lane be added when facing south?**

Richard Baier: This could be done but it is not supported since it is not ideal. The multi-modal path is designed for walkers and cyclists as well as golf carts. Providing a free-flow right/left turn would place the more vulnerable pedestrian and cyclist users at greater risk.

- 4. Could you please consider running a trolley shuttle between town squares and even to Fenney and Everglades Recreation Centers? Tickets could be purchased for a specific destination or a full day to get on and off.**

Dr. Lester: There are no plans at this time but this suggestion is being considered.

- 5. Please explain the financing of the building of new multi-modal paths in the newer areas compared to areas north.**

Sam Wartinbee: There is no difference from the area north of SR 44. It is financed through District Bonds.

- 6. Will the connecting multi-modal path bridges be maintained by the districts when the time comes?**

Richard Baier: Yes, the bridges are all a part of District government. There is very little maintenance of this type of bridge since it has a special coating over steel which adds additional protection. Regular inspections will be handled by District 13.

- 7. Will there be a Villages Grown store added in the Spanish Springs area?**

Dr. Lester: Absolutely. We are looking at a variety of ways that Villages Grown will be in Spanish Springs.

8. The following questions relate to untrimmed trees, bushes and neglected properties.

- a. Who does a resident contact with an issue of untrimmed bushes and trees on private property blocking sightlines to roadways?**

Sam Wartinbee: Contact the Department of Property Management 352-753-4022.

- b. What is the resolution if owners refuse to pay for tree trimming that is needed to prevent a safety hazard for pedestrians and drivers?**

Sam Wartinbee: Contact the town, city, or county where the tree is located.

- c. Which department does a resident contact when landscaping on private properties is not maintained according to deed restrictions?**

Sam Wartinbee: Contact Community Standards 352-751-3912 and an officer from this department will check. A process will begin with verbal contact with the owner and continue through steps that provide time to correct the problem and advance to written contact and eventually fines if the situation requires this.

Richard Baier: Over the past ten years, 99% of complaints have been resolved amicably.

- d. Is it legal for a neighbor to do maintenance of landscaping on unkempt vacant properties that reduce the value of nearby homes?**

Sam Wartinbee: Yes, if you have permission from the owner.

Q. What about the roots from a neighbor's dead tree lifting up the sidewalk.

A. This is a civil matter that must be resolved between the two parties.

- 9. Can a gutter be added to the front of the Lynnhaven postal kiosk to reduce degradation of the cement from rain, which is allowing mold to grow?**

Sam Wartinbee: There are 66 postal stations. If this is done for one it would need to be done to all. For some of the postal stations there is no good way to run a downspout without creating a trip factor. It takes many years to create issues with concrete.

- 10. Can these features be added onto the Villages website www.thevillages.net?**

- a. Provide 24/7 technical support. The resident who sent this question has not received answers to his queries made through the current link to technical support.**

Richard Baier: Call the Villages.net during office hours if there is no online response to a request for technical support. Note: Villages.net - Office hours – Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM 352-753-4040 - 1010 Canal Street, Lake Sumter Landing

- b. Add live/day-of data for tee-time availability and selecting tee times.**
c. Add link to pay trail fees online
d. Add link to pay priority fees online

Dr. Lester: The suggestions listed above at “b, c and d” are all being actively considered.

- 11. What authority does Community Watch have in addressing resident complaints?**

Richard Baier: Community Watch has no authority to address resident complaints. If Community Watch notices an issue with a roadway a message will be relayed to the department which handles it.

Q. Who does a resident call about solicitors?

A. Call Community Standards and they will contact the company that hired the solicitor. A resident has the right to remind solicitors they are trespassing on private property.

12. When calling in complaints:

- a. **How can a resident make a complaint without giving their name?**
- b. **If a resident can report a complaint anonymously, how can the resident find out if the complaint was settled?**

Richard Baier: A resident can make a complaint anonymously by not revealing a name but must be aware that an email address and caller ID may indicate that the caller did provide this information.

A complaint given anonymously may be followed-up by calling to inquire the status of this complaint.

13. The following questions relate to issues with dogs and their owners:

- a. **What can a resident do when faced with unrestrained/unleashed dogs?**

Lt. Siemer: Sumter County requires dogs to be on a leash. Call Animal Services 352-689-4400 if there is a problem.

