

Upper Captiva Civic Association Spring General Membership Meeting

April 11th, 2021 Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue Department

- I. Call to Order 11:30am Jackie Byrnes, President
Board attending: Jackie Byrnes, Rich Gross, Erin LaVallie, Swin Swinford, Bill Fry, David Bolme, Sue Ann Cousar, Rick Noland (all in-person)
Public attendees: approx. 20 in-person and 12 Zoom

- II. Opening Comments/Progress Report Jackie Byrnes, President
 - Fire Chief Martin and Fire Commission Chairman Bill Byrnes congratulated on two successful vaccine days for Upper Captiva
 - UCCA Board will report progress on important initiatives: Brazilian pepper; golf carts; Island Access fund, Safe Harbor development & conservation efforts. Additionally, the Board will discuss procedural changes for greater transparency and member/islander involvement

- III. Sheriff's Office Update Lt. Sawicki, Lee County Sheriff's Office
Lt. Sawicki responded to numerous complaints regarding underage drivers and/or unsafe driving of golf carts, noise and general mischief by renters
 - There is no enforceable ordinance regarding underage drivers of golf carts on North Captiva. Our roads are not public, they are private and so regulation must come from owner actions. This is in contrast to Captiva, where roads are public, and the Sheriff has jurisdiction
 - Three weeks ago something like 100 high school age kids from Tampa descended on North Captiva. Lt. Sawicki and his deputy were present nearly every day, sometimes until after midnight, in an attempt to exert control. On Escondido renters were evicted from one house. When Lt. Sawicki/his deputy confronted unruly renters on Hidden Lane, they complained of a "bait & switch" tactic on the part of owners/rental agents – that is, renters were told there was no police presence on the island. Needless to say it did not go well for them...
 - Lt. Sawicki believes (as he has said before) the answer lies in cooperation among owners and rental agencies in terms of incorporating clear guidelines in rental agreements and backing those guidelines with immediate eviction/financial penalties. This is the Captiva model and it works. It was suggested that the Island Homeowners page on Facebook might serve as coordination platform

- On Captiva Minut monitors are being successfully used to inform homeowners/agencies of property status. They register sound, humidity, temperature and occupancy (# of mobile devices active). While there is no recording, if decibels or temperature exceed preset levels, the designated phone number is notified
- It was stressed that the Sheriff's officers are available 24/7, with a short travel time from Captiva where they are domiciled

IV. Fire Department Update Chief Martin, Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue

- Recently there have been two elevator rescues. This is serious if anyone were trapped without water or a/c for any length of time. The Department urges us to have elevators regularly inspected
- Fire suppression systems in-home also require regular inspection. The Department is aware of a firm which does this on an island-wide basis; if interested, let Chief Martin know
- Emergency generators additionally need inspection/servicing regularly
- The risk of fire remains elevated despite recent rain. If you or a renter spot a possible fire *call 911*
- In the past 2 years 4 dogs have died from ingesting rat poison, including one quite recently. If you put such poison out, make certain renters are aware. The Department are not vets, though they will attempt such treatment as may be available. Bill Byrnes is seeing if it is practicable to establish a link with Pine Island veterinary clinic. If any vets are on-island, will they please register with the Department?
- With respect to fire pits or grills, do not put them on the porch. In fact your insurance may forbid this. An idea is to include instructions to this effect in any "concierge" book

V. Treasurer's Report Erin LaVallie (for Helen Justice, Treasurer)

General Fund	Beginning Balance	\$25,992
	Income (membership dues)	6,693
	Expenses (insurance & mailings)	2,713
	Net Income	3,980
	Ending Balance	29,971
Island Access Fund		\$101,313
Community Center Foundation		\$5,405
Total Assets		\$136,689

VI. Board Meeting Logistics David Bolme, Communications Secretary
 In the interest of clarity and transparency, to invite members' input and improve communication, the Board in its April 6th meeting decided:

- The Bylaws will be amended to distinguish between official BOD meetings at which votes are taken and working sessions at which they are not. Note that the UCCA BOD is not subject to the Sunshine Law
- Members only will be able to access on the UCCA website the Agenda in advance of BOD meetings and are invited to attend these meetings in person or via Zoom to observe, with notice to the Communications Secretary in advance. In the interest of time and orderly proceedings, they are not invited to ask questions or offer observations during the meeting itself
- Members – as well as interested islanders – may, of course, ask questions of any Board member at any time via the website
- General Membership meetings are always open to the public. Notice is posted on the UCCA website

VII. Roads Update

A. J. LaVallie, Fire Commissioner

- The roads are under pressure this time of year due to heavy traffic – renters & construction. We have 6 weeks until the rainy season to make repairs, subject to the availability of equipment and crew from islander Mark Justice – to whom we owe a large “thank you” for his willingness to deal with this issue of importance to all islanders – weather affecting barging and completion of the Salty Approach fence
- Over the past 2 months spot repairs have been made to Escondido near the Safety Harbor Club office, to Hidden Lane and W. Sea Air and to Panama, Butterfly and Oyster Shell. This is the initial trial for the “shells”, with encouraging results on Panama Shell so far
- The major rebuild of Kingfisher undertaken last year is holding well. At \$40/linear foot this is expensive and we must prioritize spending on key roads for fire equipment access (i.e., minimum distance from firehouse). This work was partially funded by homeowners on Kingfisher, 99% of whom contributed. Private owners may pool resources to import pit shell and other finishing products, and A. J. will treat their roads subject to availability of person power.
- We have a dust problem from the increase in cart traffic. Existing homes are renting at a steady rate and there are 20 new houses under construction or contract. The Fire department is experimenting with towing a 500 gal. water trailer to use spraying roads in high-traffic months. The use of calcium chloride was suggested; this is being researched (environmental aspects?)
- Sprinkler systems which flow onto roads can, in conjunction with repeated cart traffic, cause ruts/potholes and damage roads. Owners are requested to minimize
- We thank A. J. for his untiring and effective work on a matter which impacts all islanders. His report will post on the UCCA website

