

The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

October 2006

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POA Urges "No" Vote For VCCDD Straw Poll

The POA urges Villagers to vote for the change to resident control of the

VCCDD decision-making process by selecting the second alternative on the straw vote ballot, the "No" alternative.

If this alternative is selected by a majority of the voters, Villagers (rather than the developer) will be able to elect the supervisors for a new Resident Authority Board (RAB) which will eventually assume control of most of the important amenity questions for the VCCDD administrative area north of highway 466. This could be a great opportunity for residents to have home rule and guide the decision-making in our own community.

Before explaining the reasons for the "No" recommendation, we should distinguish between the developer's construction and development activities on one hand and the developer's governance activities on the other hand.

The developer has done a fine job of developing and constructing The Villages. The design and execution of the plan for The Villages has brought us our wonderful community. We should acknowledge this fine job on the part of the developer and extend a sincere "thank you" for the developer's vision and performance that has resulted in this great place in which to live.

However, the question of the developer's governance is a separate issue that needs to be examined. Because this is the real issue in this straw vote.

If the developer, through his appointment of the VCCDD supervisors, has done a good job of governance, one might consider voting "Yes" for the "Continue As Is" alternative.

On the other hand, if you think the developer and the VCCDD have not done a good job, then you need to consider the "No" alternative which is the "Make a Change" alternative.

The POA is very disappointed with the developer's record on governance and thus recommends the "No" alternative to "Make a Change" and have the residents control the VCCDD decision-making process.

Our major concerns highlighting the developer's and the VCCDD's poor record on governance are the following:

1. Common Property - The developer has sold over \$500 million of common property to the VCCDD and his hand-appointed supervisors without resident approval. We are forced to assume the debt repayment obligation and we have no say in the matter. We cannot even vote for the supervisors who are often employees, friends, or business associates of the developer. If it were not for these sales, our monthly amenity fees of about \$120.00 north of highway 466 might be approximately \$75.00. This is perhaps the single, most serious example of abuse of trust and poor governance that we can identify for the developer and the VCCDD.

2. The Paradise Center - The VCCDD resisted the idea of renovation the Paradise Center until the deterioration was evident and the outcry from residents was loud. Why did the VCCDD wait so long? By the time it finally decided to proceed with the work, the cost was close to \$5 million. And, the VCCDD supervisors neglected to provide reserves for the cost and had to secure a separate loan to pay for the work.

3. Nancy Lopez Pond Sinkhole - The developer tried to force a \$168,000 repair bill on the residents of CDD#4 to repair a sinkhole on his Nancy Lopez

golf course. Although he eventually paid the bill, the developer cited a mistake by his and VCCDD attorneys who failed to complete the necessary paperwork which should have formalized the requirement for residents to pay. Had this paperwork been completed properly, residents would have been stuck with the bill.

4. Mulberry Lawn Maintenance - The developer and the VCCDD stuck CDD#4 residents with the obligation to pay for lawn maintenance for the Mulberry commercial areas. The developer and the VCCDD finally agreed to proper future billing, but said "no" for reimbursing past erroneous charges.

5. Sewer Water - The developer and the VCCDD tried to convert Lago Del Luna in Palo Alto into a holding pond for treated discharge water from The Villages Sewer treatment facility. The plan was to use this water to irrigate the developer's Tierra Del Sol golf course. And, they started this without telling residents or the local CDD supervisors about the plan. When residents found out, the developer and the VCCDD backed down from this plan to sneak this by the residents.

6. The Activity Policy - The developer's VCCDD and SLCDD supervisors passed an "Activity Policy" that severely restricted our Constitutional Rights of Free Speech and Assembly. A key requirement was that any gathering of two or more residents to protest or demonstrate required an insurance policy of \$1 million. The supervisors approved this unanimously - and then they rescinded it unanimously when faced with the residents' objections. Had residents not spoken out, we would be saddled with the onerous policy.

7. VCCDD Supervisors - Now, 80% of the VCCDD supervisors, elected basically by the developer, do not even live in The Villages. We should have residents on the board who live here, understand our local problems, and have ties to our community. Since the formation of the VCCDD, the developer's record of appointment of independent Villagers to the board has been dismal.

