

SpringLake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Chairman's Message

*Brian Acker, Chairman -
Board of Supervisors*

During the past few months the District staff has been diligently preparing the budget draft for the next fiscal year. This draft will be submitted to the Board for its June meeting, a public hearing will be held in August and final budget approval will occur no later than the September meeting. As in past years the primary focus will be on the District's water control program which includes, in part, the drainage system, the levee, and environmental requirements. To date, all expenses connected with this program have been borne by the property owners within the Spring Lake District. Over the past number of years the District staff and Board have worked on developing positive working relationships with other entities that impact the Spring Lake drainage system. The District has explored funding opportunities in an attempt to reduce the impact on District property owners. Unfortunately, none of these efforts has yet resulted in any funding, but we continue our efforts and remain hopeful that funding will be forthcoming. I would like to thank Mr. Mike Willingham, the Sebring Regional Airport manager, for all his work in attempting to obtain funding that benefits both the airport and Spring Lake. I would also like to thank Commissioner Don Elwell of the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners for his continued support.

Budget ————— Process Begins



Beginning with the FY 2006 budget process a set of optimum financial goals, and a timetable, have been followed to assist the Board of Supervisors with the development of a yearly budget for the District.

Financial Goals include:

- The District will have a budget reflective of a sound staffing pattern, a progressive salary administration program, and organizational goals and objectives to determine expenditures.
- The District will maintain adequate reserves to protect it against unforeseen circumstances and situations.
- The District will have sound financial management and reporting including investments, controls, adequate insurance coverage, and utilization of appropriate external counsel and assistance as needed.
- The District will have a budget process that involves the Board, management staff, working groups, and public input.
- The District will develop a budget process timetable and chart of work for each fiscal year

Fiscal Year Projected Timetable:

April – June	Manager, Administrator, and working groups gather financial data
May	Finance working group develops projected budget
June	First draft of budget projection presented to Board
July	Second draft of budget projection presented to Board
August	Public Hearing
September	Budget approved by Board and assessments sent to Tax Collector

The development of the District Budget is an open process that is thoroughly discussed and reviewed at the monthly Board meetings, held the second Wednesday of each month at the District Offices, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Additional information can be secured and discussed by contacting the District Office at 655-1715 and making an appointment.

District Services Begin

One of the main responsibilities of the Spring Lake Improvement District is ensuring that the 1,295 vacant lots and 70 acres are mowed.



Additionally, the District mows all County Right of Ways and Medians. There are three tractors dedicated to lot mowing, and there is additional equipment for all entranceway medians, Duane Palmer Blvd., and the parks.

For those of us who reside in the community year long it is no surprise to see grass and weeds grow so quickly; some lots even grow faster than others depending on the type of soil it has. While our staff tries to keep up as best they can, heavy rains can prevent the tractors from going on the properties and sets our mowing schedule back. The action plan that is used for this program has lots that are near homes as a mowing priority, and the large acreage of lands, such as off of Rt. 98, as the secondary priority. This process allows neighborhoods that may have only a few vacant lots to not have an eyesore when grass and weeds get too high.



During this lot-mowing season if you notice a particular problem you can contact the District Office to report it. We can more often than not let you know when a certain area is going to be mowed and ensure that the problem is taken care of.

Another program about ready to begin is the annual mosquito control effort. While the District maintains the equipment and chemicals to fight mosquitoes, there are State Laws that govern the frequency of spraying. The District is NOT allowed to have a regular schedule for spraying and can only be initiated by resident complaints. Certified and trained staff is employed to oversee this program, and requests for service can be met within 24 hours, unless winds or rain are prevalent. Residents can help with mosquito control by making sure they break up any small pockets of water that might be at the end of their driveway, in the right of ways, near culverts, or are collecting elsewhere. This is a major battle every year and while the spraying does not prevent mosquitoes, it certainly helps with controlling them. Spring Lake is fortunate to have this service, as it is not provided anywhere else in the County.

Spring Lake Heritage

Mr. Duane Palmer came to Spring Lake from the north in 1930 and bought most of his property from the Davis family and several other local families. Mr. Palmer owned most of the land north of Rt. 98, and sold it to Westinghouse when they wanted to build the community of Spring Lake in the 70's. Mr. Palmer kept Pine Ranch, which is the land directly across Rt. 98, at the curve, across from the old driving range; the Graves family now owns that land. Duane Palmer Blvd. is named after Mr. Palmer.



On a recent visit to the District Office the daughter of Duane Palmer shared a lot of history with staff. As a young girl she remembered coming to Spring Lake when there was nothing but dirt roads along Rt. 98. Ranching, hunting, and riding horses took up most of her days, and the vacant land stretched from the Lake all the way up to the Airport.

Duane Palmers daughter, known today as Barry Smith, had a much storied life after she left Spring Lake. It was 1944 and with America in the midst of WW II, female aviators were being accepted as Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP's) to test aircraft and fly support missions in the U.S., freeing up men for combat roles overseas. Now 91, Barry shared numerous stories about her exploits as a WASP.

Barry drives out to Spring Lake from her current home on Lake Denton at least several times a month. She enjoys driving around and seeing the difference all the years have made. She was amazed when we showed her the operation of the pump station and had her tour the water and maintenance facilities; she was introduced to all of our staff members. She and her family are a big part of our Spring Lake Heritage.

Bits & Pieces

Useful information and data for our residents

Nell Hayes of the Highlands County Sheriff's office has been working with a new Neighborhood Watch Group chaired by Spring Lake Resident Mike Smith. If you would like to participate in this group, there will be a meeting and picnic on Saturday, June 15th, 2:00 p.m. at the Community Center. For more information, call Mike at 655-2525.

