

SpringLake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Chairman's Message

Bill Lawens, Chairman - Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors spent many months developing and reviewing the FY '13 budget, sensitive to the continued economic downturn as well as the priority needs of the District. As a result of our Professional Development Strategy and Job Functions program we have been able to both operate the District with less people than we did several years ago as well as increase our Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Economy of Service. The Board continues to oversee the finances of the District and to support our staff as they manage the works of the District.

November 14th is the Annual Landowner's Meeting and we will be electing a Supervisor for a four year term. Leon Van, who has been a Supervisor for 8 years, is retiring from the Board. Anyone wishing to serve on the Board can secure Proxy ballots at the District Office. You can contact any Supervisor, or our Manager, if you would like to discuss the roles and duties of a Supervisor.

The Board of Supervisors wishes retired employee Bill Maine good luck in his retirement. Bill has been a wonderful employee for the District and took his job very seriously. He was very committed to the daily job functions he performed and his presence will be missed.

The Board is looking forward to our next fiscal year and finally being able to start on the significant projects and activities connected to our Updated Water Control Plan and the conceptual permit approved by the South Florida Water Management District. Working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture; Sebring Airport; Highlands County; South Florida Water Management District; and the Department of Transportation residents will see the culmination of five years of study and planning.

Board Approves Budget



The Spring Lake Improvement District Board of Supervisors, at their September 12 meeting, approved the fiscal year 2013 budget (October 1 thru September 30). The Board has been discussing the budget since April, went thru several drafts, and held a Public Hearing in August prior to final approval.

The maintenance assessment for FY '13 is \$304.78. This compares with \$303.91 in FY '12 and \$302.83 in FY'11.

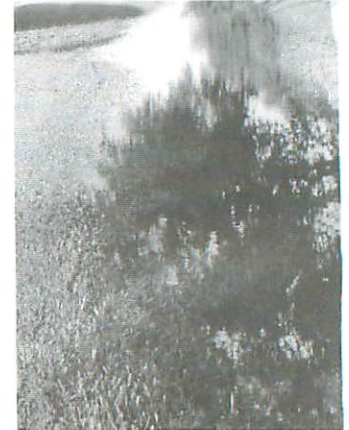
The maintenance assessment is only for those landowners within the boundaries of Spring Lake. Village One is not in the boundary of Spring Lake and does not pay the \$304.78 assessment. The total approved budget for operation, repairs, and maintenance of the District is \$1,155,420.97 and will be shared equally among the 3,791 taxable units within the boundaries of Spring Lake. The assessment for Village I residents is \$30.88 which represents their share of a Parks and Right of Way assessment.

The lot mowing assessment has been set at \$150 per lot or \$180 per commercial acre.

The fiscal '13 budget can be viewed on the District web site at www.springlakefl.com.

Drainage Is Everyone's Responsibility

There have been numerous times this summer that heavy and extended rainfall has caused culverts to fill and roads to flood. While much of this was contributed to Mother Nature and the amount of water that fell, residents can ensure that waters will recede quicker if they properly maintain their culverts. Not everyone on a street has drainage pipes under their driveways, and when these pipes are not properly maintained the water will back up onto your neighbor's land. According to the permits that residents secured from Highlands County to install pipes under their driveway, it is THE OWNERS RESPONSIBILITY for maintenance. These pictures show the problems that exist when the pipes do not have proper flow. The ends of the pipes need to be cleaned appropriately to ensure water flow. If you have a lawn contractor you need to make sure he understands your obligation for maintenance. If you do your own lawn, be sure to maintain the area yourself.



The drainage culverts in the front of your house are part of County Right of Ways. If water does not properly flow and the County is called to "fix it" they will excavate the land and bring it back to its proper grade; and this could affect both your lawn and irrigation system.

The water after a storm will eventually recede and make its way into the canals and ponds, but the effectiveness of this flow depends a great deal on the maintenance responsibility of the resident. Help both yourself and your neighbor by maintaining your drainage area.



Water Rate Study Completed

Public Comments at several District Board meetings strongly suggested that residents who are not here year round should not have to pay a monthly base rate to support the water utility. After these individuals continued to lobby their feelings with Board and staff relevant to the base rate, the District requested the Florida Rural Water Association to conduct a Rate Study for Spring Lake.

"You should be congratulated for your water system and operations staff. With unfunded mandates continuing to roll down from State and Federal agencies, along with the aging of pipes, pumps, and plants, you have risen to the challenge and continue to operate the system providing safe drinking water. Upon review of the current rate structure and annual budget, the existing rate and fee structure is sufficient to meet existing expenditure needs." (Tom Gustafson, FRWA; June 20, 2012)

These residents have requested that the Board allow homeowners to "totally disconnect" from the water system when they go back north and do not occupy their home, thus avoiding the \$18 per month base rate. If this was permitted, those residents who are here year round would have to make up the difference in the operational costs of the plant, thus increasing their base rate.

"Regarding seasonal or vacation rates, it would be highly inadvisable to go to this rate structure. After our analysis we show an average of 310 seasonal customers at \$4,411 per month base charges x 6 months of lost revenue would equate to \$26,466. This would mean raising the base rate for all customers, thus putting the financial burden on your year round customer." (FRWA)

Base rates set by water utilities help to maintain a steady revenue stream to keep the cost of providing water to all customers affordable. The system is for ALL residents, whether they reside year round or part time; maintenance and operational costs do not go away just because people are not in their homes. While the District allows for water to be turned off so there is no water usage fees, the District Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed year round base rate fees for ALL customers, regardless of how many months they occupy their homes. A Public Hearing on water rates and fees was held on August 8th at the District Office.