8. Foreign Control of the VCCDD - The developer just sold his share in the Rolling Acres Shopping Center to a German company. Now, a foreign company controls 15.6% of the votes in the VCCDD. If and when the developer sells his other holdings on the downtown square, we could find the VCCDD controlled by companies with no knowledge of or appreciation for our community. Residents should control our community - it's our community.

9. Bob Evans Restaurant Location - The developer wanted to locate the Bob Evans restaurant on the east side of highway 441/27 at the Wales Gate. This would have required a change in deeded restrictions that had to be approved by residents. The developer, with a heavy hand, threatened to force this change on residents through court proceedings and suggested that residents comply with his change order ... or else.

10. Promotional Incentives - The developer promised a variety of incentives to residents on the historic side of The Villages when buying or building their homes in the 1980s. Then, he unilaterally reneged and cancelled the benefits given to residents via contracts. It took a three-year court fight to get the developer to fully reinstate the benefits originally promised. But, he did try to take advantage of residents, and only a court fight turned him around.

Summary - We could go on to talk about eliminated pool monitors, increased RV storage fees, charges for the "free" neighborhood watch service, the closing of popular restaurants, etc. But, you get the idea.

The POA is quite disappointed with the governance activities of the developer and the VCCDD. We believe they have not been fair with residents and have taken advantage of residents on many occasions.

The best solution for these problems is to have residents in charge of the decision-making process in the VCCDD through the Resident Authority Board.

We urge residents to vote for the second alternative, the "No" alternative, to "Make a Change" for the benefit of all Villagers. Remember, this is your home town now.

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Biased Views of The Straw Vote

With all three county commissions finally approving the straw ballot wording, the fight for the hearts and minds of Villagers begins.

While the developer stated that he would let the residents decide if they wanted voting control of the way their amenities fees were being administered, his minions are hard at work trying to scare the residents into maintaining the status quo.

It started with a VNN banner on the bottom of the TV screen indicating that if the change to a resident-elected board occurred, amenity fees might change (i.e. an implied increase). Since amenity fees are based on a "contractual" agreement, the fees will be the same no matter who makes up the governing board. We view this as a basic effort to scare residents about changing to something new.

A recent letter to the editor in the Daily Sun questioned the qualifications of residents compared to the current VCCDD board. The writer thinks that residents "do not have the experience, desire or energy" to do the job.

Residents need only to look at the successes of the resident-elected District 4 board (which has managed to turn around the onerous agreements entered into by the previous developer-elected board, thus freeing residents of financial obligations they never should have had) to see that we do have capable and dedicated residents.

We don't think anyone should underestimate the experience, desire or energy of the residents of The Villages. And no one should underestimate our Villager's commitment to contribute their time and energy to their community.

Residents were encouraged to contact the VHA for answers to straw ballot questions. The VHA insists it is neutral on the straw ballot issue, yet its published answers were clearly slanted toward maintaining the status quo.

For example, on question one regarding who makes the decisions now, the

VHA tried to enhance the reputation of the current VCCDD supervisors by calling them "businessmen," but neglected to mention that all are employees, business associates, or friends of the developer in what we consider a conflict of interests situation.

The VHA answer also forgot to point out that the VCCDD supervisor who was a "previous community development district manager" was and is employed by the developer as a vice president, and he has been organizing development districts for the benefit of developers throughout Florida for over 30 years. Mr. Gary Moyer is the architect of the Center District arrangement that gives the developer total control of the amenities that the residents pay for. This is the same Gary Moyer who was the District Manager for District 4 when the onerous CR42 landscape agreement and the storm water pond easement agreement were put in place, to the detriment of residents.

While Chapter 190, the Florida law that established and continues to regulate CDD activities, provides a special exemption from conflict of interests statutes that allows a developer to put himself and his employees on development district boards, there is no guarantee that they will act in the best interests of current and future residents. We think the VCCDD history shows just the opposite.

Consider the recent VCCDD-passed Activity Policy that severely restricted our constitutional rights of speech and assembly and required a \$1 million insurance policy for any demonstration of more than two people? Thankfully, the VCCDD rescinded the policy after an outcry from residents. You have to think that a resident-elected board would not be as foolish or disrespectful of Residents' Rights.

On question two the VHA response was: "There is no guarantee that a resident-elected board will continue to provide the same programs and services in the future as past VCCDD boards have provided."

