

VHA Town Hall Meeting

April 2021

The VHA wants to thank the following people for providing answers to questions from VHA members and Villages residents for the VHA Town Hall meeting: Dr. Gary Lester – Vice President Community Relations, Richard Baier – Villages District Manager, Carrie Duckett – Assistant District Manager, Lt. Robert Siemer – District Lieutenant from the Sumter County Sheriff’s Department, Bradley Arnold – Sumter County Administrator.

(The next VHA Town Hall Meeting will be held in July.

Questions may be sent to the VHA at any time at www.thevha.net)

1. Would you please give an update on the plans for the site of the former Hacienda Hills Country Club?

Dr. Lester: This project is on hold as we are in discussion with the Town of Lady Lake. We remain committed to supporting our residents and our Spanish Springs merchants and keeping that Town Center strong. Adding a small number of second story apartments is a positive option for enhancing that Town Center. Just as we persisted in working with the City over twenty years ago to create Spanish Springs Town Square, we will persevere now to support our residents and businesses and keep that area active and vital for years to come.

2. Are there plans to build condominiums for residents who wish to move to a maintenance free lifestyle in an investment property rather than pay rent for an apartment?

Dr. Lester: There are no plans to build condominiums.

- 3. Would you please give an update on the movie theaters?**
- a. Progress and completion date of the Rialto Theater.**
 - b. Future plans for Villages movie theaters? i.e. technology; usage; a fourth theater.**

Dr. Lester: The roof of the Rialto Theater is being worked on now. The movie industry is going through many changes. Completing the Rialto Theater and decisions we make for all The Villages movie theaters is dependent on how the movie industry proceeds. Old Mill Playhouse in Lake Sumter Landing is now showing movies and hosting a variety of activities.

4. Are there plans for more dog parks particularly near the Village of St. Catherine?

Dr. Lester: Yes, there are plans to build a dog park east of the Villages of St. Catherine.

5. Would you please respond to residents who state “The Developer promised a 4th Town Square”?

Dr. Lester: Going forward, we are expanding the town center idea into more of a broader “lifestyle area”. So, like our current town centers, a lifestyle area will continue to be a focal point for the community with entertainment, shopping, dining and other services much like our current town centers but also adding more recreational opportunities to the mix...possibly golf or pickleball or even water sports. We are always listening to the residents and they have given us some great ideas on how to improve the model.

There's a lot of creativity and energy right now going into designing what a new "lifestyle center" could bring to the community.

- 6. Plans for parking around Sawgrass appear to accommodate more golf carts than automobiles. Would you please provide more details about this?**

Dr. Lester: The parking spaces for automobiles around Sawgrass are comparable to other parking areas in The Villages.

- 7. Are there plans to install fast charging electric stations for electric golf carts around The Villages now that connectivity has reached many more miles?**

Richard Baier: The District has no plans to invest Amenity Funds or other Maintenance Fee Funds into electric charging stations as it is reported that well over 80% of the carts are gas and the fees charged to recoup the initial investment would make their use prohibitive.

- 8. The following questions referred to The Villages planned championship golf courses south of SR 44:
 - a. What are the approximate dates for completing the 5 championship golf courses?**
 - b. What are the names of the other 4 championship courses planned after Southern Oaks?****

Dr. Lester: There are no names and dates of completion yet. When determined, these details will be published in the Daily Sun.

- 9. What is the approximate date of completion for the combined vehicular & multi-modal bridge over the Florida turnpike?**

Dr. Lester: The pace of house sales will determine the timing to proceed in building this bridge.

Q. Are there any permit issues building this bridge?

A. There are always conversations but no problems that I am aware of.

- 10. What is being done to bring the Villages golf courses into top-flight conditions?
 - a. Championship courses****

Dr. Lester: Crews have been working diligently to maintain these courses. This past year has had a record number of tee times and rounds of golf. Golf carts were doubled with requirements for single riders. Conditions are beginning to improve as crews continue to work.

