

# Countryside Living...

A PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF THE DONALD ROSS LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.



## SIRWCD Approves Getting Road Estimates

At the SIRWCD meeting on July 21, the Board unanimously approved authorizing the engineer to go forward and prepare estimates for the requested road projects. Approximately 30 miles of roads have already submitted petitions for obtaining in estimate in PBCE for asphalt paving.

The number of petitions was greater than originally expected so the engineer advised that the project was large enough that it would not be piggy backed on County contracts, as lower bids could be obtained by opening the projects up to open bidding.

Once the estimated projects prices are arrived at by the engineer ballots will be sent out to all streets that asked for an estimate. If 51% of those voting request the paving project at the price that will be quoted on the ballot their road will be done.

Currently all streets in PBCE have submitted petitions for asphalt paving except for: 64th Drive north of 143rd Street, 153rd Court between 69th Drive and 69th Trail, 75th Way between 155th Place and 159 Court, 75th Way between 160th Lane and 162th Court, and 160th Lane.

In addition the following streets have asked for OGEM paving in PBCE but not asphalt: 153rd Court between 69th Drive and 69th Trail.

One street 85th Avenue between 150th Place and 154th Court has submitted petitions for both asphalt paving and to remain dirt.

## Officers and Committee Members


### Officers:

President - Michael Danchuk	626-2530
1st Vice President - Kevin Baker	748-3376
2nd Vice President - Bob Berman	627-1118
Treasure - Daniela Russell	575-5189
Secretary - Stephanie Duncan	575-7956

### Committees:

Beautification Committee- Valerie Rozzo	743-3290
COP Patrol - Bill Bolds	626-7638
Entrance - Kirk Humphreys	748-4595
Fall Festival - Scott Rice	723-5552
Helping Hands - Pam Malone	743-9912
Newsletter Editor/Advert. - Nicole Campbell	626-2530
Welcoming - Arie Strobel	748-6784
Sidewalks - Mike Danchuk	626-2530
N E C - Mike Danchuk	626-2530
Parks - Bob Berman	627-1118
Kirk Humphreys	748-4595
Mike Ryan	747-3233
Bill Meyers	745-6632

### Information:

 Equestrian - Beverly Bean	575-4411
RV/Camping Club - Connie McCormick	744-2938
SIRWCD - www.sirwcd.org	747-0550



## Halloween Special Event

Because our large lots make it hard for the children to trick or treat, an idea has been brought up that will be tried this year in Palm Beach Country Estates. Your Association will be sponsoring a special parade type event through the community for all those that like to dress up.

We plan to have it between 6PM and 8PM on October 31, Halloween night. Preliminary plans are to have any type of vehicles such as bicycles, golf carts, wagons, and hopefully even a hay wagon for those that want to participate. Costumes will be required and we hope to have homes in Palm Beach Country Estates that will welcome the tricker treaters. **If you are interested in having a visit from this unusual group, please call one of the Board members to put your name on the list of welcoming homes. Please make sure to call early as we will likely limit the homes being visited to about 30, because of time limitations.** Hopefully you will also remember to have treats and candy for all the little children.

This event is for the children in our community, but we would be surprised and disappointed if the moms and dads as well as older brothers and sisters did not also get involved and of course dress up. Call a Board member for more information.

## County Changes Set Back Rules

It was recently discovered that the county had changed the set back rules that apply to properties in PBCE. The county had made the changes effective last year and they would apply to all new construction or additions.

Originally PBCE fell under a regulation that stated the set backs would be based on a percentage, unless the property was under 1½ acres. If the property was 1 ½ acre or less then the setbacks would be 25' on each side, for buildings and additions. Since most properties in PBCE were under 1½ acres the 25' setback applied to most home owners.

The new set back rules that took effect last year took out the 1½ acre exemption. The set backs now are: front - 30% of depth, side (corner)-20% of width, side (interior)- 15% of width, and rear- 20% of depth.

