



The Scoop!

News that concerns residents of the North River Shores Community
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Edited by Lou Tudor

692-3939

Reasons Not to Vote

There was a guy on the Board five years ago I didn't like.

I forgot where that envelope is they mailed us.

Because THEY want us to vote.

I plan to move, so who cares?

I'm not going to vote 'til they put in sewers!

It's all rigged. Somebody on the "inside" makes sure the right votes win.

It's all going downhill, anyway.....

I haven't lived here long enough to know what the issues are.

I'll be in Hawaii.

What proxy package? I never got one.

I don't get involved in that Association stuff.

Nothing's going to change anyway, so why bother?

Most of us know all of the above excuses are pretty close to reality. It's called the apathy of human beings....when good people do nothing.

If you are a member of the North River Shores Property Owners Association, you have some very important voting issues coming up. By mid October, you will be mailed a proxy package containing all the information you need to cast votes for your preferences.

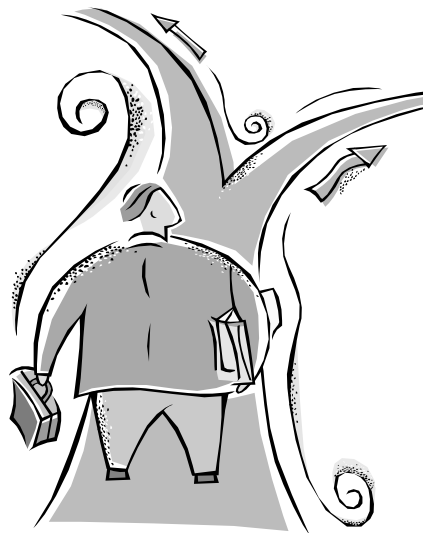
The decisions made by the 2/3 majority of voters will decide the fate of this neighborhood.

We as a community have come to a fork in the road. Your votes determine which way we turn. If you don't vote, your neighbors will make that decision for you and you may not like your fate.

Think about why you moved here in the first place.....Most of us moved here for similar reasons.....big open yards, privacy, access to boating, close to good schools, churches and shopping, family friendly neighborhood, maintained common areas, continued increase in property value. Sound about right? Make sure your vote is cast...because the issues are all about your property.

Typically, the number of Association members who actually turn in a vote is only one-third of the total membership. What a pity! If you are a member of the silent majority...wake up! The results of these decisions are going to affect you and your family for a very long time. We'll all abide by the majority vote, so please be a part of that decision making process.

Still Keepin' the Peace,
Lou Tudor
President, NRSPOA, Inc.



NRSPOA Annual Membership Meeting
Thursday, November 15th, 7 PM
See Page 6 of this issue
for information

NRS Residents for Change

Let us all look at the dual system of deed restrictions presently in effect for NRS. The map shows 517 NRS properties. More than 160 home sites are not in the NRSPOA, so have defaulted to Martin County Codes. Our recent survey shows that 115 homes in the NRSPOA want one system of codes (MC) and to return to a voluntary association (with no lien power for non-payment of dues.) The 115 residents added to those who refused to sign five years ago represent a majority wanting this change. In our survey, only 19 responses want no changes.

There are 185 home sites presently in the NRSPOA next to home sites on MC codes. Of these, 52 border on 2 or more lots on MC codes. The triangular lot at 1683 Dove Court borders on six lots, five of which are on MC codes. For copies of the map write to NRS Residents for Change, 4267 N.W. Federal Hwy, #155, Jensen Beach, FL 34957 or e-mail NRS4Change@comcast.net.

In the fall of 2006 a Five Point Plan was presented to the NRS Board. The two main points are:

1) One System of Codes – The 160+ residents not in the NRSPOA will never sign, not even a set of compromised codes. A divisive lawsuit five years ago drew a deep line in the sand between residents. The NRSPOA selected 12 people and filed suit to force them to join. The suit was settled in favor of the 12 residents, NOT the NRSPOA. Now nobody who understands this situation is likely to join the NRSPOA.

One of the biggest fears of MC codes is people not wanting a house 6' from their property lines. Fortunately, most of the lots in NRS are large (100' wide) and most people use common sense in recognizing the need to get around their house with vehicles. 160+ lots have been on MC codes for 5 to 6 years, and we haven't seen any major changes to these side setbacks.

2) Voluntary Association – We need to return to a voluntary system and get rid of the power of the lien which was added five years ago. Many (including lawyers and judges) did not sign because they didn't want to tie their property to the courts. This lien law has seldom been used. A voluntary system will

encourage some non-signers to contribute annual dues money. They still like the parks, use the boat ramp, and want common areas to look nice and remain in the control of the NRS.

