

## March 2018 Palermo Newsletter

The Palermo Board of Directors wishes to provide its owners with a brief update of material activities occurring within our Association that were discussed at the recent Board meeting.

**Board Meeting:** On March 13, 2018 a Board meeting was held.

**See Something Say Something:** Please be aware that on March 8<sup>th</sup> and the following day, several residents of Palermo viewed two non-residents accessing our neighborhood through the open area on the side of the construction gate. These gentlemen reportedly were running around on various homeowner's back yards and also fishing in the ponds on both sides of the gate. When approached, the men were combative and threatening. In both cases Venice Police were called and the Front Gate was also informed. Further, the VCDD was advised of the lack of security in our neighborhood due to the construction area fencing not yet being completed. The VCDD has indicated they will accelerate the completion of the fencing project, post additional no trespass signs, and meet with Venice Police to advise them that we need rapid deployment to this area should they receive a call of trespass from residents. They did further note that "short of stringing barbed wire around the whole community" the best deterrent against trespassers is to contact the Venice Police Department (941-486-2444) as soon as possible when trespassers are viewed. For your own safety, we strongly advise against approaching or speaking to any trespassers. We are told that this problem will be on the March 26th VCDD Board Agenda, so it would be advisable for Palermo neighbors who are concerned about this issue to show up at this meeting.

**Palermo Financial Status:** At the Board meeting an unaudited balance sheet and income statement of Palermo through February 28, 2018 was distributed and discussed by Mark Faford, Treasurer and Secretary. Mark indicated that, as of the balance sheet date, the Association had \$58,857 of cash on hand, for the most part due to the timing of quarterly collections and the fact that some of the expenses payable, such as mulching and insurance, are due and payable in the latter part of the calendar year, and due to the fact that the \$15,000 planned for sod replacement this year is only partially expended at this time. Mark reported that quarterly fees as of the reporting date from all homeowners have been fully paid. From an expense perspective, Mark reported that, at present, expenses incurred have been slightly less than those budgeted primarily due to timing of the expenditure of monies budgeted for sod replacement. Further, the Association has provided for an annual expense contingency of \$6,000 and none of those funds have been expended as of yet. The Palermo financial statements as of February 28, 2018 can be found on the Palermo Web Site ([www.mypalermohoa.com](http://www.mypalermohoa.com))

**Landscaping:** The Board discussed various landscaping related matters. Phil Occhino noted that it has been a year since ArtisTree was hired by the Association. We have been conducting frequent walk throughs with the ArtisTree Account Manager to continue to work on any areas needing improvement. In preparation for the next meeting with the Account Manager and his superior, a survey on landscaping

performance was sent to residents. Eleven homeowners responded (14%), and very few negative comments were included in the responses. Thank you to those that responded. The Board has identified several areas where we would like to see improvement:

- Better cleanup of mowing debris, particularly the sweeping of lanai pads
- An attempt not to over trim tight areas around equipment that cannot be accessed by the lawn mowers, as these areas are burning out
- Attention to weed control, if possible, as several properties show a high incidence of weeds
- Improved communication of landscape areas needing attention or irrigation deficiencies due to malfunction or coverage gaps

Further, it has been noted that the person applying Round Up this month was either incorrectly using their equipment or had a leaking applicator, and, as a result, several grass areas were damaged. ArtisTree has been shown a sample of these areas (mainly at the farther end of Padova towards the cul de sac) and ArtisTree has agreed this is their fault. The employee will be spoken to and if these areas do not regrow, ArtisTree will rectify the problem with new sod.

**ArtisTree Services:** As a result of the survey, it was determined that the Board should provide homeowners a schedule of the timing of ArtisTree's main tasks. This schedule was handed out at the Board Meeting and is now posted on our web site. Note that:

- ArtisTree trims shrubs at the time that it is horticulturally appropriate to do so, no more frequently than once per month
- ArtisTree cleans out donut areas around sprinkler heads once per month
- ArtisTree edges planting beds one or two times a month, depending on the season

Therefore, if you see a certain task has not been completed at the time of mowing, please don't assume it has been forgotten, it may be that it is not scheduled for the particular week.

**NOTE:** All issues of any type, including Landscaping Issues, are to be reported to Brian Rivenbark at Sunstate, either by email or through the Association Web Site portal, and NOT communicated directly to ArtisTree.