VIII. Board Initiatives

Brazilian pepper

Rick Noland, Recording Secretary

Two days ago the Director of Community Development for Lee County, who oversees Code Enforcement, responded to a letter from UCCA two months past which set out our concerns concerning mandated removal of this invasive species – putatively by Jan. 1st of this year

- Lee County reaffirms that there is no intention of enforcing removal of Brazilian pepper on *vacant* lots. When building the removal is mandatory, and the permitting and inspection is well understood
- The process of voluntary removal from vacant lots remains unclear. At various times recently Lee County has stated that a permit is required, or that a permit is necessary only if Gopher tortoise is found (information on certified tortoise wranglers will soon be available on the UCCA website Brazilian pepper page), or no permit is required for 5 or less trees from a lot that already has an existing dwelling. We will request clarification once again
- There will be no new deadline for removal
- There will be no assistance from the County beyond “educational materials”
- Disposal of debris is left to the discretion of our Fire Department. We will work with Chief Martin to set out guidelines. In the meantime use your common sense

Golf Carts

Bill Fry, Director

Bill is pursuing three approaches: slowing carts; establishing a Cart Registry; obtaining “best practice” renter agreements

- The FAQ on the UCCA website contains names of businesses which can chip newer carts to control speed. Settings “1” or “2” (8 – 11mph) are recommended. For older carts manual adjustments may be possible. FYI, NCIC has a tower-based system tracking their newest carts, for monitoring speed & location, prohibiting beach access and remote shut down
- Bill and David Bolme are establishing a prototype Cart Registry. Owners are encouraged to register their carts, to clearly ID the carts and to provide contact information for anyone to report misuse. The goal is to be “live” this year.
- The absolute number of carts may not be limited by the County. This was researched when the Upper Captiva Panel drafted the Brazilian pepper and Dark Sky ordinances in 2012. If we wish change (i.e., new zoning) we need to speak with County Commissioners

- Per the Sheriff's Office statement that the only means of regulation is voluntary, the idea is to establish Community Standards, and Bill has begun researching "best practice" renter agreements
- There is no regulation which effectively bans gas powered vehicles. The Safety Harbor Club has an informal agreement with NCIC to phase out their gas powered carts

Island Access

Swin Swinford, Director

This \$101K fund was established to purchase land for a dock in case the ferry services failed.

- Zoning will not allow commercial usage of a residentially zoned dock. We could purchase a residential dock and go through the re-zoning process. But that would prove costly and could get denied - and frankly there are not really any residential dockage parcels suitable for the use
- If we move forward a partnership may be the way. UCCA has no official position to offer the membership, but will in the future

Safe Harbor

Swin Swinford, Director

The Safe Harbor corporation, owners of Island Girl, has proposed building "treehouses" behind Ancient Beach

- It is uncertain how serious SH is: the CEO has indicated that he would be unlikely to proceed if the island is opposed; the Chief Development Officer said they are in the "pre-application" mode.
- The UCCA plan is to educate, determine and address. In the next 6 weeks 2 island-wide Zoom meetings will provide the community with up-to-date information. This Summer an island survey will determine attitudes, identify issues and report back. Following that we will set up a Zoom Town Hall with SH to air our concerns
- These include but are not limited to: septic, road traffic/golf carts, Salty Approach impact, Safety Harbor vessel congestion, wetlands/flooding. At a minimum we need to both define our "asks" to SH and be prepared to raise matters with the Planning Board prior to an application hearing with the Commissioners

Conservation

Swin Swinford, Director

We believe 102 properties changed hands last year. We know 20 homes are presently under construction or will be in the near future. It is conceivable that this level of building will continue for several years. The pressure on the island infrastructure of this level of activity – most of which is oriented toward renting – is significant

- To the extent possible we encourage private purchase of vacant lots with the view to maintaining “green space”, either by individuals or in partnerships
- UCCA is discussing partnering with the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation, which owns land here. Ryan Orgera, CEO, hopes to hire a person focused on NorCap
- This will be a continuing effort demanding support from all islanders. UCCA has 138 household memberships, of whom few attend our meetings either in-person or virtually. To make any of our plans work, we need broad participation; increasing visibility and membership is the first step and one in which all members can participate

IX. Meeting Dates

Jackie Byrnes, President

The Summer Board meeting will be June 28th, the next General Membership meeting July 6th. Locations and times will be posted on the UCCA website and an e-mail notice of the General Membership meeting will be sent

X. Other Business

- It was noted that UCCA funds are held in interest-bearing accounts (really, really low interest-bearing accounts)
- A need for beach street signage was raised, to keep renters from becoming even more lost. Jackie said the Board would study the matter
- A suggestion was made to invite a business on-island to sell, rent, maintain all golf carts, centralizing control of these vehicles. Another was to replace all golf carts for renters with bicycles
- With the resignation of Rick Noland from the BOD, there is an open Board position. The criteria for service are ownership of island property and/or on-island legal address

XI. Adjourn

Rick moved to Adjourn, Second by Bill, unanimously approved @ 1:30pm