

# Sweetwater at Indian Wells HOA

## Neighborhood Newsletter

February 2020

Dear Sweetwater HOA Residents,

We have received several requests from Owners for a more diligent application of the Rules and Regulations by the Board of Directors and the management company.

With that in mind, the Board and the property manager have endeavored to work harder at enforcing the rules. Unfortunately, there are a few individuals who have disagreed with this new approach and they have taken to social media to voice their discontent. Some of the posts found on social media have been hurtful, negative and perhaps even defamatory. While the Board and the management company acknowledges the right of all persons to express their opinions freely, we deplore the general negativity of their comments. Sweetwater HOA is a community in which we must all live together, and the rules are in place to provide a more congenial atmosphere.



**We ask that those who disagree with the actions of the Board and the property manager do so in a manner that is more civil and respectful than what we have seen so far.**

**CONSIDER THIS** – The Board and OMNI occasionally get favorable comments from residents who are very happy in Sweetwater HOA. Probably not enough, but it is our belief that most residents see what is being accomplished and are supportive of the Board and the management company – OMNI. For those of who are not full-time residents – are you pleased when you visit and spend time here? Are the pools clean and working; is the property cleaned up; are things repaired or being repaired; have you seen your property values increase? These are things to think about and reasons why Owners should not listen to the few who bash us. The latest outcry is from some Owners who are unhappy because the Rules are starting to be enforced. Why should you follow the rules and your neighbor doesn't? **RULES ARE IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY TO KEEP THE A CONDO COMMUNITY SAFE, BE COHESIVE AND A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE. PLEASE READ ON BELOW.**

**FACTS** - It is unfortunate that many residents do not attend Annual meetings, a lot of information is provided every year. In 2019, the progress the current Board has made over the past several years was presented.

Complaints were that communication is lacking. So, the Board sends out newsletters every few months to update the community. Email blasts are also sent out to let Owners know what and when things are being done around the community. Anything else going on either has not been approved or resolved. Not everything is an easy decision. Often several estimates need to be obtained, bids sent out and wait for replies from busy vendors, sometimes legal opinions need to be obtained. Answers often take more time than all of us would like. It is reality.

Many residents do not understand the reasons or source for many decisions that are made. For instance, the recent enforcement of the new Rules and Regulations for Sweetwater. This culminates a lot of hard work from a committee made up of Homeowners and the final review by

# Sweetwater at Indian Wells HOA

## Neighborhood Newsletter

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Board members. It was done in conjunction with the Sweetwater Master Deed and By-laws. The reason for this action was a result of the biggest complaint from the community – **“THE BOARD DOESN'T ENFORCE THE RULES”, OWNERS CAN DO WHATEVER THEY WANT”**.

The question is: **Do you want to protect your property values, or do you want this place to become undesirable, unsafe or allow garbage bags left on or around porches/stairwells?**

Some have already said, I've had this birdbath (or statue or whatever) for years, why now? The answer is that all previous Boards including the current one has allowed it. Well now, the current Board is listening to the Owners. **Our mission is to do what's right for the majority of the Owners, not a select few. No one on the current Board has instituted any policy or change that in any way benefits them.**

For those who have been here awhile, they may remember that lawsuit money was spent on other projects rather than structural defects. As a result, Homeowners had a big assessment and a big loan was taken out to pay for other projects. It took a long time to recover from this. Another Board wanted to allow motorcycles on the property. Fortunately, that was defeated by the community.

1. **FINANCIAL POSITION** - Where are we now? SWEETWATER has not been in this good of a financial position for many years. We have had a very successful past year 2019. At the end of 2019, Sweetwater had \$115,000 surplus in the Operating Budget (most of it will be used to pay for the projects that were started/completed in December but aren't paid for until completion in January 2020. We have over \$500,000 in our Reserve budget. Still less that what the reserve study that was completed 7-8 years ago says, but still better that the zero balance a few years back.
2. **HOA FEES** - We often hear rumblings that they are too high. Here is a fact. Unfortunately, our Master Deed has a payment structure that states your dues are based on the size of your unit. Hence, “A” units pay the least and “D” units pay the most. If this was spread proportionately, the average payment by each owner what be around \$300/month. It would take 100% of the Owners to agree to this and this will most likely not happen. REMEMBER – When comparing communities HOA dues, you must compare APPLES TO APPLES, as there is no comparison between Sweetwater HOA and Woodlake HOA  
**So, what do you receive with your monthly dues? Sweetwater HOA dues include:**  
Landscaping, trash removal, master building insurance, Reserve account for future repairs, pest control inside and out, dryer vent cleaning every other year, cable tv (bronze package), community Wi-Fi, water and sewer, 8 pools (yes, eight, not many communities have that many), exterior building maintenance, windows, screens, doors, common area/property repairs, tree removal, on-site maintenance staff and an on-site manager (remember the days when you only saw a manager a couple times a month?)
3. **FACTS-** Sweetwater HOA is over 25 years old and many buildings need repair. There are overgrown and/or dead trees and bushes that need to be trimmed, removed or replaced. Numerous building repairs are needed because during original construction, many were not completed according to code and now need to be addressed. The list goes on.