- b. Executive courses**

Richard Baier: In order to keep courses in a top-flight condition we have implemented yearlong scheduled course maintenance closures for contractors to perform key agronomic practices. Enhanced accountability of maintenance contracts with additional supervisor positions and geographically assigned areas of supervision. Summer application for nematode control in conjunction with Championship Golf for improved turf health and density. Capital golf course improvement plans

for aging infrastructure. As we have had to implement safety protocols over the past year to keep golf an essential outdoor activity during COVID -19, we have also had to adapt our maintenance practices to support the over 440,000 increase in rounds from the prior year.

11. Are there plans to add more golf practice facilities south of 466A? Sarasota has become exceptionally crowded.

Dr. Lester: Yes. The Sarasota facility is certainly popular and additional practice facilities are planned.

12. What are the plans for adding more Executive golf courses south of SR 44 to support the new population? Many neighborhood golf groups are having great difficulty getting tee times.

Dr. Lester: Yes, there are plans to add more Executive golf courses. It needs to be noted that no day has ever had all tee times booked. Flexibility in scheduling is important.

13. Dog parks in The Villages have been upgraded. Mulberry Dog Park has been slated to be improved. When will this happen?

Richard Baier: I am pleased to announce the Mulberry Dog Park re-opened at 7:00 a.m., on Monday, April 19th following the installation of a beautiful shade structure and other improvements. The new shade pavilion is approximately 924 square feet (steel structure, PVC columns and trim with shingle roof). Other improvements included upgraded sidewalks, fencing, grounds around dog water guzzlers, as well as an application of rejuvenator and new striping on the parking lot. The total cost for this project was approximately \$113K, and we are extremely grateful to the members of the Authority Amenity Committee for authorizing the improvements to this recreational amenity. The Mulberry Dog Park is sure to be a wonderful area for residents and their pets.

14. Can the adult pools have The Villages radio station piped in as is done in the family pools? While the music is pleasant to hear, the radio also provides emergency weather warnings.

Richard Baier: Due to the number of offsite pools over 50 of them that would need to be wired for speakers and amp system the costs would need to be approved by the respective boards. The resident is certainly welcome to attend either AAC or PWAC for further direction.

Carrie Duckett: We encourage residents to add warning alerts to their cell phones. We, also, want to remind residents that the Public Safety Department will program weather radios for free.

15. Could you please explain why Community Watch does not report deed violations instead of requiring residents to report them? Owners of pre-owned homes are not always informed of their restrictions.

Richard Baier: Deed compliance is a complaint-driven process throughout each one of the Districts. Rather than having Community Watch or other District staff “police” deed restrictions, only those deed compliance violations reported are acted upon. Providing potential deed compliance violations is an easy process that can be done in person, over the phone, through email, or by mail. Once Community

Standards receives a complaint, a Deed Compliance Officer familiar with the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions for that specific unit verifies the complaint.

Copies of your Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions can be obtained online at www.DistrictGov.org For assistance, contact Community Standards at 352-751-3912.

Carrie Duckett: The complaint-driven process in District 5 states that no anonymous complaints may be made. In District 7 only one complaint may be made per method of communication

16. Can the walkway on the Sumter Landing Bridge be reduced in order to widen the golf cart lanes which seem too narrow for the newer model carts?

Richard Baier: Unfortunately, for several reasons, it is not possible for the Golf Car lanes in the vicinity of and crossing Morse Island into and out of the Lake Sumter Landing area. First, given the limited overall width of the lanes in that area, and the heavy automotive, golf car, and pedestrian traffic, there are no viable options that allow for expansion of the golf cart lanes while affording safe pedestrian lanes. The Morse Island Bridge itself would require a major re-engineering, reconstruction effort (or replacement) to accommodate expanded lanes while providing for adequate automobile and pedestrian lanes. As originally designed, there is adequate width for automobile and golf cart traffic while also affording safe access for pedestrians. Again, with the heavy traffic through this area in terms of an automobile, golf car, and pedestrian traffic, it is optimally designed and configured to ensure the safety of all who transit (auto or golf car) as well as jog, walk, or bike this area.

17. Are there plans to add safety features to the multi-modal paths south of SR 44 for night use such as guard rails; reflectors; lighting? There are long unlit stretches plus curves that create dangerous situations. i.e. traveling north on the path leaving the Village of Bradford.