There is clearly no guarantee that the VCCDD board will continue to provide any particular programs or services either. There are a number of programs and services that the current board has decided to discontinue. We no longer have pool monitors at most pools. We have had a reduction in Neighborhood Watch services. Along the residential roads within your district, look at how much better maintained the grass and shrubbery are for the frontage maintained by your numbered district compared to the road frontage (for the executive golf courses) maintained by the Center District.

Hopefully these VCCDD reductions in services and lack of attention to the basic need to plan for long-term facility maintenance will NOT be continued by a new resident-elected board in the future.

On the question about an independent audit, the VHA response should have pointed out that the Management's Discussion and Analysis section of the most recent outside audit, by KPMG, a major national accounting firm, stated that the VCCDD financial position was deteriorating (a year-to-year decrease in net assets). Liabilities exceeded assets by \$3.2 million as of September 30, 2005, while liabilities exceeded assets by only \$492,000 at September 30, 2004 (and this is BEFORE the borrowing of the \$4 million to renovate the Paradise Center).

There are no guarantees that residents will ever get another opportunity to decide who should control the spending of their amenity fees. And, if the straw vote is not successful at this time, there is a basic uncertainty regarding the

developer's intentions over the next few years. We have no way of knowing who might be the commercial landowner in the years to come. If the developer were to sell his holdings of commercial properties in the downtown areas, we might find a new owner with voting control of the VCCDD and no experience with our community. We could be worse off with some outsider as the main landowner and decision-maker in our community.

The offer to allow this non-binding straw ballot can only come from the owner of the commercial property in the VCCDD. Thus, residents need to make an informed decision now and they need to be provided with ALL the facts.

It seems clear that one or more employees of the VCCDD/developer, who have a vested interest in the result of the straw ballot, prepared the answers provided by the VHA.

If the VHA is to be neutral, it has an obligation to be TOTALLY honest and these answers should not be published without the addition of factual information germane to the subject of the question. Claiming neutrality IS NOT acceptable when the underlying objective is lobbying for the status quo.

If the developer is sincere in his offer to let the residents decide, then he should call off his employees and support organizations like the VHA and let the facts come out in an unbiased fashion. There is no question he has the ability to influence public opinion through his control of the local media (TV, radio and newspaper). The issue needs to be decided by the residents, based on a balanced analysis of the facts.

"The time is always right to do the right thing" and the developer needs to step up now and let this issue be decided fairly. Provide the pertinent information in an unbiased way-and let the residents decide this important community issue.



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Who Votes Now In The VCCDD?

You can't vote for the VCCDD supervisors now. But, who does vote for these supervisors?

Here's the answer:

<u>Voting Entity</u>	<u>VCCDD Votes</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Abundant Life Ministry	1	1%
Burger King	1	1%
Pizza Hut/KFC/TB	2	2%

Wendy's	2	2%
CVS	2	2%
Sedona Car Wash	2	2%
Towne Place Suites	2	2%
Perkins	3	2%
Applebees	3	2%
Target	11	9%
German Corp RolAcrs	20	16%
Developer Entities*	79	62%
VCCDD (77 not voted)	0	--
Total	128	100%

The various entities of the developer of The Villages include: The Villages of Lake-Sumter, Inc. (the developer's main corporation), Lazy B Cattle Ventures, Villages Family Companies, Villages Operating Companies, Citizens First Bank.

The VCCDD is a government in the VCCDD area and does not vote in the election of supervisors.

Villagers have no vote in the VCCDD.

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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.

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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.

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Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To the lady attendant at the Boone Gate who is often seen sweeping up outside the gate shack to keep it nice looking. That's taking pride in our community.

Jeers - To residents who let their lawn sprinklers get out of alignment so that they sprinkle on passing cars.

Cheers - To the Sumter Board of County Commissioners for putting Mr. Pete Wahl in his place after he vetoed the placement of political candidate signs on the Sumter Annex property owned by the County.

Jeers - To the developer of The Villages for selling the Rolling Acres shopping center to a German company which now controls about 15.6% of the votes in the VCCDD. Resident still control zero percent of the vote.

Cheers - To Pluto-thanks for the memories. It was great while it lasted.

Jeers - To the developer of The Villages for turning the programs at the Church on the Square into a cash-on-the-barrelhead enterprise. Is this the start of an effort to slur the church as a white elephant, money losing, waste of valuable real estate on the square? Would that make the case to tear down the church and replace it with a big office building with big rents for the developer? Gosh, we hope not.

