

Spring Lake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Certified District Officials

Supervisor Tim Roland (left) and Butch Copeland received their CDO Certificates at the recent State Conference of the Florida Association of Special Districts. They earned this designation after completing a required curriculum of classes related to the administration of a Special District. They now join SLID Chairperson Kay Gorham, who received her CDO last year.

State Safety Award

Board Chairperson Kay Gorham and Deputy Manager Israel Serrano are shown with the award given at the recent State Conference of the Florida Association of Special Districts. The

Award is given out by Preferred Insurance Company and recognizes a District that has shown exemplary safety standards and controlled insurance claims over the years. This is the first time Spring Lake has received this honor.



Pickleball

The ladies from the "B" League gave it their all this year with guidance from their drill and strategy coaches, Jill Holste and Ken Shockley. The team practiced twice a week at the Spring Lake courts and went undefeated for the season. They took first place in the South-Central Florida Pickleball League, defeating teams from Tanglewood, Sebring, and Sun 'n Lake. Congratulations to team members: Carrie Beezley-Goodall; Jolyn Hooper; Diana Brewer; Deb Herman; Karen Pape; Johanne Lemay; Ali Verona; Gwen Thompson; Debra Owen; Diane Eastman; and Sue Mills.

The Spring Lake Pickleball Courts are open to the public, and there is a Pickleball Club for interested players. The courts are open daily from dawn to dusk, with certain days and times designated for open play. A schedule is posted at the shelter on the courts.

Budget Process Begins

The District has an exceptional reputation for transparency and public involvement when it comes to developing the budget. Our financial policies and procedures are meant to gather input from the public to ensure that the elected officials are good stewards of your tax money. Here is the process that has been in place since 2009.

February Board Meeting: Full review of utility operations, fees, and plans

March Board Meeting: Discussions on equipment and vehicle needs

April Board Meeting: Personnel salaries and benefits are reviewed

May Board Meeting: All Field services are reviewed

June: First draft of budget presented to Board and posted on website

July: Second draft of budget presented to Board and posted on website

August: Public Hearing on the budget

September: Budget approved and assessments sent to Tax Collector

Residents are encouraged to attend monthly Board meetings that are held the second Wednesday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at the District office. You can also review all Board documents and send your comments to the office if you cannot attend in person. The key to staying on top of how your taxes are being used is by going to the District website at www.springlakefl.com and reading all of the Board Packet data, minutes of the meetings, and financial statements.

Neighborhood Watch



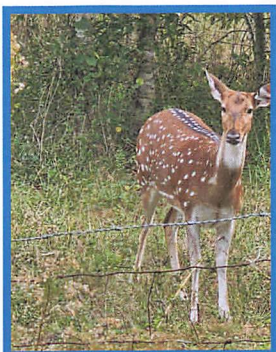
Captain Kenny Johnson from the Sheriff's Department held an informative meeting with residents at the Pine Breeze Park Shelter. This program is sponsored by the Spring Lake Property Association for the entire community.



District Utility Staff

Considerable growth and development over the years have expanded our Utility needs as we maintain and service two water plants, a sewer plant, and an extensive infrastructure. These men work diligently on numerous functions:

Work Orders – Locates – Hydrants and Valves – Meter Reads – Meter Installs – Water Breaks – Testing and Flushing – Step Systems – Daily Maintenance – and numerous resident needs. Our utility staff possess areas of expertise and experience that saves the District a lot of money, not having to bring in other professionals i.e. electricians, plumbers, carpenters, etc. When you see these men driving thru the community, they are tending to many utility needs



Seen at Arbuckle Creek Park



Pawsitively Dog Club Day at the Bark Park



Gathering On Sunset Hill

Every evening groups of residents enjoy watching the sunset at Sunset Hill, located in the southeast part of the ECO Park. These pictures were taken as the group watched the moon launch. A future State grant will completely renovate this area to include shelters, grills, benches, and other amenities.



How Are Utility Rates Established?

The Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA), an arm of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), assists communities that have water and wastewater systems, providing a myriad of services and programs. For close to 20 years FRWA has assisted Spring Lake in developing rates and fees for our utility system, as well as providing consultation and training to our staff.



On an annual basis FRWA conducts a very detailed analysis of our utility system to ensure that there are sufficient reserves to handle repairs and replacement, and adequate income for operational purposes. They prepare a lengthy report and present it to the District for our budget discussions.

Additionally, FRWA does what is called an Asset Management Plan to ensure that our facilities are properly funded over a 10-year period. This is also a requirement as a result of our various government grants, appropriations, and loans. Both of these documents are public records.