- b. **Can anything be done about residents bringing dogs, which are obviously not service animals, to restaurants and stores?**

Lt. Siemer: HIPAA Laws prevent asking what service a dog is providing.

Richard Baier: Service animals have to be licensed but we are not allowed to ask for proof.

Sam Wartinbee: This issue is being discussed at the state level.

- c. **What is the Villages policy on walking dogs that excrete at the postal stations and on common grounds?**

Richard Baier: Residents are expected to clean up after pets and be considerate of others.

14. The Chatham family pool was closed for maintenance around Christmas time. Can maintenance be scheduled when there are fewer visitors during off peak times?

Richard Baier: We checked the period from December 20, 2019 – January 2, 2020 and found that no more than 2 pools were closed for part of a day at the same time and no more than 3 golf courses out of 42 were closed for one part of one day. The District strives to present its recreational amenities in the most positive manner and while we try to have them open at peak periods of use that is not always possible.

15. Can more frequent monitoring be added to the family pools? The problem behavior that caused the closing of the Santiago pool would have been prevented if a monitor was supervising.

Richard Baier: We card and monitor the pools regularly.

16. Please explain why the Rialto theater in Spanish Springs is closed for renovations during high season instead of during the summer.

Dr. Lester: The extensive renovations will require many months in order to have the theater ready for peak season next year. If we started this summer, then it would be closed during peak season next year.

17. Could you explain why the Shay gate has been unmanned for months?

Richard Baier: Additional time for the permitting process between Lady Lake and Lake County has delayed the start date.

18. Can you provide an update of the trash contract and recycling decisions?

Richard Baier: Three public meetings were held with real time information collected. From this information four options are being reviewed: **1.** A review of recyclables north of SR 44 – but not the historic area; **2.** Move away from a landfill and move to an Energy-to-Waste facility as is done in District 12; **3.** Look at a self-sustaining program for bulk waste i.e. refrigerators, stoves, etc.; **4.** Negotiate a longer contract over 20 years, rather than 5 years, with annual review.

Meetings and decisions will be posted to keep residents involved and informed.

19. What recourse does a resident have when renters create problems? Some homeowners do not provide renters with a list of Villages policies/deed restrictions.

Richard Baier: Contact Community Standards and the District will work with the owners and renters toward a resolution.

20. What is the District policy on speed limit signs? One resident reported that Sumter County Sheriff's Office recommended the addition of signs.

Lt. Siemer: Engineers reviewed and determined best signage for use in cooperation with the local government.

Richard Baier: Sumter County BOCC (Board of County Commissioners) is the regulatory authority for the setting of the speed limits. That being said, the county hired a professional engineering firm to complete a master traffic study several year ago which set the speed limits in accordance with State and Federal requirements.

Q. What is the speed limit in neighborhoods?

A. Unless otherwise posted the speed limit is 20 mph.

21. Could you please give an update of how local law enforcement agencies oversee the town squares?

Lt. Siemer: Extra patrols are provided during busiest times: i.e. between 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM; during big events.

Q. Are town square cameras monitored 24/7.

A. Video footage is not monitored by law enforcement. A deputy will review the video footage if a crime occurs.

22. A resident experienced hit and run issues and asks the following:

- a. **What recourse does a driver have when the license plate/tag information is available from a hit and run? An incident occurred on Morse Blvd and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) said nothing can be done without proof of driver. The driver of the damaged car had to pay for the damages.**

Lt. Siemer: Sumter County relies on FHP to handle more serious traffic issues. Sumter County will follow up on any information provided.

Q. What recourse does a driver have to recover cost of the deductible?

A. This is an issue to be handled between the insurance companies.

- b. Would video surveillance identifying a hit and run incident to a parked vehicle in a Villages shopping center parking lot help the vehicle's owner recover the cost of damage to the vehicle?**

Lt. Siemer: We check with businesses to see if video coverage is available to review. We follow up wherever possible.

- c. Can video surveillance be installed in the Villages shopping center to help identify hit and run incidents and other issues?**

Richard Baier: There are no plans to install the kind of surveillance used in major malls.

The next VHA Town Hall will be in April.

Send questions any time to:

The VHA at www.thevha.net

Villages District officials at www.districtgov.org or call Customer Service 352-753-4508.

The Developer at www.thevillages.com. At the bottom of any page click on "Feedback."