Cheers - To heroic little Shakespeare for defending the kids and the territory. Oh, my gosh, what happened to him? This is worse than Who Shot JR! Hopefully, this will be resolved by early October. But, the uncertainty and waiting are agonizing.

Jeers - To the VHA president for claiming neutrality in the straw vote while publishing answers to questions in their newsletter that are biased, incomplete, and misleading. Wouldn't you think that the VHA would want to be more helpful? Shouldn't it voice an opinion of what is in the best interests of residents? Why does it often favor the developer at the expense of residents?

Jeers - To the golf division for the terrible condition of executive course sand traps. Some of these are hard as concrete. Please, groom and mix up the sand once in a while. Also, please get some new fluffy sand.

Jeers - To Villager Henry Cole for his outlandish, false, dirty pool, and misleading tirade against Sumter County commissioners Roberts and Chandler in a flyer he passed out at postal stations in praise of commissioner candidates Breeden and Gilpin. The Leesburg Daily Commercial printed a story on September 25 debunking most of Cole's comments as outright lies and distortions. Cole was quoted in the story as defending his comments by saying that he didn't want to scrutinize the details point-by-point. OK. How about just a retraction and an apology to Roberts and Chandler? Breeden and Gilpin should also condemn the distortions. Check out the www.votesumter.com website for a factual analysis or many of these issues.

Cheers - For the widening of the cart lanes on Rio Grande Ave. and on Del Mar Dr. Yes, they were too narrow before.

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New Sexual Offender Website is Available

The POA has been publishing in the Bulletin a link to the Sexual Offender database of the State of Florida. We have also brought to our meetings a three-ring binder with the identification sheets for members to review at the

meetings.

Now, we have learned from the Lynnhaven website of a new website that tracks registered sexual offenders and keep the most up-to-date information about their location.

The website was developed by John Walsh from America's Most Wanted TV program.

You enter your address and a map appears showing your address and the location of any offenders living in your area. Click on a location dot and a picture of the offender appears, along with his or her address and a description of the crime committed.

You can even sign up to be alerted when an offender moves into your or your loved one's area. ***This new website is: <http://www.familywatchdog.us/>***

Thanks to the Lynnhaven website for this worthwhile information.

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Pete Wahl Tries to Veto Political Signs

The Villages overstepped its authority by trying to impose its own rules in a state election. The Villages decided that no political signs could be placed in the ground at a polling site within The Villages area.

We were able to stop them during early voting only when the Sumter Board of County Commissioners stepped in and reminded Mr. Pete Wahl that the polling places for the early voting period were not on The Villages property, but on county property ... and that campaign signs would be permitted.

On Election Day, there was only one polling site on county property and another at a church. We did place signs at those locations. However, all the other voting polls (25 precincts) were on The Villages property. And so, The Villages imposed their rule saying, "NO SIGNS."

Most polling areas in the United States allow candidates and their supporters to place political signs in the ground on Election Day, but NOT here in The Villages.

Yes, they can exercise this rule, but why? Is it because the signs are too offensive to the eye and they want to maintain the pristine look we have in The Villages? Well, the signs are only displayed for one day ... that doesn't seem unreasonable. To me this behavior is another example of the developer behaving like a dictator.

It appears to be a control issue. The Villages, too often, assert its authority in situations where it has no right to impose that authority. And, most of the time,

these decisions are not questioned. The VCCDD gets away with unilateral decisions again.

Remember when the center districts at the urging of Mr. Pete Wahl tried to prevent us from picketing? We stood up to them, we spoke out ... and we picketed ... and we won!

We have an opportunity to make some changes now. We are being offered a voice in our government.

There will be a "straw vote" on the ballot in the November election for residents north of C.R. 466. Simply put, the vote is to determine if Villagers are in favor of letting the developer continue to run things as he always has through the VCCDD or whether Villagers want representation on the VCCDD.

The wording on the ballot is convoluted. If you want the VCCDD to remain in the hands of the developer, you vote YES. If you want resident representation, you need to vote NO. A bit confusing, so be careful when you vote.

We have a chance to change things here in The Villages, to finally have a voice in our government.