All meetings to determine rates and fees are discussed at regular Board meetings during the budget process, June thru August. The August 12, 2026 public hearing establishes rates and fees for the Fiscal Year '27 period, and the public is urged to attend and participate in discussions.



Tradition Continues

The Board of Supervisors continued the St. Patrick's Day Luncheon that began in 2008 by former Board member Tim McKenna, who died February 24, 2023. The event was held at the Community Center and was underwritten by the Board members.



Bark Park Renovations Complete

Residents and guests attended the grand opening of the newly renovated Bark Park on Saturday, May 2nd. The additions to the park were underwritten by grants from the State of Florida, as well as the County Recreation Department. The total cost of the renovations came to \$325,000 with \$79,500 coming from District funds. Another grant request is pending that will connect the Bark Park Trail to the ECO Park.

Annual Water Quality Report

In Florida, a CCR report stands for Consumer Confidence Report. It is the annual drinking water quality report that public water systems must provide to customers under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Florida drinking water regulations. In past years the District published the two-page report in the June issue of The Breeze. With two water plants now in operation, the report takes up too much space to put in The Breeze. For that reason, we are posting the CCR on the District web site, www.springlakefl.com, putting the link on the monthly water bill, and also putting a link in an email blast. If you are not currently receiving emails on our blast, please go to our website and click on mailing list in the lower right-hand corner and you will be added. These blasts are important updates and information on what is happening in the District.

The CCR report is basically a “report card” for our tap water. It explains:

- Where your drinking water comes from (aquifer, lake, river, etc.)
- What contaminants were tested for
- What levels were detected
- Whether the water met federal and Florida standards
- Any violations or treatment issues
- Possible health effects of contaminants
- Contact information for the utility and public meetings

Typical items you may see in a CCR include:

- Chlorine or disinfectant levels
- Lead and copper testing
- Nitrate levels
- Bacteria testing results
- Disinfection by-products
- Hardness or mineral content
- Statements about vulnerable populations

The Florida rules governing CCRs are found in Florida Administrative Code Chapter 62-550, administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Spring Lake has had a stellar record with CCR's over the years.

Streetlights

Report Broken or Non-Working Streetlights

A well-lit neighborhood is a safer, more welcoming neighborhood. Streetlights help prevent accidents, discourage crime, and make evening walks more comfortable for everyone. To keep our community shining, the District is asking residents to help identify broken, damaged, or non-illuminating streetlights so we can request timely repairs from Duke Energy.

Residents can help by reporting any streetlight that shows signs of:

- No illumination — the light does not turn on at night
- Intermittent flickering — the light turns on and off repeatedly
- Physical damage — leaning poles, broken fixtures, exposed wiring
- Daytime burning — the light stays on during the day
- Obstructed lighting — tree branches or debris blocking the light

Your observations help us create accurate work orders and ensure Duke Energy can respond quickly.

How to Report a Problem Light when you notice an issue, please provide:

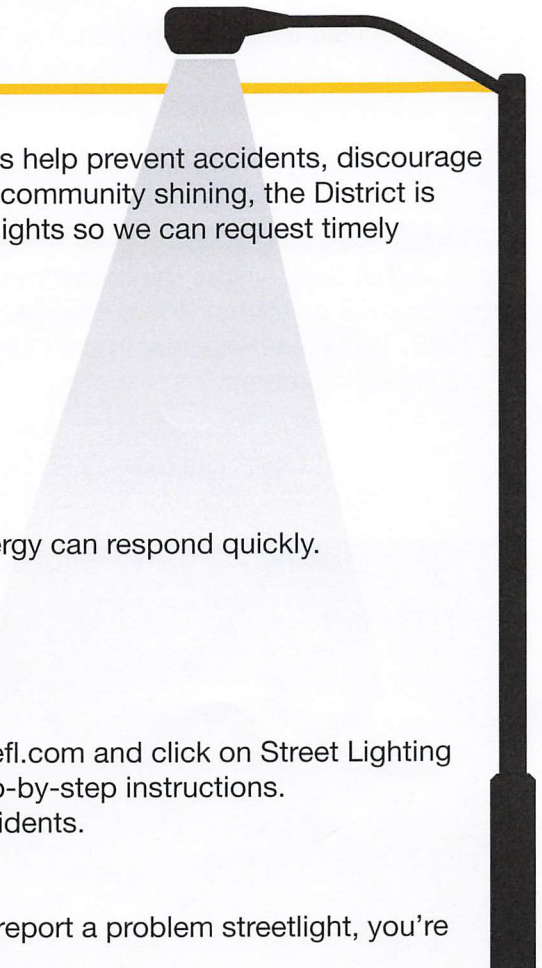
- Exact location — nearest address, intersection, or pole number
- Description of the issue — not lighting, flickering, damaged, etc.
- Optional photo — helpful but not required

You can submit this information by going to the District website at springlakefl.com and click on Street Lighting under the Services tab. Click on the Repair Request and follow the easy step-by-step instructions.