Richard Baier: District Property Management (DPM) has been actively surveying and addressing incremental upgrades to the Multi-Modal paths south of SR44. The multi-modal paths were engineered and constructed under the supervision of a professional engineer and were turned over to the District as designed by the Developer. However, we have installed reflectors on all cart paths in District 13 and are surveying District 12 this week for the installation of reflectors. DPM is evaluating the impact to resident safety of installing reflectors every 20' in areas that are currently not well lit, such as the Chitty Chatty area. This is an ongoing project and DPM will make recommendations to District Supervisors and the Project Wide Advisory Committee based on the safety assessments that are currently being performed to ensure that our multi-modal paths are as safe as possible for everyone.

18. Would you please explain why renovations of Fenney Recreation Center included removing the Orange Blossom coffee shop? Residents believed this amenity would remain.

Dr. Lester: The Recreation Department indicated that they could utilize that space for additional recreation activities and since the Fenney Grill was open next door, we agreed to the new use by our residents.

19. Are residents allowed to park on the streets overnight in the Sumter County section of The Villages?

Lt. Siemer: Yes, in the residential areas, as long as the vehicle is parked with the right-hand wheels parallel to and within 12 inches of the right-hand curb or edge of the street. You cannot block other driveways, or

be within 30 feet of a stop sign. You cannot park within 15 feet from a fire hydrant and emergency vehicles must be able to pass.

20. Our amenity fees include a cost for fire support. Residents also pay an annual fire assessment fee which is supported in part by our property taxes. How is the amenity fee portion spent for fire support?

Richard Baier: An amount of \$4.08 month/ \$48.96 annual per amenity unit is provided to VPSD from the amenity funds. These funds are used to provide additional services including various fire prevention services, Fire alarm battery change-out program, and other emergency medical services expenses.

21. The following questions related to a grant received by The Villages:

- a. The Villages received a 3 year grant to increase Villages Public Safety fire staffing by 27 positions and engines. Please share when these positions will be staffed.**

Richard Baier: The positions were staffed on December 28, 2020.

- b. Does the grant impact our normal VPSD budget proposal for the County: showing an increase over the prior year or a reduction by the receipt of the grant?**

Richard Baier: The grant was funded 100% by FEMA. The Sumter County Budget FY20-21 was reduced by \$648,595.00 due to the grant. We increased the VPSD budget by \$301,196.00 to cover expenses such as uniforms, bunker gear, and Life Scan Physicals.

22. Can gate arms be painted yellow or reflectors added? Some people are color blind. Further, when driving at night or entering heavily shaded areas during daytime gate arms are difficult to see.

Richard Baier: The Traffic Control Guide states to use red and white reflective bands. Maintenance of lights on gate arms would increase the amount of repair work and costs when gate arms are knocked down. Driver responsibility is a key safety factor. By establishing consistency for drivers' expectations safer conditions are established. When reviewing the gate strike recordings, the most common issue is distracted motorists when going through the gates.

23. What is being done to reduce continuous speeding on Buena Vista Blvd and Morse Blvd?

Lt. Siemer: Every quarter the Sumter County Sheriff's Office issues an average of 800 and 1200 citations in The Villages. We use traffic units, road patrol, unmanned patrol vehicles, and speed enforcement signs to deter traffic violations. The speed enforcement signs do record speed, the day and times even when the speed is not displayed.

24. While being used as a speeding deterrent, can the unmanned patrol cars be relocated more frequently? Grass grows rapidly around them reducing their purpose.

Lt. Siemer: We try to move the unmanned vehicles weekly depending on the traffic units' workload. We will make it a priority.

25. What is the District AED program?

Richard Baier: The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) is a District within the Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD). VPSD operates, manages, and supervises an AED Program called Neighbors Saving Neighbors. There are 228 operational Neighbors Saving Neighbors AED groups and 29 new groups forming. There are over 800 AED's in service and more than 5,500 trained responders. Also, there are AED's located at Recreation Centers, Schools, Offices, and Community Watch maintains 23 AED's as well. There is approximately one AED for every 216 people in The Villages. The cardiac survival rate in The Villages for the year was 17% as compared to the National Average of 10%. VPSD is actively researching how we can increase the availability of AED's to the general public and provide more education at an even more affordable cost.