# Sweetwater at Indian Wells HOA

## Neighborhood Newsletter

February 2020

### **Below are some Accomplishments approved by the Board in 2019 & 2020**

**Plumbing-** JMJ Plumbing completed the water shut off valve replacement project. A separate shut-off valve was installed for pool # 6 which was previously tied into the 6200 building. Maintenance staff also tagged each water shut off valve so Owners can easily identify which one is their shutoff.

**Pools-** Resurfacing and grouting of pools # 2 and # 4 completed.

**Credit Card-** Received approval for credit card from TD bank to be used for HOA purchasing needs. This allows us to get better deals using various vendors and services.

**Signs posts-** New vinyl sleeves were installed over damaged 4 x 4's signposts.

**Mailings-** A separate list of Owners without email access was set up and they are mailed most email communications.

**Coastline Roofing-** In 2019, the roofs on buildings 2490, 2494, 2498 were replaced and we were able to obtain some insurance money for replacement of the roof's dues because of damage from Hurricane Florence. The roofs on buildings 2474, 2478, and 2482 were also replaced in January 2020.

**Power Line –** The power supply line to pool house #5 was faulty and was replaced.

**Identification-** Name tags are now worn by maintenance staff and manager.

**Drainage by Tennis courts -** Mr. D's tree service was contracted to clear out the area behind the tennis courts. This was done to help with the water that needs better drainage on the road by the garbage and tennis court area. Mr. D's took care of a fallen tree along the side of the 1100 building.

**Mailbox Project –** Maintenance installed lattice work to repair the rotted areas around the mailboxes.

**Drainage Ditch –** The ditch and trees along side of the east side of the property from Woodthrus Drive down to the golf course was cleaned up. This was a joint project with Woodlake to clean the areas between the boundaries so better drainage will occur.

**Entrance Pond-** Two benches and a fountain were installed at the pond along the main entrance to Sweetwater.

**Annual Meeting-** 2019 Annual Meeting was conducted and new Board members elected. **The 2020 Annual meeting is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Surfside Beach Library. The official notice and proxy will be send 30-days from the meeting, please ensure you return the proxy, even if you are attending, to ensure a quorum is obtained** and another meeting does not need to be held.

**Power Washing-** Power washing and gutter cleaning completed on all Bldgs. in June 2019. Gutter cleaning was also completed on Bldgs. in need in December 2019.

**Porches-** Structural repairs were completed on several porches.

**Dryer vents-** New dryer vent covers were installed this summer to prevent birds from entering. The Board also contracted Simply Vents, LLC to provide vent cleaning service for many Homeowners. This service is provided by the HOA every two years, but Owners are responsible for their dryer vents and any needed cleaning.

**Lighting –** Santee Cooper installed a new light pole in front of Building 6300. They also completed the work on the LED lighting conversion project on all pole lights. Maintenance is continuing to replace light bulbs with more efficient LED lights, and we may receive a refund from Santee Cooper as part of this replacement project.

**Handrails –** The maintenance staff constructed railings at Buildings 2200, 2300, 3500 & 7300.

**Pools –** New generators were installed on pools 5 & 6.

**Tree Trimming –** Mr. D's tree service completed trimming trees around the property.

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## Neighborhood Newsletter

February 2020

**Legal Representation** – The Board agreed to have Elizabeth Saraniti handle Sweetwater delinquencies and collections and to retaining Luther McCutcheon as our association lawyer replacing Jay Haar.

**Sliders & windows** – New vendor (Advanced Windows and Doors) has or are in the process of installing new sliding glass doors and windows in many units.

**Pest Control** – Completed 4 times during the year with maintenance staff accompanying the pest control employees when accessing all units.

**Drainage pipes between and at parking lots of Buildings 6100, 7100 & 7300** going into the canal were repaired or replaced and new riprap installed.

**Courtyard Property-** The property in the courtyard area where the concrete slab existed, was sold. The new owner submitted plans to the county to build a 10-12-unit condo/apartment complex. The Board made an agreement with the new owner to allow an easement to the property using our existing road. In return, we will not have to relocate our Sweetwater sign on Hwy 17 and the mailboxes which are part of the new owner's property. They will have their own regime. They will not have any access to Sweetwater's amenities.

**Committees-** The following committees have been formed: Rules & Regulations, Landscaping, Building Maintenance / Improvements. These committees are already making progress. The Board wants to thank those who volunteer their time and effort.

**Most would agree, the list above is a pretty good list of accomplishments completed by the Board, the management and maintenance staff.**

**Being a Board member is a lot more work than people realize, and it is not easy. Think about the time and effort put in by all of us without payment. It can be a "thankless" job, but people who really care about Sweetwater HOA, do not bash the community, but volunteer to help.**

**Remember there is a hierarchy of how projects, etc. are addressed. For example: safety issues are a priority, major repairs 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc. So, your request, although important, may still take time to get to and be taken care of.**

**Please do not listen to rumors. Listen to facts. Ask questions. The dissidents are people who only care about themselves – not all 334 Owners. Please think about the above and consider the source of these lies and rumors that are being spread around our community regarding the Board and Management company. We welcome anyone who will help, submit your application for the Board or help with committees. Sweetwater HOA is your community, help to improve it! Let's keep it a desirable place to live and keep our property values escalating.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.

If you have any questions, please email Jennifer Wulff, CMCA, Sweetwater HOA Community Manager-[sweetwater@omni-property.com](mailto:sweetwater@omni-property.com).

Sincerely,

Sweetwater at Indian Wells HOA Board of Directors