

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

April 2015

## **Summer House Owners:**

The Board of Directors of Summer House is still working with the Staff and others to plan and execute major initiatives. The Staff has been asked not only to help in these efforts, but also to maintain the normal procedures and routines of operating the property and the business of the HOA. It's a full plate for everyone. A short review of the highlights follows.

## **Golfside Re-Pipe**

At this point, we have completed the re-pipe of the majority of the Golfside buildings, but much remains. The six untouched buildings all have three stories, which means that there are second floor units in each building not accessible from the attic, a challenge from a technical point of view. Progress on these buildings will be a little slower than we have experienced to date, both because of the access issues and because those building designs contain more units per building.

We are already experiencing fewer slab leaks. When St. Johns County recently replaced their water meters on the Golfside [a project unrelated to ours], we experienced no slab leaks. During the first water meter replacement phase a few months ago, we experienced several. Bottom line: the re-pipe is a disruptive, sometimes inelegant process, but it's working.

## **Water Heaters**

During the re-pipe process, our entry into each unit has afforded us an unusually detailed view of the operating condition of all of the water heaters on site. The vast majority of water heaters on the Golfside are ten years old, the end of their useful lives. We have experienced several instances lately, not associated with the re-pipe, in which water heaters simply burst and spread thirty or forty gallons of water around several units, usually at a cost to the unit owner of thousands of dollars. It's going to happen again and again. Owners pay for the damage to their units and the damage to other units. Why not change out the water heater at a discounted price while the HOA plumbers are on site? Fair warning: when your water heater bursts or leaks, it's not an HOA responsibility. If that happens to you and you call the office, you will be advised to hire a plumber and a water extraction company.

## **Landscaping**

Spring has sprung. The Board and Staff have a more aggressive and well-funded plan this year for addressing the landscaping. As is normal for this time of year, there is much to do. Fortunately, we have a functioning Landscaping Committee that has been traversing the property with the Supervisor of the landscaping contractor [and once with the Owner of the company] identifying and pricing projects for the landscaping crew. We're also cutting back the trees and foliage in places where it interferes with structures. If you have suggestions, the Landscape Committee will be happy to hear them. The committee members are volunteers who receive no compensation for their time and effort; constructive suggestions communicated appropriately are welcome.

## **Golfside Color Change Proposal**

Two of our Board members have been focusing on addressing the details of the Golfside color change, communicating with the product supplier in an attempt to understand the long term maintenance characteristics of the material, and working with the Staff to prepare the proxy materials necessary for another vote. Those proxy materials will be distributed shortly.

## **Hardie Board Project**

Two of our Board members have been focusing on addressing the details of the Hardie Board construction project, working with our architect on construction drawings and preparing plans and processes for the management of this long term project. This project is designed to significantly upgrade the basic physical characteristics of the Golfside over a period of years, transforming HOA maintenance cost requirements and, most importantly, lifting real estate values for everyone in the entire community. Our architect, Dennis Williams, will be in attendance at our next Board Meeting on April 29 at 2:30 pm to spend some time with the Board exploring the details of the project.

## **Landlords, Tenants and the HOA**

Ours is a large and inclusive community, and we welcome owners who wish to reside here and we welcome owners who invest. For those owner-investors, please be mindful that you are obligated to register your tenants and their vehicles. The Staff is discovering a number of unregistered tenants in our complex. It is quite common for unregistered tenants to have their vehicle towed [expensive], which also results in a fine to the owner for failure to register a tenant [also expensive]. The real world result is that it is an unpleasant experience for everyone, including the Summer House Staff. Please register your tenants, provide them with the Rules and Regulations, and ask them to comply. Not registering tenants deprives the HOA of information on residents which, in emergencies, can be extremely important. For those who choose to openly flaunt the rules, please be aware that the likelihood is high that you will get caught, anyway.

### **Speaking of Rules, Let's Talk About Trash Left Outside Units**

Everyone associated with rules enforcement dislikes the task. Residents routinely speak to the Staff abusively when the Staff requests compliance or photographs a violation by those who actively refuse to comply with the rules [sadly, it's a regular feature of rules enforcement]. Owners should realize that, as a practical matter, the HOA will always be there. Addressing the Staff with disrespect is not a long term success strategy. And where the rubber meets the road is TRASH. Trash attracts vermin, which are nasty, unhealthy to the community and expensive to eradicate. Eradicating vermin is only possible if you eradicate their food source. The Board and the Staff are serious about this issue. If an owner or a tenant leaves trash outside their door, the owner will be fined. It's a health and cost issue. Don't expect the Compliance Committee [again, thank you to these volunteers] to reduce your fine. Unless you were on your way to the emergency room, they probably won't. "I only left it there for 3 minutes" and "I didn't know about the rule" won't work either. We also experience constant complaints about residents not picking up after their dogs and leaving "doggie bags" outside their doors [also a vermin food source.] Please pick up after your dogs and dispose of those items properly.

### **Let's Talk About Your Patio or Balcony, Too**

Shannon Kolacz, our Property Manager, sent out an email recently advising residents to be aware of the condition and contents of their patios and balconies, particularly on the Beachside and particularly in areas that are infrequently trafficked. Her advice is sound. These kinds of rules violations are not similar to trash violations in that they do not create a general health hazard. But the Staff will inspect the entirety of the property during the spring, and those grills and exercise machines and construction materials on patios will result in fines. She warned you and I have now warned you...because we don't want to fine you, but we all have to play by the rules.

### **Window Replacement**

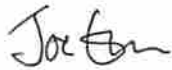
We have received reports of local contractors representing to owners that they are the only approved vendors for window replacement in Summer House. This is a complete misrepresentation. The Board retains architectural review responsibility for window replacement, but we only require that replacement windows be consistent with the existing windows in Summer House. We do not endorse particular vendors. Once you have received architectural review approval of the window materials to be used, owners are completely free to purchase and install such windows from any vendor/contractor of their choice.

**Contact Information**

Please take a moment to ensure that the Staff has up-to-date contact information for you and, if applicable, your tenants. Especially important are phone numbers and email addresses because they allow the Staff to contact owners quickly and inexpensively. With 463 condos, we have a regular stream of minor emergencies that require instant communication [water infiltration into other units, for example...recall the water heater situation]. The Staff is often very effective at mitigating small disasters but we need to be able to communicate quickly and effectively with residents. Also, please make sure the Staff has a key to your unit, another effective tool in an emergency.

Thanks for your trust and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Gill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Joe Gill