The other three parts of the Five Point Plan include:

3. Keep a Strong United Association – With one set of codes, welcome back the 160+ non-signers. Those who pay their dues voluntarily will get a key to the boat ramp (one key, one lock - not the present two key, two lock system.) With one system of codes, the NRSPOA will be freed up to focus on important items affecting NRS, like school sites, mall access roads and rehabilitation half-way houses.

4. Reduce the Dues – by going to one system of codes, the need for lawyers for the two-tiered code system ought to be reduced. Also, the present budget of \$30,000 for the parks does seem a bit excessive.

5. Continue to Improve the Parks – There has been a nice improvement with our parks. In the past, donations have been solicited (and received) for special projects.

We feel for the board, caught up in trying to work within a dual system of codes. The situation is the same as if two-thirds of MC residents had to obey the MC traffic laws and speed limits and the other one-third races by on some other system.

Several former NRSPOA board members support our efforts. One resigned because he could not deal with the dual standards, and in good conscience administer a stricter set of codes when his own property was sandwiched between two houses on MC codes. There has been a valiant effort for six years to recreate a deeded community and resolve the problem created by Arbogast 55 years ago by putting 50-year life on restrictions, but the number of people refusing to sign proves the effort to be unsuccessful.

The issue will be on the November ballot. Let's re-create the pleasant, family atmosphere for which NRS was known! Vote for one system of codes (Martin County) and to make membership voluntary (remove the lien laws.)

Pete Meier – NRS Residents for Change



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THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NOVEMBER MEETING

An important fall event is fast approaching, and warrants considerable thought for all of us in North River Shores. That event is the November NRS Association annual meeting. Put it on your calendar now, or like me you may tend to over schedule the month, and miss the opportunity to voice your opinion about changes in our neighborhood.

And about those changes.....I, for one, am in favor of updating the covenants as needed and as agreed upon by the majority. Our system is a good system, but will always and forever be subject to updates and changes, as are our very lives. Unfortunately, we have a group (NRS Residents for Change) who represent themselves as fighting for the neighborhood. This group wants their way regardless of how the majority will vote, regardless of how it affects the rest of the neighborhood, or regardless of how many law suits they need to file. Don't be fooled! This benefits no one except the lawyers. I would invite these neighbors to join in the association, serve on the Board of Directors, join a committee, and present ideas that implement change to make our Association better. Leveling the playing field, by lowering all of our standards to that of Martin County codes, does not sound like an improvement. Spreading inaccurate and confusing information, conducting flawed surveys and distributing inaccurate results, is not the way to solve this dilemma. Listening to each other, gathering accurate information, and giving every person or group the opportunity to vote on their proposals, is the way to go! Then we live together in NRS as friends and neighbors, and adjust the amendments as needed.

Let's stop the lawsuits and the hatefulness. Let's work on improving our 70% participation in the association. We need to be one group of neighbors working together. We now have a Board of Directors who are flexible, hard working, receptive to new ideas and change, and willing to resolve issues without legal action.

It's time to get out your copy of the current covenants and study them just a bit. You'll understand why our neighborhood is so much more appealing than other areas in Martin County that have no association. Talk to your friends, neighbors, and Board members, if you still have questions. The time is now to get informed and the time to act will be at the November meeting. See you there!

Karen Fortmeyer

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

by Jerry & Fred Felton

August 2nd we attended the Community Neighborhood Watch Meeting and toured the newly remodeled and expanded Sheriff's offices. Rhonda Irons, of Crime Prevention and Community Programs for the Sheriff's Department, was our tour guide. This was a special treat for all the volunteers! Sergeant James White and Laura Passanesi, of the Community Programs division, also toured with us. During the general meeting, Auto Burglary Prevention was discussed.... the Sheriff's Department suggests that we put a see-through sticker in the corner of our car's front window. We can give you some of these stickers at the Annual NRSPOA Meeting on Thursday, November 15th.

See **WATCH** on Page 4

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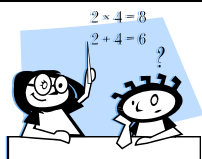
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WATCH (cont. from Page 3)

Storm Check is a Free Service to all Residents in our neighborhood and could be most helpful in the event of a major storm, such as a Hurricane. It's a simple system created to notify volunteers to check on your well-being after the storm has passed. We thank you, First Presbyterian Church, for this service. Call the church office at 692-0500 for more details. The free service is provided regardless of religious affiliation.

Mail Box Damage You may remember that the Postman in our neighborhood warned us NOT to use our red mail box flags. This is a signal to some people to search and damage our mail boxes. The problem continues. A resident recently reported that mail boxes on his street were vandalized and damaged. He did report this to Deputy Grimsdale at 260-5576. Please be alert for unusual noise or activity of this nature and call 911 or Deputy Grimsdale. We always welcome new volunteers for the NRS PATROL. An active bicyclist has even agreed to watch for any suspicious activity in NRS. If you are interested in being on the PATROL, please call us at 692-2729.

