

The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

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CLICK ON THE ARTICLE NAME BELOW

[Confusing Language For VCCDD Straw Vote](#)

[What Language Should Say](#)

[What If You Live South of Hwy 466?](#)

[No Taxation Without Representation](#)

[Cheers and Jeers](#)

[Video Camera Crime](#)

[POA Hall Of Fame](#)

[Disclosures When Buying Your Home](#)

[The POA Disclosure Reform Bill](#)

[Political Candidate Questionnaire](#)

[Red Light Runners](#)

[Florida Hometown Democracy](#)

[Ollie's Frozen Custard September POA Special](#)

[We Need Your Help](#)

[Voter Information](#)

[Safety on the Recreation Trails](#)

[Short Comments](#)

[POA Survey Comments Continued](#)

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[Return To Main POA Page](#)

Confusing Language For VCCDD Straw Vote

All three counties involved with The Villages have approved, or soon will approve, the official Straw Vote ballot language asking residents north of highway 466 whether they prefer to assume voting control of the VCCDD.

There are two alternatives:

The first is to "Continue As Is" the current situation in which decisions are made by VCCDD supervisors who are primarily elected by the developer;

The second is to "Make a Change" whereby residents would elect their own supervisors in a new board to assume voting control of the decision-making process.

Although these two alternatives appear simply stated, the official language that is almost finalized is, in the opinion of the POA, incomplete and twisted around in a way that may confuse voters.

The official language in final consideration for the two choices is as follows:

Vote "YES" if you like the way Amenity Programs, Facilities and Services are currently being provided by the Villages Center District and would prefer they continue to be operated as they are now.

Vote "NO" if you prefer to change the way that Amenity Programs, Facilities and Services are being provided north of County Road 466 by creating a separate Administrative entity by interlocal agreement among the numbered districts, Lake County and Villages Center District.

The confusion here is that to vote for a change, you have to vote "NO" as your choice among the two alternatives. This is counter-intuitive since most people when asked if they want to change something would say "yes" if they wanted the change.

This is the crux of the problem. Residents will need to be careful and study beforehand the two alternatives. Residents must guard against making a very simple but serious mistake on this key point.

Furthermore, no mention is made in either alternative about how supervisors are elected.

In the "Yes" alternative, the first alternative, where no change is made and the developer will retain control, it is not stated that supervisors will continue to be appointed/elected primarily by the developer.

In the "No" alternative, the second alternative, where a change will be made to resident control, it is not said that supervisors will be elected by the residents.

If you, the reader, are like most Villagers, your head is swimming trying to understand these alternatives. This is the main problem that the POA sees in this language: it is twisted around, and there is no mention as to whether the developer or the residents will elect supervisors.

The important point for residents to realize is that selection of the "Yes" alternative will continue the developer's hold on the decision-making process to the exclusion of residents.

If residents, however, select the "No" alternative, most voting control of the VCCDD will be transferred to Villages residents.

To summarize:

The "Yes" Alternative will continue developer control of VCCDD decision-making.

The "No" Alternative will ultimately transfer VCCDD decision-making to the residents.

By voting for "No" on the second alternative, residents will be saying: "I don't like the way things are being done now and I want a change."

If you are concerned about the complexity of this choice, so are we. We still give the developer credit for making the offer to consider this. However, we have this awful language complexity to deal with. So, it will be more important than ever for Villages residents to study the issues and make the informed choice they favor from the vantage point of full, complete, and understandable information.

[Top](#)

What Language Should Say

There are problems with the Straw Vote language that the lead article in the columns on the left tries to explain.

In this column, we attempt to lay out the simplified language that the POA favors for the ballot in an effort to avoid possible confusion. We think the ballot should have been set up as laid out below.

We would favor two short introductory paragraphs and then the listing of the two choices immediately below that as follows:

Currently, decisions about Amenity Services, Facilities, and Utilities in The Villages north of highway 466 are made by the VCCDD Supervisors who are elected primarily by the developer of The Villages.

Residents are being asked whether they would prefer to change this.

PLEASE VOTE FOR ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. "Continue As Is" Alternative - I prefer the current situation in which the VCCDD has responsibility for decision-making and the supervisors are elected primarily by the developer of The Villages.