When dealing with properties with approximately 1.15 acres this change will have a dramatic effect on the ability of the property owner to build or add to their home. A typical lot in PBCE is 220' in width

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and 240' deep. This would have an area of 52,800 feet. With a 25' setback there would be 32,800 square feet of usable space. With the new setback rules there would only be 18,480 square feet that could be used to build on. This is a reduction in usable property for most property owners in PBCE of over 40%. Several home owners that have recently applied for building permits have already been advised that they can not build their additions because of these new regulations.

Because of the seriousness of this change Michael Danchuk had met with the Zoning Department to ask them to reconsider their action. They requested a written request for clarification. Recently Michael received a letter from Jon MacGillis, Zoning Director, that the change would remain. The Director stated that the County feels that allowing the 25 foot setbacks would take away from a rural atmosphere, and that the percentage setbacks were adequate for the PBCE community.

At a recent Landowners meeting all the residents except one, voted that the setbacks should remain 25 foot, and that this setback is more than adequate as the minimum between homes or additions would have to be at least 50 feet. It was also noted at the meeting that there are many homes that are already built with the original 25' set back, and the change would not be fair for those attempting to currently build granny quarters and garage additions.

Michael Danchuk, has contacted Commissioner Karen Marcus, to obtain her assistance in getting the setbacks returned to their original situation.

## Neighborhood Reinforcement Act

Recently Michael Danchuk had requested that the County Commissioners consider a special tax program for those individuals that chose to live in their homes for over 10 years.

As values of homes in Palm Beach County are increasing at a tremendous rate, the taxing structure has been providing the county a windfall in revenue. The "Save our Homes" amendment has helped residents of Florida by limiting the increase in taxes to 3% per year if the property is homesteaded. This is a good program but for those on a fixed income an increase of 30% over 10 years may still force them to leave their home.

Because some of the pioneers of our communities are taxed out of their homes Michael felt that the County should consider a special tax limitation for those that stay in their home for over 10 years. This would give a community a sense of history and unity, and may allow some elderly residents or others to stay in their homes.

The program Michael proposed to the County Commissioners would be called the Neighborhood Reinforcement Act. It would work similar to the 3% Save our Homes act, however it would add the limitation that if a resident lived in the home for over 10 years, and if the home was homesteaded, the assessed value would no longer increase after the 10th year.

Michael is following up with Commissioner Karen Marcus to see what can be done to get this program implemented, as it would not take away tax dollars, and may allow some resident to stay in their neighborhood. Any feedback is appreciated and you can contact Michael at 626-2530.

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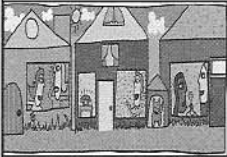
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## Beautification Committee Launches Community Wide Effort



We live in a truly unique and diverse neighborhood that is continually improving. In order to continue and accelerate the rate of improvement, The PBCE Beautification Committee is launching an effort to encourage and reward home owners for beautifying the community and their existing homes. Each season, we will feature in the newsletter recognition for homes of special interest. In addition, the beautification committee will be looking to offer recognition for homes or neighbors that make an special effort to make PBCE a beautiful environment. Noteworthy home and street improvements may also be submitted to local media for publication.

The beautification committee would like to assemble a team of experts from our own community who offer the array of services for home improvement: Landscaping, Painting, Pressure Cleaning, Roofing, Electrical, Plumbing, General Contracting, Pools, Architectural Design, Interior Design, etc. If you are interested in becoming part of our team, let us know.

We don't want to leave behind anyone. There are residents in our neighborhood who need assistance with their homes. Due to age, disabilities, or financial limitations, many are not able to fix a roof, pressure clean, paint, or do landscaping. The beautification committee is the link between neighbors who need help and those who would like to donate their time. If you or one of your neighbors is in need of assistance, please submit the house in need of repair to our chairperson. Likewise, if you are able to donate time, services, money, or materials for this effort, please contact us. A few hours of your time can make a difference. We will coordinating our program with the Helping Hands Committee on overlapping efforts. Here's to a beautiful future!

*Valerie Rozza*-Beautification Committee Chair

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FREE ESTIMATES

## Minutes of Meeting July 19, 2005

Officers present; Mike Danchuk-President, Kevin Baker-Vice President Bob Berman-2nd Vice President.

Treasurers report- There is approximately \$9,000 in the account. The exact amount will be confirmed when the Treasurer returns at the next meeting.