**Irrigation:** The VG&RC CDD is the responsible party for deciding whether homes are permitted one or two watering cycles per week. Since June, only one watering per week has been allowed, but finally as of March the VCDD has decided to allow two, two-hour waterings per week.

All homes are outfitted with an Irrigation Control Box that is programmed with the date and time that the home's lawn and shrubs are to be watered based on the last digit of the home's address and the CDD's permitted schedule. The Irrigation schedule can be

found on [www.venetianpoa.com](http://www.venetianpoa.com). Watering outside of this schedule may result in fines imposed by the POA to the homeowner (the fines are not imposed to the Association or the landscaper).

The Palermo Association has decided to leave all Irrigation Control Boxes unlocked, so that homeowners can help in their obligations regarding Irrigation Controls. Note that our landscaper will perform a Wet Check once per month for each home and will be deployed to fix any irrigation problem reported by a homeowner to Sunstate. That said, in between Wet Checks, each homeowner must take personal responsibility to ensure there is power to their Irrigation Control Box and to notice and report any indications of malfunctions, including dying grass and shrubs. Both ArtisTree and the homeowner have a role in ensuring the Irrigation Control Boxes function, but ultimately the homeowner is potentially fined for watering at unauthorized times.

The Board has also decided to begin a program of accompanying ArtisTree's irrigation specialists on Wet Checks, with a deep dive for several homes each time to ensure that the quality of the Wet Check is sufficient to identify all issues and any gaps in coverage due to placement of irrigation heads. We are all impacted by the amount of water that the VCDD permits, but we are focused on at least ensuring that the water we do get is delivered in the best way possible with functioning sprinkler heads.

**Mulch:** Cocoa Brown mulch was applied to planting beds in November, with a follow up on some additional mulch needs subsequently. Homeowners have reported they are very pleased with the change in color. Plans are to apply Cocoa Brown mulch in November, 2018. We expect to apply 150 cubic feet of mulch to each home's planting beds and tree surrounds, with an opportunity for homeowners to order in advance, at their own cost, any additional mulch they would like delivered for homeowner application, in light of the fact that a few properties have larger beds than the average home. Homeowners will be informed in the future of the planned mulch application date.

**New Sod:** The Board has budgeted \$15,000 for sod replacement at homes for which bare areas are not progressing. Phase I of the sod replacement has occurred with great success at a cost of \$4,629. Based on a homeowner survey of backyard bare area sod needs, Phase II of the sod replacement is now being priced out. Homeowners whose properties are included in Phase II will be informed regarding the schedule for Phase II installation in the coming weeks.

**Common Areas surrounding Palermo:** All of the areas of land surrounding Palermo that are not part of homeowner properties are common areas that will ultimately be owned and maintained by the VCDD. These areas include lakes and lake banks, the preserve areas and adjacent land, the roadways, the construction road area, the entrance structural monument area, the area next to 460 Padova, an area next to 512 Padova, and the cul de sac planting circle. Presently these areas are owned and maintained by Lennar. The Association has been informed that the transfer of ownership amongst other things will be subject to the completion of a punch list, which

we do not have access to. The Association is not involved in this transfer and has no role in signing off on any punch list. If you have any specific concerns, that you would like to articulate on this matter, you are welcome to contact Kareen Richard and/or Jerry Jasper, Chairman VCDD.

We have been told that removal of Brazilian Pepper Trees from the preserve areas is included in the aforementioned punch list. Part of this project has been completed and we are told that an inspection by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), which we believe includes a review of this removal, is scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup>. A Palermo Board Member will attend as an observer and report back any relevant information to the community.

#### **A Few Reminders:**

- Power washing of sidewalks and street aprons is a homeowner responsibility.
- Please ensure your guests do not park with the wheels of their cars on the grass fronting your property or on the sides of your driveway. This kills the grass and the Association cannot take responsibility for replacing grass that has been damaged due to homeowner and guest actions.
- Please do not leave landscape debris or garbage/recycling containers on the grass adjacent to your driveway, if at all possible. If left for any period of time, this will kill the grass.
- Please keep your garage door closed to prevent animal entry, grass clippings blowing in, and/or theft.

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### **The Palermo Board of Directors Nancy Spokowski -- Phil Occhino -- Mark Faford**

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