2. "Make A Change" Alternative - I prefer to establish a new Resident

Authority Board to assume from the VCCDD the responsibility for decision-making and the new supervisors would be elected primarily by residents.

The reader should compare this language with the official language presented in the lead story on the first page of this Bulletin issue. Study the alternatives. Understand the differences. Question the alternatives and what is best in your opinion. Decide on your choice. Vote your choice in November. Make your decision based on what you think is best for you and your community.

However, please don't fall into one of these traps:

- Deciding on alternative #1 for continuing developer control because it appears simpler.
- Deciding that alternative #2 is better just because it appears to be more thoughtful, or better because it appears more complex.
- Deciding on alternative #1 to retain developer control when you are concerned about past developer actions on issues like the Nancy Lopez pond sinkhole repair, the aborted Activities Policy that was designed to severely restrict your constitutional rights of speech and assembly, or the repair costs of the recreation trails, etc.
- Deciding on alternative #1 to retain developer control by thinking that the developer has done a good job here. All voters should separate the developer's construction and development activities, which have been good, from his governance activities where there are questions about how his hand-picked VCCDD supervisors have repeatedly taken advantage of residents.

In summary, this is a big decision, and all residents north of highway 466 will have to carefully study the details and decide accordingly. Remember, this is your hometown now.

[Top](#)

What If You Live South of Hwy 466?

What if you live south of highway 466? Can you vote for or against the Straw Vote on this November's ballot?

No, you cannot vote for or against this.

The reason is that the developer is not allowing you to vote as he is doing for the residents north of highway 466.

This option may be offered to residents south of highway 466 when the developer has completed development and construction activities within another 4-6 years.

So, until then you will be "second-class" citizens. You can live here, pay your amenity fees and taxes, but you will not be able to vote for the SLCDD

supervisors who will make all the big-money decisions for you.

The big dollar decisions, moreover, are still to be decided in the SLCDD area. These are the sales by the developer to the SLCDD of all the common property at inflated prices.

These sales in the VCCDD area north of highway 466 have amounted to over \$500 million, and the debt repayment obligation has been forced upon residents by the VCCDD. Roughly 60% of amenity fees north of highway 466 are pledged for debt service. Monthly amenity fees north of highway 466 could be in a \$50-\$75 range were it not for the inflated property sales from the developer to the VCCDD.

Those sales are just starting south of highway 466. And, the developer will resist giving you the vote until all those property sales are completed and you are obligated for the full repayment, like it or not. And the tab could be in a one billion dollar range.

So, until then, like it or lump it -- unless you speak up now and demand your rights as a resident to be able to decide community issues on your own rather than let a developer-appointed board make your decisions.

You should be the one to decide....

[Top](#)

No Taxation Without Representation

The American Revolution was fought over a variety of issues, one of the most important, perhaps, was the notion of Taxation Without Representation.

In the 1770s colonists were increasingly irritated by England as it imposed more and more taxes on the colonies when the colonies had no representation in Parliament. King George III liked it this way and objected to the increasingly independent notions of the colonists. He insisted on making the decisions for the colonists, which he felt were his to make based on the divine right of kings.

Early Americans didn't agree and fought the Revolutionary War over the right to make their own decisions by their own representative government.

This is the idea, as Lincoln said, describing a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

This is the way it should be - and that includes here in The Villages. We should govern ourselves. We should make the decisions that affect us in our everyday life in our community.

We should not tolerate our VCCDD government, where 80% of the supervisors don't even live in our community, making decisions on what they think is best

for us.

The VCCDD is the government that has committed roughly 60% of our monthly amenity fees to debt service to buy back common property from the developer at inflated prices without standard property appraisals. We had no say in the matter, could not vote out the supervisors if we were unhappy with their actions, and could not object to the debt repayment obligation forced upon us by supervisors who are hand-picked by the developer.

The situation here is not much different from what it was in 1776 when those residents decided to govern themselves. We can also do the same through our vote.

And, we think that if George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton lived in The Villages today, they would vote to change to self-rule, alternative #2.