Community Emergency Response Team Joe Miller is the C.E.R.T. leader. He said that if we have a hurricane, he and his team will be taking directions from Martin County Emergency Management. They educate community volunteers throughout the County.

Why Does the Association Give Boat Ramp Keys to Non-members?

by Cathy Ellis

Association members have recently asked, "Why is the association giving away boat ramp privileges to property owners who are not members of the association?"



When the developer created this community, he made a promise to all property owners. By owning property in this community, each owner would have access to the parks and the boat ramp. This "promise" is documented in the title to the parks in our community.

Without a legal decision to the contrary, the association remains obligated to provide access to all property owners. The association does hold the title to the parks, maintains the right to set the rules and regulations, and can suspend privileges if the rules are not followed.

Several years ago, the association tried to obtain a ruling regarding the fairness of this situation (owners having privileges without any contractual financial obligation), but a decision was made by the board at that time to discontinue pursuit of the answer.

Non-members do pay a boat ramp maintenance fee annually (currently \$225), and they also accept the risk of potentially increased liability, as they are not protected by the insurance that the association carries for its members. Should a situation arise, the non-members could be named individually in a suit because of their legal interest in the park properties.

Association members are protected by the association's liability insurance (\$1 Million). A recent check with the association's legal counsel revealed that only a case involving severe bodily injury could challenge the limits of our current coverage. Cases such as those are extremely rare, so members are well-protected.

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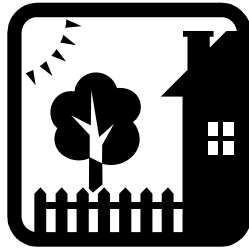
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Like the old saying goes, “fences make good neighbors”

by Colleen Patterson

In our neighborhood we have a resident who has recently “torn down” their fence. The Next Step Center, or what is more accurately known as a sober house, has decided in essence to tear down the fence and allow all of us to see what is going on in their “home.”



Prior to moving, The Next Step Center had up to 11 residents on NW 10th Street, in a family-type setting to help “husbands and sons” return to an independent lifestyle in which their addictions were able to be controlled. Through faith and family, The Next Step Center was helping to make this happen for these men. And for the most part, the neighborhood was not aware of the help that was taking place.

But now, the center has moved to the corner of Sunset and Fork and increased by over 300% capacity to allow approximately 35 residents in what would be a campus-type setting with “faith-based” activities and fellowship.

My question is, can this larger use really be hidden behind that fence? Does this large “family” really fit in our neighborhood? Does this really help promote a return to independent living for “husbands and sons”?

That is my point.

It is not that I do not support such a program but that I do not believe a program of this size, with a lack of professional oversight and legal ability to adequately enforce its rules, is the right fit for the participants in the program and definitely not for our community. My neighbors and I are concerned, and rightly so, about the parameters of this increased rehab program, how it is being run due to the lack of oversight by a state or federal agency, and what impact it will have on our quiet suburban lifestyle, specifically regarding traffic, safety and welfare concerns.

Further, it appears that the County does not want to address the issue due to potential lawsuits concerning fair housing and/or discrimination issues. Therefore, I respectfully ask Mrs. Cook, as a faith-based provider, to please do the right thing for all of us: maintain your ministry, help our husbands and sons, but do it in an appropriate “family-type” setting, not in a fraternity.

Coming Together for a Common Cause

by Lou Tudor

Recently, property owners in NRS and surrounding communities (Sylvan Shores, Sunset Estates) became aware of the renovations at the apartment buildings on the corner of Sunset Drive and Fork Road. Rumors began to circulate that the current tenants had been evicted and a drug/alcohol rehab facility was coming in. The NRSPOA Board of Directors interviewed Tina Cook, the new owner, to determine fact from gossip. The communities then united in efforts to research the situation and share their findings...through e-mails, hand-delivered flyers, phone calls and personal conversation.

The new owner of the apartments, listed as Sunset & Fork, LLC, found a way around the traditional use of the apartment buildings. This company is leasing the buildings to The Next Step Center, a faith-based transitional living facility for men who are recovering substance abusers.

After receiving numerous complaints from concerned residents (via urging through ALL those means mentioned above), Martin County Growth Management held a meeting on September 13th, to respond to questions about the legitimacy of this use of the properties. At this meeting, property owners were told that since the new owner was merely renting apartments, the use is consistent with the zoning (R3A). The audience protested and County personnel then agreed to investigate some of the information that surfaced during the questioning.

Property owners left the county meeting unsatisfied with the answers they received to their many questions. They were also motivated to find a way to not only terminate this use, but to keep anything similar from happening again in the future. A petition is now circulating, that urges the County to review the definitions within its zoning categories, to prevent further expansion of this type of usage. (Go to <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/mcsoberhomepetition> if you are interested in signing the petition.) Many property owners are also doing further research in an effort to uncover anything that can put a stop to this facility in North River Shores. Some are also making sure the concerns are not forgotten, by writing letters to the Editor of the local papers. The County Board of Commissioners did include this issue on the September 18th agenda and have agreed to continue investigation.