At their May meeting the District Board of Supervisors agreed that Notary Services would continue to be offered by our District Notaries. While staff will notarize most documents, they will NOT notarize wills, living wills, power of attorney, or similar documents where they could be called upon as a witness on mental capacity.

Residents who want to view the FEMA updated Flood Maps for Highlands County can go to the link at <http://www.cfrpc.org/floodmapupdate/> to view. Physical maps are available at the Highlands County Planning Office at 501 S. Commerce Ave. As mentioned in previous articles, the levee in Spring Lake has been certified and accredited by FEMA and no changes to the previous flood maps have been made to our District.

The 2012 Water Quality Report is now on the web-site. In past years the District was required to print the report in The Breeze; the law now allows us to share it electronically. If you would like a hard copy of the report you may request one at the District Office.

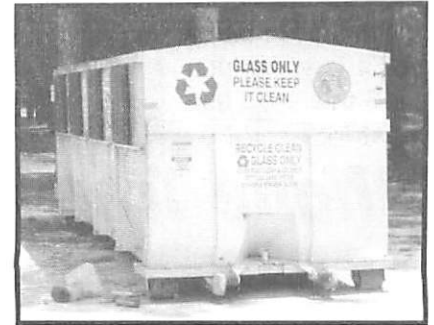
If you have an American Flag that needs to be disposed of, please feel free to drop it off at the District Office and we will get it to the appropriate organization for proper disposal.

Wondering what is being installed at the intersection of 98/66 that used to be a Citgo station? Compressed Natural Gas; one of the newer fuels being used by trucks and company fleets.

If your water bill seems to be higher than previous months, be sure to check for toilet leaks or irrigation problems. These are the two biggest issues that cause higher bills.

Recycle Program Having Issues

While most of our residents who use the recycle bins are environmentally concerned and conscientious, there is still a group of people that are going to "spoil it for the rest of us!!"



In spite of distinctive signs that tell us what to put in the bins, and how to package them, violations continue to occur. Additionally, some people are leaving trash, tires, wood, and an assortment of "junk" next to the bins. There are also people who are going into the bins to recover coupons from the newspapers??????

These bins are on District property and we cooperate with the County to provide this recycle program for our community. We must all be diligent in watching for the small group of people who are causing problems. It would be a shame to eliminate this program if these problems persist.

State Appropriation REJECTED!

The Sebring Airport and Spring Lake collaborated on a joint proposal to secure \$450,000 from the State to upgrade and improve the 40 year old pump station that protects our residents from flooding and is an integral part of the Airport's expansion project. A meeting was held at the offices of State Senator Denise Grimsley and State Representative Cary Pigman and a presentation made by the Airport and District Manager. It was a very positive meeting and we were optimistic that our relatively small request would easily be funded. Additional information was submitted as requested and we awaited word that never came. An e-mail was sent to the District Manager that stated, "Sometimes it takes several years to get an appropriation through. We can try again next year."

For a look at those projects that received State Appropriations you can go on the web to www.myfloridahouse.gov and search 2014 budget. Look at others that received funding and you be the judge.

SPRING LAKE

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Phone Tree Reminds Residents of Overdue Water Payments



Residents who are late in paying their water bills receive recorded phone calls from the District. These calls are a courtesy extended to all water customers, and are a friendly reminder that you are late in paying your water bill. Calls are not meant to be harassing, but to assist the customer in avoiding late fees and service disconnection.

The water department is governed by policies and procedures that are approved by the District Board of Supervisors, and coordinated by District staff. According to Board policy, a \$5 penalty fee is posted and termination is 10 days after the due date.

Here is how the Phone Tree system works. The first call notifies you that your bill has not been paid and you have 72 hours prior to disconnection. If you do not come in to **pay your bill you receive a second call** making you aware that in 48 hours your water will be disconnected. A final call is made notifying you that your water is going to be terminated for non-payment. Prior to this final call being made we check each delinquent account to determine if there is a special circumstance that we need to address.

For example, a customer who has never had a late fee in 7 years is on the list. They may have gone on vacation; someone is sick; or another emergency has occurred.

Customers can avoid any Phone Tree calls, late fees, or disconnections by simply being on the ACH program and having the money automatically deducted from your checking account and you receive a monthly invoice showing a zero balance. You can also use a major credit card.

Monthly Base Rate charges start at \$18 per month for standard size meter.

Water Use fees per 1,000-gallon rate levels are as follows:

0 to 5,999	\$3.10 per 1,000 gallons
6,000 to 14,999	\$3.60 per 1,000 gallons
15,000 to 39,999	\$4.20 per 1,000 gallons
40,000 and over	\$4.81 per 1,000 gallons

A complete listing of all water rates, fees, policies and procedures are available at the District Office.

Rt. 98 Study In Progress

The Florida Department of Transportation held a Public Information Workshop on April 16th at the Chateau Elan, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. providing residents of the area a complete description of the Rt. 98 project. The purpose of the open house was to provide residents and businesses the opportunity to review project information, ask questions, and offer comments about proposed improvements to US 98 from US 27 to Elliott Road in Spring Lake, just east of Haywood Taylor Blvd. Maps, display boards and other project information were on display the entire evening. Project representatives were available to discuss the study and answer any questions. A comment card was available for people to make comments and submit to FDOT.



A notebook is available for review in the Improvement District Public Records Room that contains all the information that has been made available to date. Project information and graphics are also available on the project website, www.us98Highlands.com If you have any questions, or want to be added to the mailing list, contact Mr. Aaron Kaster, Project Manager, FDOT, PO Box 1249, Bartow, Florida 33831; Aaron.Kaster@dot.state.fl.us; or 863-519-2495