**New Business - By-Laws** The by-laws were changed by the previous Board. Updating the by-laws was an excellent idea. However, the new Board felt certain items need to be clarified and discussed. The first discussion clarified the question of how many officers constitute a majority? Current bylaws state that two officers were sufficient, if they consist of the President and Secretary. A recommendation was made that at least 3 Board members must be present for a Board meeting, and at least 3 Board members must vote for a decision to pass. The second issue discussed was how the by-laws state officers are elected. Current by-laws state that the community votes for Board Members and then the Board votes on which Board member will hold what office. It was suggested by residents present that the community be allowed to vote for the individuals running for a particular office on the Board. It was also suggested that the terms of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary be staggered. Terms would consist of two years- in order that all Board members were not new all at the same time.

The issue of signatures on checks was discussed next. Community members agreed that it was important that it be clear that one of the two signatures on any check written by the Board should be the Treasurer. During further discussion of by-law changes, it was recommended that a quorum must consist of 3 out of 5 members. All by-law changes will be brought to the Community for discussion and clarification.. Clarifications will then go before board members where there must be at least 3 positive votes.

Elections should be held every year and the process of two year terms will be implemented. All the membership will be allowed to vote for elections. By-law changes will be introduced in the newsletter prior to a change and there will be a meeting before the Board votes on them so there can be community input.

**Website** It was brought up that revenue and expenditures will now be posted on the website. This way community members can see where dues are spent. This may be more effective than an audit, as a proper audit would cost several thousand dollars. New members names can be introduced, if they want, on the web. The website is PBCE.ORG and it will be maintained by a Palm Beach Country Estates resident. Mark Powell has offered his services. Suggestions from Community members included putting useful dates about community events on the web-site.

**Name Tags** Residents will be offered name tags at future meetings so that members can get to know each other.

**Welcoming Committee** Ms. Ari Stroebel noted that she is gathering items for the Welcome packets she is putting together for new residents. She would appreciate items from community members with businesses. Any items or suggestions for the packets will gladly be accepted.

**Park** There will be a meeting Saturday -at the lot being donated by Bob Berman for the new park. The lot is at the end of 69th. Refreshments will be served. Everyone who is interested in organizing the park project is invited to attend.

**Water Update** Bob Berman reported that the SIRWCD received bids from 10 companies. 3 of the companies are in the top 10 in the United States. Bid packages will go out this week and the Board will confirm

when and how the time frame will take place at the District meeting this Thursday night. Water distribution will be from north to south. Those who live closer to the front entrances will probably be hooked up later rather than earlier in the process.

**Road Paving** Only five roads have not sent in petition requests for paving. Estimates are underway.

**Set Backs** For reasons unknown the County has changed the setbacks as of last year from 25' to a percentage setback. This has caused setbacks to be much larger than they were before. These setbacks would have been more reasonable for lots of about 2½ acres, and PBCE lots are not that large. Many structures that are currently existing in PBCE would not be allowed by the new set backs. Several new building plans have already been rejected. These new setbacks will present problems for the building of garages, granny flat, and other expansions. A vote was taken of those in attendance and all residents at the meeting voted to ask the County to return to the 25' set back, except one person.

**Sound Barriers** It was felt that sound barriers may be needed, but we should see how those most affected along the turnpike feel about them. Bob Berman noted that public participation will drive what happens and where with sound barriers. The decisions revolve on the cost per benefited area, and because we have large lots its will be difficult to get them for our side of the road.

**COP** Bill Bolts stated that the Sheriff is currently out of COP cars. We still need a total of 30 people to have a program in PBCE. Also there is now a problem with financing the COP program as the community has to pay for the fuel, and fuel costs have gone up drastically in the last several years. Possibly we could get a donated electric car if it is available.

**Police Blotter** It was discussed as to whether to list crimes in the community. It was felt it should not be listed on the website, but possibly in the newsletter. This would include info on speeding and accidents. Phone boxes Concern was expressed about the phone boxes at the corner of 155th and 75th that block vision. Residents will check with the phone company to see if anything can be done.