How fortunate we are to live in a place where we can decide to govern ourselves. How different this place can be compared to others like Cuba, Russia, China, where someone else makes the decisions for you.

[Top](#)

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To The VCCDD and the SLCCDD for arranging flu and pneumonia shots for Villagers in October. This is a wonderful accomplishment on the part of these center districts and is the kind of endeavor they should be working on. Thanks.

Cheers - To the Villages Daily Sun for starting to report in more detail the accidents and crimes in our community. Residents need to know about these occurrences so as to protect themselves, especially from crimes. The Sun's previous notion of not reporting these so as to give the impression of no problems and happy days in The Villages was wrong and dangerous for residents.

Jeers - To resident who put out yard debris many days before the official pick-up. If your pick-up day for yard debris is Wednesday, please don't put debris out days before as a smelly and ugly sight for all your neighbors. Please store it on the side of your house, and then put it out the evening before the pick-up day.

Jeers - To residents who sweep grass clippings or other debris into the storm sewers.

Jeers - To the asphalt pavers who recently re-paved Rio Grande and Del Mar and did not "feather" the edges into the gutters, thus leaving a high edge that is

a hazard to walkers, runners, skaters, bikers, etc.

Cheers - To the SLCDD or whoever removed that inappropriate concrete obstacle at the Belvedere Gate. Doesn't anyone think these things through before they spend all that money doing something not-so-smart?

Jeers - To the One Sumter concept which will make this upcoming election a "Them Versus Us" contest between residents of The Villages and everybody else in Sumter County. We may get polarization rather than the county unity promised by One Sumter.

Jeers - To everybody involved in producing the convoluted and confusing language for the Straw Vote options. How can intelligent adults produce such problem language?

Cheers - To the developer of The Villages for allowing residents north of highway 466 to decide whether they want to assume voting control of the VCCDD. This would allow residents to decide governmental and community issues by themselves.

[Top](#)

Video Camera Crime

The Sumter County Times newspaper recently carried a story that we can't remember seeing in the Daily Sun.

Two men in a pickup truck allegedly stole a screen room construction kit from a home site. Valued at \$1,500, it was taken off a home foundation in the Village of Caroline.

The men in the truck went through the Caroline Gate and the Mallory Hill Gate and were photographed by video surveillance cameras with an empty truck the first time and with the kit the second time. When Sumter County Sheriff personnel reviewed the tapes, they saw the materials in the truck.

Both men were arrested based on the video evidence and charged with grand theft.

The key point is that various entry gates around The Villages have video tape cameras that record vehicles going through the gates. This is a really worthwhile crime fighting tool used in The Villages.

Perhaps we should publicize incidents like this more in the Daily Sun as a way of discouraging crime. Discouraging criminals is better than having to catch criminals. Let's be thankful, however, that we have the video cameras to do both.

[Top](#)

POA Hall Of Fame

POA members need to start thinking about the names of individuals that should be considered for the POA Hall of Fame honor.

The process starts with a Nomination Form that is available now at the POA monthly meetings or from any POA official. Candidates for the Hall of Fame honor can only be nominated by current POA members or by the Nominating Committee just formed for this purpose. The Nomination Form will contain the nominee's name and current contact information, if available. At least five (5) co-nominating signatures will be required from the persons making the nomination. A space will be provided for an explanation of why this person deserves to be in the Hall of Fame. This explanation is very important.

And, time is flying. Nominations need to be submitted by the end of October.



[Top](#)

Disclosures When Buying Your Home

Reprinted below and in the columns on the right is the Disclosure Reform bill that we plan to submit again to the Florida Legislature for consideration in the next session.

In preparation for that, we are asking residents to send to us any examples they may have experienced of nonexistent, poor, or misleading disclosures on the purchase of property in The Villages. If, when purchasing your home, you weren't told something, or were misled about anything relating to disclosure issues, we want to hear from you regarding what happened or didn't happen.

Our plan is to develop a listing of specific examples that we can show to public officials willing to help our legislative initiative on Disclosure Reform.

So, please write us with your story at POA Disclosure, POBox 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158, or email directly to us at the new POA email address of poa4us@gmail.com.