Your participation helps us maintain a safe, reliable lighting system for all residents.

Thank You for Being Part of the Solution.

Community awareness is one of our strongest tools. By taking a moment to report a problem streetlight, you're helping improve safety, visibility, and quality of life throughout the District.



An Open Letter to Spring Lake & Next Open House (7/8 & 7/9)



I never set out to be the most talked-about guy in Spring Lake, but here I am — cast as the villain, the savior, and a few characters I don't recognize in the mirror. A neighbor suggested that I just speak up, so here it is, straight from me. I'm not here to win an argument. I'm writing because there's confusion going around, and

we need to talk about the truth directly — not through a secondhand screenshot, not from someone guessing at my intentions. Let me start with how I got here — again, for those who are new to the conversation.

I'm a lender — the "bank." I jumped in when SIGR was weeks from foreclosure, facing 20+ years of deferred maintenance that threatened its very existence. I have no background in golf or restaurants and never wanted anything more than to play an occasional round and eat an occasional meal. Despite some comments, the course is in the best shape it's been in for two decades. That's not ME saying it, it's YOU saying it — come see for yourself. Our Google reviews speak for themselves; if you'd like verification, just ask.

I'm not dumping a failing business — I'm simply moving to the next step of the original plan: close out the long overdue loan and sell the property. After my team's amazing work and turnaround, this is a genuinely viable business — this past season, golf revenue was up approx. 60% and expenses were down approx. 40% — and it will continue this path of success and can sell on this strength to a buyer who values what it brings to Spring Lake. Or it can sell to someone who values the dirt itself more than the amenity it provides this community. I'd much rather it be the former.

Here's what you've heard — and here's the truth...

"I have to pay \$5,000 tomorrow."

That figure was floated as an example, not a bill — and I've heard the response loud and clear... thank you. This is not a final plan because no initial plan even exists yet. Nobody is being billed for anything. This is the start of the conversation, other options exist, but absolutely nothing has been decided.

"I'm not bailing out a failing golf course."

Was your course failing when I got involved? Yes, but it's not now! I'm not asking anyone to rescue me, rather, I'm offering YOU an option. This is YOUR choice about Spring Lake's future, and you're free to say 'no.' This is just an offer, one of multiple options... not a decision or an invoice.

"The data center talk is just a scare tactic."

I understand why this one worries you. It was highlighted by a resident, from a listing showing what the land could support someday. It's not a plan I brought up; it's simply what this could be worth to a creative and well-funded investor. Selling is, and always has

been, the next step once the renovations and business turnaround were substantially complete. I'd rather it stays in the hands of those who have benefited and will continue to benefit the most, YOUR hands, and that's exactly why I got involved in the first place. But to be clear: any other option will be outside of your control. Exposing a real possibility isn't a scare tactic; pretending it doesn't exist and continuing to ignore this perpetual risk is how we landed here in the first place. Whoever comes next won't owe this community anything.

"It only matters to people who live on the course."

Nearly every for-sale listing in Spring Lake uses your golf amenity as a selling point, and more than 90% of residents said it affects property values. The degree varies but make no mistake — this touches the whole community. Please don't take my word for it: ask the realtors who live right here and can speak to the facts even better than I can.

"He'll pocket millions and walk away in his shiny new shoes."

I've always been clear that I don't want to own a golf course — and if I didn't care, I'd simply sell to the highest bidder, a non-golf user, and I would have already walked away. As I've said all along, this isn't about me "making" money — and I will not be "profiting" from any transaction with Spring Lake. Be mindful of the loudest 1% who don't necessarily represent you. If it were about profit, you'd already be wondering if the three-foot-tall grass would ever get cut again.

Where things actually stand...

Nothing is set in stone. There are several paths — which is why I will continue to hold open and transparent meetings and am genuinely asking for your input while there's still time. That window is open now, but it won't be forever.

So here's my ask...

If you really want the truth and answers, ASK ME! Bring your hardest question — but the answer isn't online. And if you think I'm wrong, tell me in person. I want to hear it; those are the most useful conversations I have.

Come to the July 8th or 9th open house (times to be announced) - pop in for five minutes or an hour

Email me at joel@siresort.com (we can set up a phone call or a Zoom — and that goes for our snowbirds too!)