A copy of the Florida Rural Water Association Study can be accessed on our web site at www.springlakefl.com or a Public Records request can be made at the District Office.



Bits & Pieces

Useful information and data for our residents

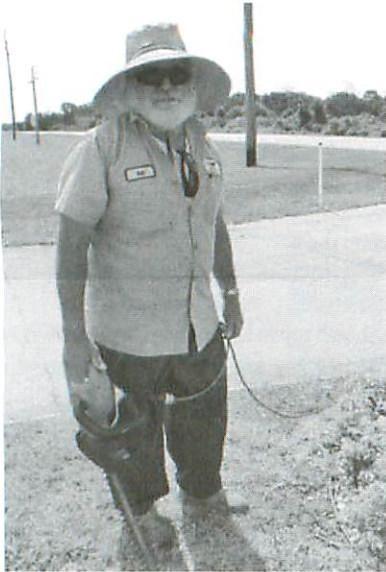
- The annual Landowners Election will be held on Wednesday, November 14th, 10:00 a.m. in the District Office. One three year term is available; proxies may be picked up in the office.
- District Board meetings for Fiscal Year '13 have been established for the second Wednesday of each month, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the District Office. The only exception is the month of June, when the meeting will be the third Wednesday.
- Effective October 1 the District will be e-mailing water bills to all ACH and Credit Card Auto Pay customers. There are almost 700 customers using these payment methods, with 426 already signed up for electronic billing. Using technology saves time and money for the District and positively impacts water rates for the future. Call the District Office for details.
- Trees and branches often fall on vacant lots. If the land is in the District Lot Mowing Program and the debris is not too large, staff will remove it for safety purposes; otherwise, the District has no authority to remove and haul debris from vacant lots.
- The Spring Lake Property Association will be holding its annual Community Picnic on Saturday, October 27th at the Community Center and Pine Breeze Park. This popular event is FREE to all Spring Lake residents and along with food and drinks there are many displays and booths; including a Child ID Program being offered by local Masons. Robbie Nicklow is the chairman of this year's event and you can call the SLPA for details.
- SLPA Newsletter Editor and resident extraordinaire, Sam Heede, keeps us posted on all kinds of activities and history associated with Spring Lake. She informed us that a Fox Squirrel was sighted on Oak Knolls, 2-3 pairs of Eagles are still nesting near Rt. 98 and Lin Road, and a bobcat continues to be visible in the golf course area. In spite of her very busy schedule she will be assisting the District in archiving all of its historical items.
- While Mosquito *Spraying is in full force*, standing water makes it difficult to perform at maximum effectiveness. Residents can help by monitoring standing water and help it flow as much as possible; especially at the end of driveways. The lawns and culverts are saturated with water and mosquitoes are more difficult to control; thus increasing the need to spray.
- Arbuckle Creek Park Road has been closed for maintenance. The Road is being disked by District Staff and the County will be grading the road. Residents can access the park via the Lake, but use of the road until it is graded is not permitted. Call the office for more details.

Road Improvements Being Made at Arbuckle Creek Park



SPRING LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Bill Maine Retires

Bill Maine joined the Spring Lake Improvement District staff in May of 2001, coming to the District after 10 years at the Golf Resort. Bill has operated numerous pieces of equipment and performed many field and drainage functions. Most people saw Bill as the dedicated staff member mowing the medians and entrances of our community and ensuring that all debris was removed and areas looked nice. For the past several years Bill oversaw the care and maintenance of our parks and facilities, as well as supporting efforts at the pump station and after hour's water emergencies.



Born in Miami, Bill moved to Sebring in 1982 to raise his family. He has two children, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He is engaged to Patricia Youngquist and they reside in Spring Lake. Besides being a District employee Bill had nearly 40 years as a volunteer fireman, 28 with the Lorida Volunteer Fire Department.

Bill has a master upholstery skill and has been working on golf carts, boats, and car seats ever since he came to Sebring. Not one to stay at home, Bill is operating his part time upholstery business out of Musselman's Storage Facility on Airport Road, and his skills are in demand. A small gathering was held at the District Office to wish Bill a happy retirement.

Rt. 98 Study In Process

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is beginning a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study of the proposed widening of US 98 (SR 700) from US 27 to east of Airport Road, now Haywood Taylor Boulevard, in Highlands County. The project begins 2000 feet west of US 27 and extends to Elliott Road, a distance of approximately 4.6 miles. The purpose of this project is to improve the capacity of US 98 to accommodate travel demand generated by population and employment growth in Highlands County. In addition, it is anticipated that this project will improve connectivity between Highlands and adjacent counties, enhance safety along the project corridor, and improve emergency evacuation.



The PD&E study will evaluate and document potential engineering and environmental effects of the proposed widening of US 98. FDOT will conduct the PD&E study in accordance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Additionally, as part of the PD&E study, FDOT has implemented a comprehensive public involvement program. FDOT will host one public information workshop and one formal public hearing during the PD&E study to provide project information and solicit public comments. Newsletters will be mailed in advance of the public meetings to property owners, elected and appointed officials, and interested people. Representatives from FDOT will be available to speak at small group meetings upon request. FDOT has developed a project Web site (www.US98Highlands.com) to share information about the PD&E study. The PD&E study is expected to be completed by the spring of 2014.

The project is reflected in the adopted Highlands County Comprehensive Plan as part of Policy 3.8: Determined as Highest Priorities. There is currently no funding for design, right-of-way, or construction for this project in the FDOT Tentative Five Year Work Program (Fiscal Years 2013-2017). If you would like more information about this project, please contact project manager Aaron Kaster at (863) 519-2495 or by email at Aaron.Kaster@dot.state.fl.us. A map showing the project parameters is in the Board Room at the Spring Lake Improvement District Office.