Please include your name and address and phone number - we have to have this for proper documentation and for any follow-up questions. And, be as specific as possible. Remember also that we need your story. If not enough people respond, the conclusion will be that there is no problem. So, if you had a problem with a disclosure, we need to hear from you. Thanks in advance for your help on this effort.

[Top](#)

The POA Disclosure Reform Bill

The current disclosure language given to buyers at the time of home purchase in a CDD is in Section 190.048 Florida Statutes. The section is inadequate and should be revised. Revisions should apply to any sale of a CDD property by a developer or its agents.

There are several issues that need to be part of a comprehensive Disclosure Reform bill as follows:

1. Timing of Disclosure - The currently-required Disclosure is often given to potential buyers too late in the buyer's decision-making process, or often delayed until the time of closing, or afterwards. The Disclosure should be given to a prospective purchaser: (a) no less than ten (10) business days prior to closing; or, (b) at an earlier date when the buyer first exhibits serious interest in a property; and, (c) updated at least three (3) business days prior to closing.

2. Receipt for Disclosure - Buyers often complain that the currently-required Disclosure was never given or was delivered after closing. A developer or its agents should be required to obtain a signed and dated receipt from a potential buyer indicating when the Disclosure was delivered.

3. Separate Sheet of Paper - The currently-required Disclosure is often buried in other lengthy closing documents. The Disclosure should be on separate sheets of paper, clearly identified.

4. Dollar Specifics - The currently-required Disclosure is not comprehensive and specific as to dollar amounts. The Disclosure should contain reasonable estimates of the dollar amounts for the first three (3) years for each tax, assessment, and/or monthly fee. Any bond obligations to be assumed by individual residents, the related interest rates, and repayment options should also be identified.

5. Undisclosed Liabilities - Any significant underfunded or unfunded liabilities of a CDD, potentially to be paid by residents within the next ten (10) years, should be identified, explained, and fully disclosed.

6. Special Agreements - Any agreement between a developer, a district, and/or any other party, which could have a current or potential significant

financial impact on current or future residents in the district within the next ten (10) years, should be identified, explained, and fully disclosed.

7. Covenants and Restrictions - These details applying to the property should be fully listed and explained to a layman's understanding.

8. Disclosure of Problems - The Disclosure should specifically disclose and explain any obnoxious, troublesome, or unsavory physical properties or characteristics of, on, or in the surrounding land within a ten (10) mile radius of the property of interest to a potential buyer.

9. Procedures to Follow - Many complaints in the past refer to sellers or sales agents not following proper procedures, or, at the worst, actually misleading prospective buyers on disclosure issues. The Statute should require specific disclosure and compliance as indicated herein by sellers and/or sales agents.

10. Noncompliance Fines - These requirements for specific disclosure and compliance are substantially weakened if a penalty fine is not specified and enforced. The Statute should specify a penalty fine of at least \$2,500.00 for each violation of these Disclosure requirements to be paid within thirty (30) days by a violator to a prospective buyer affected by a violation upon notice of the violation from the prospective buyer. The total fine shall double each thirty days until paid up to a maximum of \$10,000.00. Any legal, court, discount, or collection fees required to accomplish the collection of a fine shall also be paid by the violator above and beyond the previously mentioned \$10,000.00 maximum.

11. Annual Reporting - Developers and commercial sales agents should be required to submit an annual report summarizing their compliance with these Disclosure requirements, any instances of non-compliance, and detailing the payment of any required fines, under penalty of a separate \$50,000.00 fine and any other criminal penalties identified by the Florida State Legislature for non-compliance with any part of this annual reporting requirement.

[Top](#)

Political Candidate Questionnaire

In the previous issue of the Bulletin, we listed five questions that we sent to candidates for offices in various local and state elections. The idea was to see where these candidates stood on issues of importance to all Villagers.

These are the questions sent to the candidates:

1. Full Disclosure - Would you support legislation requiring developers to provide full disclosure for prospective home buyers along with stiff financial penalties for violations or non-compliance?

2. Controls on Developers - Would you support legislation to more closely regulate developers as they develop Florida land?

3. Villages Voting Authority - Are you in favor of allowing Villages residents to have voting control of their center CDD's decision-making process?