We want to prevent situations like we had in the past where, as an example, the VCCDD agreed to purchase the Savannah Center, for us, from the developer at a price far over the true market value. That decision ended up costing you and me. We are stuck with these decisions because we did not have representation. We have absolutely no recourse. Do you want this to continue to happen?

Let's not lose this opportunity. I want to have a voice in the decisions that are made here. People have given their lives to preserve their rights; it is the essence of living in a free country.

Sue Michalson
POA Director

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Hugh Gibson on The Disclosure Reform Bill

Mr. Hugh Gibson, Florida State Representative for our area, said that if re-elected in November, he is willing to introduce the Disclosure Reform bill in the Legislature.

Senator Carey Baker, Florida State Senator for our area, was also interested last year but was unable to proceed without a sponsor in the House. We plan to talk to the Senator in early October about how best to work this.

With Representative Gibson, as well as his opponent, Robert Thompson,

voicing support for the bill, we are encouraged that the bill will have the needed dual sponsorship.

Mr. Gibson went on to say that Disclosure is an important issue. And, sales people should be held accountable for what they do or do not disclose. He cautioned that home buyers should get their own attorney to assist in the home buying process.

He did voice concern about the definition of any problems impacting a property. We acknowledged this issue and mentioned that we would rely on the legislative process and the bill-writing capabilities of legislative staffers to come up with acceptable language.

To illustrate this problem, consider whether a neighbor's obnoxious saxophone playing would have to be disclosed as a "problem." We think that proper language needs to be worked out in Tallahassee.

So, keep your fingers crossed that we make some progress on this Disclosure Reform bill. But, be cautious - the legislative process is a complicated one that takes a lot of people to reach agreement on legislation. And, sometimes it doesn't happen in one year.

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CDD#4 Ponds

There are 24 lined ("wet") ponds and 6 unlined ("dry") ponds in District 4. One of the 6 dry ponds is located on the south side of Sherwood Villas. The other 5 are spaced along the eastern boundary of the district. All 6 dry ponds are on District 4 property and maintained by District 4.

Of the 24 wet ponds, District 4 has maintenance responsibility for six of them. Two are on District 4 land (Sweetwater, which is behind and east of Publix near the Mayfield Villas and Fairlawn which is on the south east corner of Buena Vista and Belle Meade, near the Fairlawn Villas).

There is a maintenance agreement obligating District 4 to maintain two ponds on a Center District golf course (Woodbury and Wisteria, both located on the Walnut Grove golf course, just north of the FPC-SECO substation on Belle Meade). That agreement also obligates District 4 to maintain the Springdale pond located on the developer owned Nancy Lopez golf course (Erinn Glenn), just west of the Springdale pool on Belle Meade.

The sixth pond that District 4 is obligated by maintenance agreement to maintain is Mulberry Lake which is located across the street from the Mulberry recreation center, just south of the Forsyth and Birchbrook Villas. The northern portion of Mulberry Lake is on District 4 land while the southern portion is on the developer owned Nancy Lopez golf course (Ashley Meadows). The District is obligated to maintain the entire pond.

There are 18 wet ponds that the district does not have maintenance responsibility for and they are scattered across the Nancy Lopez, Walnut Grove, Amberwood and Oakleigh golf courses. Seven are on Center District land and 11 are on developer owned land.

About a year ago, the Greenbriar pond on the Nancy Lopez golf course (Erinn Glenn) emptied due to sinkholes that tore the liner. The district staff (Pete Wahl) told the District 4 board that District 4 needed to pay for the repairs since we had maintenance responsibility and were also the permit holder with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

Based on that, the board approved the payment (\$167,501 in total) and asked the developer for a contribution to reflect the benefit he received. He paid the district 10.77% (\$17,747) which he calculated as his share for storm water runoff but refused to consider the benefits he received for irrigation, water-front lot premiums, enhancement of the golf course, etc.

It took almost a year, but District 4 proved that (1) it is not the permit holder with SJRWMD-the developer still holds the permit and (2) District 4 does not have maintenance responsibility for that pond (and many others). The developer finally reimbursed the \$149,854 balance that District 4 paid. Thus, the developer has paid, reluctantly, the entire bill for that repair.

