

Palms of Terra Ceia Bay CDD

A message from Brad Smith, CDD Chairman

I have been talking to a lot of people about the Funding of Operations and Mangrove Trimming over the past month.

I found that there are a lot of good people with an interest in both subjects. There is also a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding within our community.

In anticipation of our February 1st workshop when the CDD Board will be listening to what you, our neighbors have to say, I have listed some items here that in my opinion, may need some clarification.

Question: If the Funding Structure is changed will I lose my homestead exemptions on all my taxes?

Response: If the CDD would change to a Non-Ad Valorem Funding model any homestead exemptions you currently have would not apply to your Palms of Terra Ceia Bay assessments. However the homestead exemptions would still apply to all your other taxes including Manatee County, the Fire District, etc.

Question: If the CDD changes to a Non-Ad Valorem model there is no limit on how much the CDD Board can increase taxes.

The direct answer is yes.

The practical answer is:

- a. There is currently no limit to how much taxes can be raised now on Ad Valorem (assuming property values go up) and the assessment for capital and reserves is already Non-Ad Valorem and has no limit.
- b. However, anytime the Board contemplates increasing assessments every property owner will receive a letter that outlines the board's intention and provides dates for a Public Hearing at which time the reasons for the increase will be discussed and the property owners can state their concerns, suggestions and/or objections.

Question: Why should I pay for the trimming of the mangroves?

Response: This question is really at the heart of both of the issues facing our neighborhood.

The mangroves and the entire waterfront are one of the prime assets of Palms of Terra Ceia Bay community. The CDD exists to maintain our assets and only the CDD has the authority to do the trimming.

It cannot be delegated or assigned to the individual high rises.

For at least 5 to 10 years the CDD has paid for the trimming of the mangroves.

There is approximately \$7500 in the budget to keep the boardwalk, pier clear and 320 linear feet to maintain the some view along the boardwalk and for the high rises.

That equates to about \$12.50 per year for every residence if everyone paid the same which we currently do not.

Because the trimming is funded by Ad Valorem collections the 4 high rises pay significantly more than the \$12.50 and most of the property owners with one story units probably pay closer to \$3.00 to \$7.00 out of their ad valorem taxes per year for the trimming.

Those are the real numbers when we are talking about when discussing the entire community paying for the mangroves.

Under a Non-Ad Valorem funding system it would be possible for the entire amount to be charged to the high rises if the CDD Board decided to do so.

We cannot do that under the current Ad Valorem system.

Question: What about the discussion that the CDD will be paying for more mangrove trimming?

Response: Nothing has been decided yet. There is not even a plan to look at that has been reviewed by residents or the CDD Board.

At this point it is nothing more than an idea.

No additional mangrove trimming can or will occur without going through a permit modification process with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

That process could take from 9 months to a year.

Before that process could start the board would need a plan that would be brought before residents before it would be submitted to FDEP.

None of that has happened yet.

Question: If the CDD changes to a Non-Ad Valorem assessment how much would I pay?

Response: There has been no decision on how the assessments might be distributed among the various Palms of Terra Ceia Bay communities at this time. That is to happen after the discussion on Monday evening.

However, in its simplest term we can take the total Operating Fund Budget (\$297,552) plus the Capital and Reserve Assessment (\$53,289) and add them together to get the current total revenue of \$350,841.

We would then divide \$350,841 by the 591 residential units in the community for an average assessment of \$593.

This is just the simplest calculation to provide a general idea of what the number might be.

It will certainly need to be adjusted downward because this calculation does not include the assessment that would be attributed to the Golf Facilities.

Non-Ad Valorem also has the flexibility to have more or less costs assigned to a particular property that receive above or below average benefits.

That could also adjust the amount that you pay compared to your neighbors.

Remember this is a very preliminary estimate.

Summary: I hope that this information helps to better explain some of what is going on.

If you have any more questions please contact our District Manager, Bruce St.Denis at:

bruce.stdenis@dpg.com or 407-619-7942

February 1st meeting decorum:

I hope that all of you share my interest in showing respect and patience with our neighbors that may have an opinion different than our own.

At the meeting on February 1st I will ask that each presenter keep their comments to 2 or 3 minutes and that there be no derogatory personal comments or attacks on the opinions of others.

Say what you want to say and let others speak for themselves.

I will also ask those in attendance listen to what everyone has to say and not to comment, cheer or boo during or after any presenter.

As a community we are better than that.

I will consider any one engaging in in any of these type of behaviors to be trying to intimidate or silence their neighbors and I will ask those people to leave.

I hope that there will not be any reason to have to do that.

details, details...

At the February 1st meeting we will have sign-up sheets for those that want to speak at the front entrance.

You will be asked to print your name (legibly so we can call your name) and check a box to speak on Funding, Mangroves or you can check both boxes.

We will call the names in the order in which they appear on the sign up sheets.

We will keep 3 folks ready to speak at the podium at any time.

That way we always have a presenter ready but no one has to stand too long.

Everyone that wants to speak will be given their opportunity.

In the interest of everyone's time we suggest that you do not need to repeat what has already been said but you certainly have the right to do so.

I look forward to seeing all of you on February 1st from 6:00 to 9:00 at the clubhouse.

Be well.

Brad.