4. Villages Recreation Trails - In The Villages, are you in favor of having the center CDD districts pay for the maintenance and repair of the recreation trails?

5. Florida Hometown Democracy - This proposed constitutional amendment would shift the power to approve local developments away from elected officials in our cities and counties and give that power directly to local voters in a referendum about future land use. Would you support this idea?

We received a good response, summarized here. We will run another article in the next Bulletin to summarize any more responses.

Several respondents wanted to see specific details before answering. However, a "yes" or "no" response could always depend on "this" or "that" condition. Thus, our questions were phrased in a general enough of a way so that a general enough of an answer could give an insight into the candidate's thinking about topics of interest to Villagers.

We received these responses:

Hugh Gibson, running for re-election to his Florida House seat, responded with a page-and-a-half letter explaining his thinking about each question. On the first two questions about Full Disclosure and Controls on Developers, Mr. Gibson said he could support each with the right kind of legislation that he would want to review in advance. On the Villages Voting Authority he did not answer the question, saying that "only the voters can decide." On Recreation Trails, Mr. Gibson believes that the individual districts should pay since the individual residential districts built them. Mr. Gibson did not favor the Hometown Democracy amendment.

Robert Thompson, running against Representative Hugh Gibson in November, responded "yes" to all five questions without reservations. Mr. Thompson has indicated his strong support for the Full Disclosure bill and, if elected, vowed to introduce the Disclosure Bill as one of his first acts in the Florida House.

Joey Chandler, running for re-election to the Sumter County Board, responded "yes" to the questions 1-4 about Full Disclosure, Controls on Developers, the Voting Authority, and Recreation Trails. He answered question #5 on the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment with a "no."

Jim Roberts, running for re-election to the Sumter County Board, responded "yes" to the questions about Full Disclosure, Controls on Developers, the Voting Authority, and the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment. He answered question #4 on the way to pay for maintenance and repairs of the Villages Recreation Trails with a "no."

Pam Rinehart, running for the CDD2 board, responded "yes" for Full Disclosure, Controls on Developers, and the Villages Voting Authority but qualified her responses with wanting to see the wording or scope of each issue. She also responded "yes" to the Recreation Trails question on the assumption that it referred to the VCCDD. She did not provide a response for

the Hometown Democracy questions and indicated she would have to see the specific language.

James Dee, running for a seat on the CDD4 Board, responded with a page-and-a-half letter explaining his thinking about each question. He felt the Disclosure Bill provisions were unwieldy, unclear, undefined, and, with some items, totally unrealistic. He does support disclosure requirements that are reasonable, defined, specific and not in violation of the property or constitutional rights of others. He gave no response on the Developer Controls question. On The Villages Voting Authority, he did not give a response but indicated his belief that people have a right to make decisions about what is their preference and in their best interest. He believes the Recreation Trails are the responsibility of the numbered residential districts. Mr. Dee feels The Florida Hometown Democracy issue is troublesome and he gave no direct response.

James A. Murphy, running for the CDD4 board, responded with a "yes" for the questions on Full Disclosure, Controls on Developers, The Villages Voting Authority, and the Recreation Trails. He responded with a "no" on the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment.

Cindy Barrow, running for the Lake County School Board, District 3, responded with "yes" responses for Full Disclosure, Controls on Developers, and The Villages Voting Authority. She questioned the Recreation Trails issue, but indicated that she felt the developer should be paying, not the residents. On the Florida Hometown Democracy question, she responded "yes - absolutely."

H. David Werder, running in a primary for the U.S. House seat held by Ms. Ginny Brown-Waite also responded. Mr. Werder responded that he was running for a federal office and felt that the questionnaire was not appropriate for him.

[Top](#)

Red Light Runners

In a recent POA general membership meeting at which Lady Lake town Manager Bill Vance was the speaker, a member asked about having cameras mounted on light poles at intersections to photograph license plates of red light runners.

Vance later asked Ed Nathanson, Chief of Lady Lake Police, for his comments. Chief Ed responded with the following:

"According to Barry Wall of D.O.T., it is not enforceable nor is it legal to write traffic citations on state roads based solely on traffic cameras at this time, according to the Florida State Statutes. However, it is permissible on city/town owned streets and roads should an ordinance be enacted. Please keep in mind that in our case, that means that there are no lights on the 441/27 (which

is really State Road 500) that would qualify for this program.