We may not agree, and that's fine — but if you really want what's best for your community, my offer stands and I would love to figure it out together. It's time to come together and build on what makes Spring Lake special.

With respect,
Joel



SEBRING INTERNATIONAL
GOLF RESORT

The ECO Park Story

What started out as a necessity for drainage of 4,000 acres has turned into one of the most popular parks in all of Highlands County. Originally built for the retention and storage of stormwater and improving water quality prior to discharge thru a pump station, is now a functioning community amenity.

From 2012 thru 2014 105 acres of land was purchased on the east side of Duane Palmer Blvd. for a Stormwater Treatment Area (STA). Construction began in March of 2015 and concluded October, 2016. Towards the end of completion, it became obvious that to have a large lake for retention and storage alone made no sense. This had to become a community amenity. It was decided that a multi-use path would be installed around the water and a bathroom, shelters, picnic tables, and grilles would be constructed, along with a paved parking area. A few years later two fishing piers were built, along with a Little Free Library. After Spring Lake resident and sheriff deputy William Gentry was tragically killed on May 7, 2018 in the line of duty, the District Board of Supervisors, in partnership with the Sheriff's Department, officially named the park the William J. Gentry, Jr. Memorial ECO Park. A beautiful monument and memorial area was installed.

Many individuals, families, and groups use the ECO Park on a daily basis, and it is the most visited park in Spring Lake. Whenever you go there you will see people walking, biking, fishing, using their golf carts, or just relaxing under the shelters. Along with providing recreation to residents, the STA continues to provide improved quality prior to the water leaving Spring Lake and making its way thru the pump station, out to Arbuckle Creek, on to Lake Istokpoga, and then to Lake Okeechobee.

Here is some interesting information about the Stormwater Treatment Area:

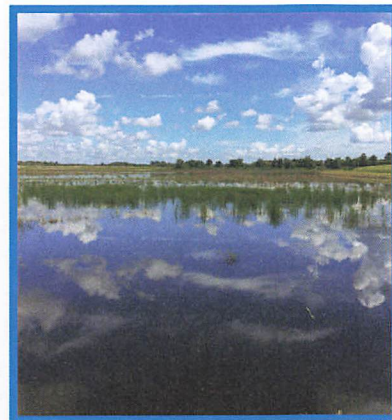
- 750,000 cubic yards of fill was removed from the 70-acre STA. The hill that has become known as Sunset Hill, where residents gather for sunsets, was built with some of this fill
- Just under 25,000 dump truck loads were used to remove fill
- Receives storm water from just under 4,000 acres
- Retains 9.5 million cubic feet of stormwater before being discharged
- 183 pounds of phosphorous removed annually
- 598 pounds of nitrogen removed annually

At the entrance to the bathrooms a fact sheet on the STA is available. The pamphlet also contains a checklist and pictures of all the birds that use the STA, compliments of the Audubon Society.

The following species have been identified in and around the ECO Park:

Pig Frog, Cricket Frog, Leopard Frog, Soft Shelled Turtle, Peninsula Cooter Turtle, Gopher Tortoise, White-Tailed Deer, Bobcat, Grey and Red Fox, Otter, Raccoon, Opossum, Armadillo, Skunk, Alligators, Variety of Snakes.

Don't miss out on this wonderful environmental amenity for all residents and their guests. If you have children or grandchildren in school, let their teachers know that this is a great place for a field trip. It can also be combined with visiting the water plants, sewer plant, and pump station.



Be A Water Angel

For close to 10 years the District has had a Water Angel Fund that helps residents and families in need pay their monthly water bills. Generous donors have provided funds that allow District staff to credit these selected accounts from anonymous donors. A card is sent to each recipient letting them know of the water angel donation, and a thank you is sent to the donor. If you are led to become a water angel, make the check payable to SLID and put water angel in the memo section.

Here are some examples of how the Water Angel fund has helped people:

- Single mom with three kids cleans homes. She became very ill and could not work for several months.
- A man accidentally shot himself and has been unable to return to work.
- A woman and child were left behind when her husband was killed on his bike.
- An elderly couple became very ill, and both spent weeks in a hospital
- Husband lost his wife to cancer and is raising two children
- A dad lost his job and has had to do side work to earn money for his family
- Many other cases of people losing their jobs, getting sick, death of a spouse, and struggling with bills



Hurricane Season Update

There is an abundance of information available throughout Highlands County on preparing for a Hurricane, as well as on social media. Living in Florida, we all know what supplies to secure, how to protect our homes, and how to stay safe. Here are a few items specific to Spring Lake.