26. Recently an AED program supported by the County has been introduced in an area of the Villages. The program would use the application of Pulse Point as well as receive funding from the County for equipment. What update do you have on this program?

Bradley Arnold: The program is growing at the request of residents in The Villages® development and outside of the development. For more information on the program, residents can view the information on our website at <https://www.sumtercountyfl.gov/1232/Ambulance-Services>

27. EMS ambulances are experiencing response delays. What is creating the time delay and how is the County addressing the issue?

Bradley Arnold: For any response delay incidents, we review each of those, including the system as a whole to include the call taking, dispatch, all first response agency activities, transport (if part of that process), and time to offload of the patient to the hospital. The pandemic has impacted the system for over a year; therefore, looking at other causes is the task when reviewing each incident. The review includes our Medical Director team from the University of Florida College of Medicine since we are patient-focused and provide patient-care oversight of the two fire departments and ambulance service. Since they are part of the University of Florida, it provides an additional communication avenue with our local UF/Health hospitals. Sumter County is addressing the system as a whole by reviewing alternative systems that can significantly improve patient outcomes and reduce the duplication of services that increase the unnecessary cost to the system.

28. Prior reference had been made by the County that work was being done to “improve patient outcomes”. What is the conversation and what would this mean for residents of the Villages and the County?

Bradley Arnold: See my response in the question above regarding the review activities that are occurring. On May 18th, the Medical Director and I will be presenting information for Board direction to have a dedicated Medical Director Team-driven medical response that would include more units available and dedicated for medical response to reduce the burden of that response on the fire departments. If directed, the updated system would have a secondary benefit by gaining efficiencies in the system and reducing the duplication of costs for a medical response. The Board of County Commissioners is charged with the statutory authority for the provision of these services and the funding of both fire departments and ambulance service in Sumter County; therefore, the Board's direction and approval is required for structural changes to the system to service.

29. The County is expected to receive Covid relief funding from the Federal Government. How do you envision those dollars being used and are there any restrictions on their use?

Bradley Arnold: Any federal funds from the COVID relief funding will funnel to the State of Florida before distribution by a contract with conditions to Sumter County. There is no timing on when that will occur and what allocation limitations will be contained within that agreement. The U.S. Treasury is the rule-making entity for the federal law regarding the limitation and restriction interpretations of the law. Since it is only one-time revenue, then matching it to one-time expenditures such as capital improvements if used for County government purposes would be my recommendation.

30. Cazaras Avenue in Santa Domingo East needs repair. Camero Dr. and Enrique Dr. are smooth. Other streets seem to have been scraped but never repaired. Is there a schedule for them to resurfaced?

Bradley Arnold: We have a state grant that is programmed for FY 24 in the Florida Department of Transportation budget to support resurfacing of the neighborhood streets off of Cazaras Avenue (from El Camino Real to Madero Drive). Cazaras is not part of the grant funding but is planned for budget consideration after FY 24 when the grant-related work is complete. The grant-related resurfacing work programmed includes the side streets in the neighborhood stemming from the following roads off Cazaras Avenue (from El Camino Real to Madero): Dorian Lane, Santo Domingo Drive, Enrique Drive (East side only), and Cordero Ct (East side only).

31. Can a stop light be installed at Canal Street and 466A?

Bradley Arnold: The original design did not warrant the installation of a signal at this location. The traffic conditions at the intersection have not exceeded the original design considerations to support a warrant study.

32. Can an overhead yellow caution light be installed at the intersection of County Road 470 and 501?

Bradley Arnold: The current design plans for Central Parkway (fka C-470) at Marsh Bend Trail (fka C-501) will have a roundabout at this location. This project is nearing the final approval of the budget and construction drawings as part of The Villages® Companies Regional Road Agreement; therefore, this project will resolve the increased traffic concerns at this intersection.

33. An increase in the Fire Assessment fee maximum was recently advertised. Do you anticipate the current fee of \$124 increasing in the upcoming 21/22 budget? Any estimate of increase?

Bradley Arnold: That discussion and decision by the Board will not occur until July; however, based on the Board's decision on 4/13/21, if there was an increase, then it could only rise to \$125 per improved parcel since that is the current maximum rate.