"With that stated, there is a red light running enforcement effort under way that is known as House Bill 259 that is being submitted for consideration. If and when that bill passes, I will gladly pursue the cameras for our traffic lights."

As the POA hears more about this from either Lady Lake or the surrounding counties, we will update our membership.

We have also taken the initiative to present this material to the Silver Hair Legislators for consideration. This was sent to Tom and Charlotte Poss for introduction at the SHL session later this year.

We further think that residents should talk up this idea with any government official who is willing to listen.

[Top](#)

Florida Hometown Democracy

A proposed amendment to the Florida State Constitution is called Florida's Hometown Democracy. This amendment would shift the power to approve local developments away from elected officials in Florida's cities and counties and give that power directly to local voters in a referendum about future land use.

A group of concerned Floridians is pursuing this potential constitutional amendment for inclusion on the November, 2008, ballot. Just this last June this group received Florida Supreme Court approval to proceed to gather signatures. If enough signatures are received, the amendment can be placed on the ballot. Thus far, only about 70,000 of the required 611,000 signatures have been received.

Further information is available on the group's Internet website at:
<http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com/>

We urge residents to explore this website and decide whether they would like to support the proposal of the Florida Hometown Democracy. A petition is available on the website for download.

One of the founders of the group is scheduled to speak at the November 15, 2006, general membership meeting of the POA. This will be a good chance to learn more and get answers from one of the key authors of the amendment. Put it on your calendar.

[Top](#)

Ollie's Frozen Custard September POA Special

Spotlight on Businesses that Support the POA:

In celebration of the POA, Ollie's will be offering POA members a Special throughout the month of September. A regular single dip cone or dish for 99 cent. This special will be offered - Monday thru Friday - from 5 pm to 7 pm during our new "HAPPY HOURS" promotion, or see our coupon in this Bulletin.

The Ollie's store at the Villages is a copy of the hugely successful Ollie's located in Sycamore, IL. Since its opening over 5 years ago, Ollie's at The Village has grown steadily. The store is unique in the custard business with inside seating for 24 customers, unlike most walk-up custard stands.

They also market Ollie's in very interesting ways. They have given out over 65,000 samples of their product and have participated in numerous events with local groups and charities to promote their brand of custard and help the communities they serve. Ollie's also offers its patrons a membership in its "Ollie's Club" which gives each member a FREE sundae on their birthday and offers Ollie's product discounts each month. There are currently over 10,000 members.

Ollie's is also known for its Signature Sundaes. The first one, called The Schwartz (named after the founding family of The Villages), has been such a success that they have introduced another this year. It is called The Strawberry Volcano because it looks like a volcano shooting out strawberry lava.

Ollie's motto is "If you like ice cream-you'll love Ollie's." They make three flavors of FRESH custard daily; they always have chocolate, vanilla and each day they feature a "Flavor of the Day." Some of the most popular flavors include: Irish Cream Cake, Butter Pecan, Blueberry Cheesecake and Peanut Butter Chocolate Nut. Ollie's stocks over 30 of their "Flavor of the Day" which are available in pints and quarts for take-out only. All selections are listed on a calendar/flyer available at the store or on their website at <http://www.olliesfrozencustard.com/>.

[Top](#)

We Need Your Help

The POA needs some volunteer help from members. Call Joe at 259-0999 for details.

We have openings on the POA Board of Directors for members who want to get more active in the POA. You might find that the time requirement is not great and the personal rewards are truly gratifying.

We could use the help of a volunteer attorney on a variety of projects. A background in local government law, real estate, litigation, or contracts would be helpful.

We also need paid route delivery people to help deliver the POA Bulletin once a month for two to four days. A dependable car or golf cart is needed. Routes near your home are possible. This work is compensated. Contact Lee at: delivery@poa4us.org.

[Top](#)

Voter Information

The POA has been concerned about what we see as the Daily Sun's drumbeat of incorrect information about the Sumter County commissioners. This is in editorial material, news stories, and letters to the editor.