**Traffic Controls** A possible 4 way flashing traffic control at 75th and 155th was discussed. Also litter signs may be requested. Speed bumps were discussed, but as feeling pro and against were about equal they will not be pursued. Straw poles may be done in the future on speed bumps.

**Clean Up Day** A clean up day will be scheduled by the end of the year. Meeting was adjourned about 9:30PM.

*Nicole Campbell* - Substitute Secretary

## ADVERTISING

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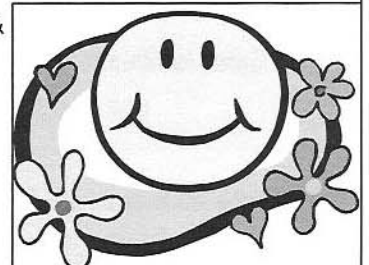
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### Message from the President

Wow talk about a lot happening in Palm Beach Country Estates. This issue covers just some of the items of interest and concern.

To be involved make sure you join some of the committees being set up, as it will only help your community, and they are a great way to meet your neighbors.

One of the nice things about being able to write this section is that I can express my personal views. These are opinions I have as an individual, not necessarily representing the opinions of the Donald Ross Landowners Association Board, or the South Indian River Water Control Board, even though I am a member of both.

Recently we have seen the many petitions for getting our roads paved. I personally feel that no matter how you feel about paving versus keeping your roads dirt, you still owe it to yourself to be part of those getting an estimate. Then if you decide you do not want your road paved just vote no. But at least you will have a choice. If you are not sure if your street is one of several that at last count did not have a petition for an estimate, you may want to consider calling the SIRWCD or me to check and possibly send in a petition.

With the number of streets being included in this estimate there will be an economy of scale. If you are not part of this estimate you may find that the cost in the future may be much higher. Also it is likely that if a large majority of the roads are paved, then the maintenance cost of the dirt roads will go up.

I also feel that if you are considering putting a hard surface on your roads you should go with the asphalt type paving NOT the OGEM. There are a few roads in Palm Beach Country Estates that have sent in petitions for both surfaces. They will need to choose one or the other.

I believe the asphalt surface is a more durable surface, more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and aesthetically more pleasing. Even though the initial cost may be slightly higher than OGEM, because of its durability, in my opinion it will be cheaper in the long run than the OGEM. So I strongly recommend, that you choose in Palm Beach Country Estates to get the estimate for asphalt not OGEM paving. *Michael Danchuk*



### Police Blotter

Recently some residents have received mail that had a return address from the Palm Beach County Sheriffs Office. The letter contained a page from the police blotter. The PBSO has advised residents that asked about it, that the letter was not sent out by them even though it had their return address.

### Vandalism



We have been getting reports of vandalism. Mail boxes, eggs on metal fences, and front entrance. This is costing money and information obtained indicates it is our own kids. Please talk to your children to make sure they are not involved.

### Letters to the Editor



Space permitting we will accept letters to the editor for publication. If a letter is accepted for publication, it must be signed by the writer. No anonymous letters will be accepted.

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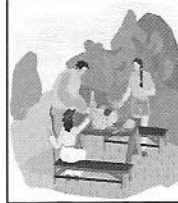
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### Community Park

A small but active group of volunteers met on July 23, 2005 at the corner of 69<sup>th</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup> for a planning meeting of the future community park. There were drinks and

sandwiches available, as promised. The midday temperature was quite high, but did not burn out the ideas and enthusiasm for the project. Fortunately Bob Berman brought his motor home and kept the air conditioning going so everyone was able to cool off.

The park, which will be built on land provided by the Berman family, has been discussed for over a decade. Michael Danchuk had asked the group to get together at the site, so plans could start to be formulated. A short walk was taken by the group around the site which is between 69<sup>th</sup> and a turnpike canal.

Bill Meyers, a resident of PBCE presented an informative video showing playgrounds that could be designed and built by the community under the guidance of Leathers and Associates, which has helped with similar parks in Jupiter and other areas of Palm Beach County.

It was decided to do a presentation of the playground program at the next Landowners meeting. A one year time frame to get the park project done was set. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact the Landowners Association or the Park Committee.

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### **\*\*Land Owners Meeting\*\***

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**Neighborhood News**