- District staff meets early in June to review a Hurricane Guide that covers all the duties and responsibilities for every employee, and to ensure that District facilities and equipment are secure.
- Both water plants and all lift stations are backed up by generators so that we never lose the ability to provide water to our residents. It is not necessary to stock up on bottled water.
- The District office is our Emergency Operations Center and is also backed up with a generator.
- The pump station has a 5,000-gallon diesel fuel tank that is always filled, and a back up generator for the two electric pumps. Spring Lake will not flood!!!!
- All District vehicles and equipment are topped off with fuel when the storm is inevitable, and all fuel tanks are filled as well.
- The new Digital Sign on Rt. 98 will be used to post important messages, and our e-blasts will be used frequently. If you are not on the e-blast list you are encouraged to send your e-mail address by going to our website and click on mailing list in the lower right-hand corner and you will be added. This is an extremely important communication tool.
- If you need to find a shelter, or have an emergency, you should contact the Highlands County Emergency Operations Center at 863-385-1112
- It is District policy that staff will NOT respond to emergencies if weather conditions are deemed unsafe. As soon as conditions improve, it is "all hands-on deck!"

Let's all hope for a mild hurricane season and that we avoid any major storm.



LEAVE THOSE METERS ALONE!!

Meter Turn On/Off Policy:

The Spring Lake Utility Department will turn water service on or off, free of charge, during normal working hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Residents needing water services turned on or off after 4:00 p.m., during the weekend, or during a holiday, will be charged a \$40 service fee to have a utility worker complete the service request. Residents who have pre-scheduled plumbing services must notify the District Office at 863-655-1715 **PRIOR** to the plumber's arrival.

What is Meter Tampering?

Meter tampering is any action to the meter and/or the utility shut-off valve located in front of the meter without prior authorization. This includes turning a meter on or off, removing a meter, hooking up a meter illegally, or any other action performed to change a meter's reading. All cases of meter tampering will be subject

to a \$100 meter tampering penalty. If there are any damages to the meter valve and/or to any piping, it will be the homeowner's responsibility to pay for any costs associated with the repair prior to restoration of water service.

If you suspect your meter has been tampered with or broken, immediately contact the District Office at 863-655-1715. A Utility Technician will be dispatched to assess damages and make the necessary repairs, which are the responsibility of the homeowner.



THE DISTRICT PROVIDES A YEAR-ROUND 24-HOUR UTILITY SERVICE

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

115 Spring Lake Blvd.
Sebring, FL 33876
863.655.1715 phone
863.655.4430 fax

In Loving Memory



Spring Lake lost one of its most popular and committed residents with the recent passing of Monica Griffith. Over the years, Monica spearheaded the establishment of the Bark Park by securing over 400 signatures many years ago and convincing the SLID Board to build the park. The recent expansion of the Park was influenced by her as well.

She established the Pawsitively Dog Club and promoted numerous functions at the Park. Our annual Festival was not complete without her Halloween contests for all the fur babies!

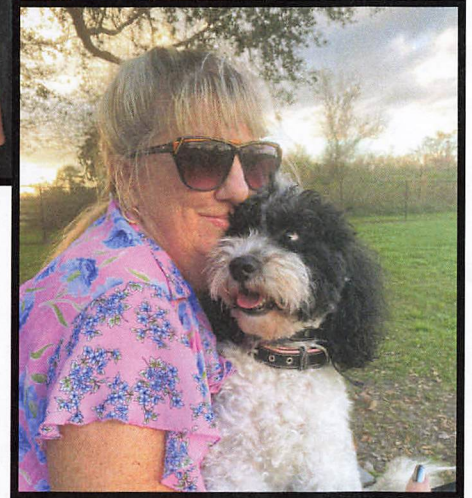
She was also active in the SLPA and oversaw Neighborhood Watch for a number of years, scheduling workshops and events with the Sheriff's Department.

The District is accepting Memorial Gifts in her name for the Bark Park Fund; monies used by the Dog Club to enhance their activities. Checks can be made payable to SLID, and in the memo section put Griffith Memorial Gift. Plans are being made for a Celebration of Life and will be posted on social media.

Monica & her beloved Candy



*Monica & her
granddaughter
Sabrina*



Fire Hydrant Protection

There are 226 fully operational fire hydrants throughout Spring Lake that offer protection to the community. It is imperative that maintenance and flow testing is conducted in a timely manner. The District recently completed a full inspection program that included 12 key procedures. All the information is very important and is shared with the Highlands County Emergency Operations. The County uses the GPS information for location and flow data to assist the fire departments when water for fire protection is needed in our community.