A website has sprung up that attempts to provide factual information to refute some of the incorrect information that we have seen.

If you want documented analysis of some of the many recent statement you have seen in print or heard about the Sumter County commissioners, please check out this important website at <http://www.votesumter.com>.

We don't know who is behind the website. It would add credibility if we knew. The factual analysis and documentation are, nevertheless, worthwhile. Thankfully, someone had the time and knowledge to set the record straight.

[Top](#)

Safety on the Recreation Trails

At the POA meeting on August 16, Bernard O'Donnell, a Villages resident, made a presentation restated below regarding the design width of the two-way recreation trails adjacent to El Camino Real and Buena Vista Blvd. within Sumter County. Bernie was a professional electrical engineer in his previous occupation. He consulted with registered civil engineers to confirm his recommendations here. This presentation has also been given to the Sumter County Commissioners:

The recreation trail design width of 10 ft. is clearly inadequate for the stated intended use by pedestrians, bikers, and golf carts.

The reason for presenting this data to Sumter County was that Public Safety is a major responsibility for any local government entity. Also, it was confirmed that there was no engineering review by a private Engineering Consultant or the State of Florida of the design at that time in the late 1990's by Sumter County. This is normally done (by legal requirements) for any construction project in the county.

In the initial Development of Regional Impact (D.R.I.) submitted by the developer to Sumter County, there was no specified width identified. However, for the Marion County portion of Buena Vista Blvd. and a later D.R.I. for Buena Vista (in Sumter County), the width was specified as 12 ft. Had the county either used a paid consultant or consulted with the State or the Developer Design Consultant, this design error could have been readily avoided.

In the Florida State Greenways manual, design width is listed as the Major Design Consideration. The minimum design of a two-way paved path for non-motorized pathway (a shared-use pathway) is specified as 10 ft., with a 12 ft. minimum width if bikers are added to the intended use. If golf carts are added to the mix, it is clear that a 16 ft. pathway would be the correct conservative design guideline from safety considerations. In any case, it is clear that 10 ft. is clearly inadequate, and these pathways need to be widened to a minimum of 12 ft. as this is the current width of The Marion County portion along Buena Vista Blvd.

The tunnels at Savannah Ctr. are now both 16 ft. wide (the reasonable safe width), but the original design at Savannah included a pedestrian pathway resulting in a clearly unsafe pathway for golf carts. This pathway was removed within the last two years at local district expense. Also, additional cement was added for turnarounds on both sides of this tunnel, in recognition of previous design errors.

In addition to the current unsafe conditions of these pathways just for golf carts alone, use of licensed LSVs or Golf Cars along these paths have not been banned. LSVs are permitted by State Law to use the adjacent roads of El Camino Real and Buena Vista Blvd as the speed limits of 35 mph permit road usage, while golf carts are banned from usage in these roads. In Spanish Springs CDD, there are no roads that LSVs can't use, but no local or county government seems to be able to recognize this obvious compromise of public safety.

When 4 ft. wide golf carts use these pathways and are within 6 in. of the edge (a reasonable assumption), two golf carts traveling in opposite directions even at safe speeds will pass each other with only a 1 ft. miss distance. This is clearly an unsafe condition for golf carts alone, while LSVs being 8-12 in. wider can't even hardly fit on these two-way pathways, much less avoid collisions.

Also no mention of LSV intended usage is included in any D.R.I. along these

recreation trails.

It is unfortunate that Sumter County did not review this project properly with the developer as this design problem could have been avoided from the start.

It is obvious that the designers from the developer later recognized this design inadequacy in the Marion County portion of the recreation trails, as these are now 12 ft. Also the design width of the trails in Sumter Landing of approx. 16 ft. will allow LSV drivers to use these recreation trails parallel to Rt. 466 where the speed limit exceeds the 35mph limit.

Hopefully, Sumter County will enter into a negotiation with the developer to fix the unsafe pathways in Spanish Springs CDD, so that ALL Village resident safety concerns will be addressed.

It was also pointed out during the presentation that golf cart safety is ultimately the responsibility of each Villages resident and that the County could help in making the residents more aware of this by providing a mailing to all residents of practical and official rules for golf cart users on all streets within The Villages.