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Recreation Trail Speed Limit

With more and more reports of accidents on the Recreation Trails related to speed on the narrow trails, why not post a speed limit of, say, 20 mph on the trails as well as the streets? That is about the speed limit for regular golf carts with some insurance companies.

That being said, how many of us would want to go faster? Most golf carts are flimsy, don't offer much protection in an accident, and most of us don't wear seat belts. Twenty miles per hour is fast enough in a golf cart to get you mostly anywhere.

For the LSV golf carts that can go faster, require them to travel on the streets.

If we get the posting, let's have police with radar guns checking and writing tickets as necessary.

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Some Villagers Not Allowed to Vote

Please find below my thoughts and concerns regarding this very important vote on how The Villages north of 466 should be managed in the future.

The present arrangement whereby only registered voters can partake in this Straw Poll is in my mind totally unfair, as all residents/homeowners will not be able to vote.

We have many residents that only live here 6 months of the year, due to immigration controls on homeowners from countries such as Canada, UK, Germany, etc. They pay their property taxes and amenities charges year round.

Also, we have full year residents who for one or more reasons are not citizens, these would be Green Card holders. They also pay their taxes and amenity charges year round.

We also have people who have second homes, one up North and one here in the Villages, again paying taxes and amenity charges year round.

If you want this straw vote to be fair and equitable, all residents/homeowners should have the right to vote.

As a suggestion, why not put the voting sheet in the monthly (amenity fee billing) account to each property owner? This would be most fair and equitable, particularly for those who under the present procedure do not get a vote.

As a legal immigrant from England, now a US citizen, the proposed procedure (being used for this vote) could be construed to be another case of "Taxation without Representation."

John Land

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Political Money

A half-a-million here ... and a half-a-million there ... and pretty soon you have some real money.

That's what Gary Morse, developer of The Villages, recently donated to the Florida Republican party. \$500,000.00!! Wow - that's lots of zeros....

Bet that would have paid for lots of repairs for golf course sinkholes and

deteriorating recreation trails. Maybe also some maintenance work on Marion County roads in The Villages.

Read the excerpted newspaper story below:

GOP gets \$500,000 Donation From Central Florida Developer

By Jason Garcia and John Kennedy
Orlando Sentinel, Tallahassee Bureau

July 12, 2006

TALLAHASSEE: Gary Morse, the man behind Central Florida's The Villages retirement community, has long been a Republican Party rainmaker. He has given and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Gov. Jeb Bush and his brother the president, and flown party leaders around on his private jet.

But Morse topped himself last month by handing the Republican Party of Florida \$500,000, according to new state records. His gift matches the largest single contribution the state GOP has ever received, campaign-finance records show.

Records show that Morse, his family and his companies had contributed more than \$900,000 to the state GOP over the years. But he had never given as much in a single donation as the \$500,000 check he wrote on June 9.

The money came courtesy of the Morse Family Holding Company, which corporate records show Morse formed in March. The records list him as president and his brother, Mark, as vice president.

Neither Morse nor a Villages spokesman returned phone calls seeking comment.

"Gary Morse probably has as much political capital in Florida as anybody I'm aware of," said Slater Bayliss, a lobbyist whose clients include The Villages.



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Pay For Rec Trails Repairs

We all know that the Golf Cart trails north of 466 along Buena Vista Blvd. and east along El Camino Real are bumpy and too narrow. A method has not been determined to generate the dollars required to re-pave and widen these cart paths.

Here is a thought: annually thousands of people rent either through The Villages or through private residents, accommodations in our community. They use the same roads and cart paths that we use. A Tax or Fee should be collected by The Villages and the full amount allocated to the CDDs where repairs to common areas are needed and those areas are now the responsibility of the CCDs.

Call it what you may, Renters Tax, Luxury Tax, etc.

The first project should be the Cart Paths previously mentioned.

Make a section in the POA for ideas like these and a space at your web site for readers to vote on the idea and or respond with thoughts to broaden the idea.

Keep up the good work!

John Hutchins

(editor's note: We will soon upgrade the POA website (www.poa4us.org) to include **The POA Forum** where comments, ideas, discussions, etc., can be posted and updated by readers for all of us to see. Hopefully, this will become a popular and useful way for Villagers to discuss news and issues in our community. Sign on to our website and check out the Forum.)

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**The POA
PO BOX 1657
Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657**

Contact Information : POB 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158
Phone: (352) 259-0999

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