Although we do not yet know what the resolution will be, we do know that given a community common cause, there is not likely to be a stone left unturned.

If you have a comment or a question, a temporary e-mail address (nextstepinfo@bellsouth.net) has been established. It is maintained by community volunteers.

NRSPOA Annual Membership Meeting

Thursday, November 15, 2007, 7 PM
First Presbyterian Church

On the Agenda

Vote on Board candidates

Vote on the 2008 Budget

Vote on Covenants Amendments

Catch up with friends and neighbors

Due to the importance of the voting issues, no other business will be entertained at this meeting for Association Members.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Voting packages will be mailed to
"eligible voting interests of record."

If you have not paid all your assessment fees by November 15th, you will not be eligible to vote.

Questions? Call 692-3939

Per a request from the Picnic Committee, the NRS Picnic planned for October is being postponed to a future date, TBD.



**Thank You
Suzy & Beau!**

This community is very grateful for all the hard work these two ladies put into our common areas all year long. Their latest project is the pond area and even the ducks are happy! Beautiful is the only word to describe their choice of plants, trees and placements. They also appreciate the occasional help they get from volunteers who drive by and see them working....then come back and join them!

Just Walkin' My Dog..... the Silent Majority of NRS

Maybe you've seen me before. I am the one who walks "that big dog" - probably not often enough. During these walks, I have had the great pleasure of meeting many neighbors - some newer, some long-established. During these walks, I have also had the time to reflect on what makes our neighborhood special. We have a well-maintained boat ramp; beautifully landscaped islands, parks; and upgraded picnic tables and trash receptacles. But these are just things. What really makes us special are the people - not only the friendly people I've met, but those I haven't really met - the many volunteers of our association who maintain our community, who do the "behind-the-scenes" work that I take for granted.

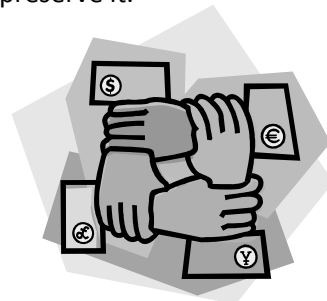
You see, I haven't really done anything for NRS except for show up at a party! Perhaps some can identify with me. Ever since this NRS Residents for Change group has formed, I have nothing but questions. Sure, I can see where some changes can be made - say allowing a resident to put up a 6' wood fence; but let's not "throw the baby away with the bath water!" Rather than build animosity within our neighborhood, pitting neighbor against neighbor, let's work together to make changes to our covenants that will benefit the *majority* of residents! Rather than form a separate group, why not volunteer your efforts within the association to create positive change!

My family bought in NRS because it was a minimally deed-restricted neighborhood. We especially appreciate the set-backs. If I wanted to live on top of my neighbor, I can think of several neighborhoods in which we could have purchased. I can't imagine the day I walk my dog through the neighborhood only to see walled-in waterfront and 12 feet between houses - and God knows what the non-waterfront will look like!

And - not to change the subject, I certainly don't want to revert to county codes and restrictions when they are written in such a way that may allow a residential treatment facility to operate in our own backyard! What recourse will neighbors have if they only have "the county" to support them? Not only will I enjoy my walks through my walled-in-waterfront neighborhood, but then I'll be able to stop and enjoy a cigarette (or other vice) with my new friends at the substance abuse home. But, ahhhh....how I digress.....

Please folks, take the time **now** to remember why you purchased in this neighborhood. Then, let's all work TOGETHER to preserve it.

-Kathryn Kaidy



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- If you want Trick-or-treaters, turn on your front porch lights.
- Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladders, hoses, dog leashes & flower pots that can trip the young ones.
- Pets get frightened on Halloween. Protect them.
- Battery powered jack o'lantern candles are preferable to a real flame.
- If you do use candles, place the pumpkin well away from where Trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing.
- Make sure paper or cloth yard decorations won't be blown into a flaming candle.



Regular Board meetings are held at 7 PM on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the First Presbyterian Church on Pine Lake Dr. NRSPOA Members are welcome to attend. Any Member in good standing (all assessments paid) wishing to address the Board should call 692-3939 & leave a message not later than 12 noon the Friday before the next scheduled meeting. Schedule changes are posted on our website: www.northrivershoresfl.org

NRSPOA, Inc. does not have a physical office, but may be reached at (772) 692-3939, which is both a voice and fax number. IF YOU ARE SELLING YOUR HOME AND NEED AN "ESTOPPEL LETTER" FOR CLOSING, FAX THE REQUEST TO 692-3939.

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