If you agree with these recommendations, please contact the Sumter County Commissioners to encourage an action on their part to discuss this problem with the developer.

It was also pointed out The Villages designers have generally prepared excellent designs which traditionally meet or exceed local or State Code standards for which they should be commended and that this problem was likely just an oversight by both the developer and the County, since there is no specific State code for two-way paved golf cart pathways.

[Top](#)

Short Comments

If you need help on any elder healthcare issue or problem, please call the **Shine Elder Help line at 1-800-963-5337. You can also call Harold Barnes, a Villages resident, at 753-8810. Or you can talk to Harold personally at the POA monthly meetings.**

If you see Bulletins lying in the street or the gutter after delivery, or if you know a house is unoccupied, please pick up the Bulletins and either hold them for the residents' return, or discard them. This is especially important during windy or rainy weather.

If you need to contact the Seniors vs Crime organization, call 753-2799, ext 4253, for Sumter and Lake Counties or 753-7775 for Marion County. Phone assistance is only available on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 10

a.m. thru 2 p.m.

The sexual offender and predator website is http://www3.fdle.state.fl.us/sexual_predators. We have the local database in a 3-ring binder for viewing at the POA monthly meetings.

Now is a good time to renew your POA Membership for 2006, or to join for the first time, with the form on page 15, upper right hand corner. Just clip the form and either mail it to us or bring it to a POA meeting.

If your club or organization needs a speaker for a meeting, we can come to tell you more about the POA and how it represents the best interests of all residents. Call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for details.

[Top](#)

POA Survey Comments Continued

This is a continuation of comments we received in the recently completed Villages Survey. As space permits, we will continue this listing of comments in the future.

The closing costs were the highest I've ever seen. The bond is just another charge to the homeowner. The trash on Buena Vista is there everyday. We need to clamp down on the builders for the trash they leave behind. The information when I bought was not adequate at all. There were too many hidden charges.

Pete Wahl is a mouthpiece for the Morse family.

There are no disabled parking slots around Sumter Square.

Spigot at Savannah Center - water does not shoot out high enough so people are putting their mouths on spigots. This causes contamination spreading germs.

Need more comfortable seats at Savannah Center.

The developer:

All the POA points are well taken. Residents of The Villages are captives with no voice. In other words, we are definitely, undoubtedly, being exploited by the developers & his conspirators.

People are happy in The Villages but there is dishonesty or lack of full disclosure of costs/taxes/bonds/monthly amenity fees/CCD/VCCDD/ad valorem taxes, etc. News-paper and villages TV shows remind me of "The Truman Show" movie. Scary. And add one liberal columnist to the editorial page of The Daily Sun or Tom Friedmen who is moderate. Ann Coulter scares me.

It's time to move from a place run by a dictator and his puppets and the POA is the only hope we have.

The VHA is in bed with the developer - no guts.

Sales agent promised exercise equipment access, but found it available only with a high fee - salesman had promised that it was free.

The Villages operates autocratically without concern of the residents who helped grow this community. There is no fair explanation of amenity fee. One rate should apply to all.

The developer never responds to letters or calls.

Why can't Messrs. Gary or Mark Morse extemporaneously respond to questions (NOT SELECTED 'WRITTEN' QUESTIONS) posed to either of them at any meeting, especially, the annual "VHA" meeting with the residents????

Support beams in block homes only half filled with cement is not good. They did not disclose the homes would not be inspected properly. They indicated 3 inspections of homes. That was a joke. Hope that is not the case now. Greed does a number on your mind when you let it. There is NEVER too much - let's level wealth with honesty. There will be enough for you all to be billionaires.

I have for a very long time thought that the actions of the developer border on or are totally illegal. Using his lieutenants as scam artists and con men to lure people here then systematically and deliberately bleed us for all he can.

Total lack of disclosure regarding surroundings and noise - EG - train whistle. I would have never bought in area of train noise - I was not told - should have been disclosed.

I was misinformed regarding the bond issue. I was told \$5,000 could pay it off without interest with my tax bill. (surprise - surprise!!!)

· To be continued...

[Top](#)

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