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Littoral Plantings

In past newsletters you have read about the benefits of the littoral plants around the perimeter of the CDDs' storm water lakes. As a reminder, these plants provide lake bank stabilization and protection from the negative effects of storm water run-off and wave action that would eventually erode the lake banks to the point of requiring very costly repairs. Though the CDDs will be starting to implement some very localized lake bank erosion repairs, by comparison to other communities in Southwest Florida, the amount of repairs required is minimal and is due, in large regard, to the very successful littoral plant program we have at the Brooks. Additional and equally important benefits include plant absorption of impurities in storm run-off from the adjacent properties including fertilizers/pesticides, thus improving water quality and of course, providing habitat for fish and fowl. Having said all of that, please be sure to report any observations of damage or removal of these plants from the lake perimeters to the CDDs management at (239) 498-9020.

Lake Aeration

Another program the CDDs have in place and equally important to improving lake health is lake aeration. You have undoubtedly seen these in certain lakes around the community. They consist of a shore mounted air compressor (typically in a green cabinet) with rubber air lines leading into the lake and typically to multiple aeration stones or diffuser stones (you will see very definitive circles of bubbling water that are often confused with the lakes appearing to be being filled with water from a pipe below the surface). They work along the same principle of an aerator you see in fish aquariums. They help to improve the lake ecosystem and overall health by increasing oxygen levels which in turn improves the health of fish, fowl and the previously discussed littoral plants. In 2015, the CDDs will be installing three new aeration systems in lakes 93, 94 and 95. These lakes are between the Hawthorne and Palmetto Ridge neighborhoods and the systems are expected to be installed by mid-April.

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Dear Resident,

The Brooks is served by two Community Development Districts (CDDs): The Brooks of Bonita Springs CDD and The Brooks of Bonita Springs II CDD. Lee County created the CDDs at the request of The Brooks' developer in order to finance the community's basic infrastructure:

- Landscaping, irrigation, lighting, signage and sidewalks to ensure that The Brooks' residents' expectations are met and asset values are maintained;
- The storm water management system, which includes the lakes, wetlands, interconnecting pipes and control structures;
- Park and recreational facilities adjacent to the Commons Club, intended to be used by all residents.

This newsletter is issued to inform you of the latest information you need to know about your home here in The Brooks.

The CDDs finalized the Phase 1 layout plan and have secured Lee County Permit approval for construction.

The first phase concerns the Pickleball Courts. They will be developed in a clay tech surface and will include score keepers, pavilions, and surrounding paver bricks around and under pavilions and lights. There will be an initial development of three Pickleball Courts with an opportunity to develop three future courts immediately adjacent. The Pickleball Courts will be located to the immediate west of the existing basketball court. Additionally, the existing walkways will be extended around the perimeter of the park, in a combination of hard and soft surface providing for a continuous exercise path, tying the new facilities into the existing walkways and meeting ADA requirements. The plan provides adequate room for the potential future development of three Bocce Ball Courts located to the immediate west of the existing restrooms. Now that the permit approvals have been received, we will be pursuing proposals to construct and hope to have the project completed by the fall at the latest. The Phase one project costs are expected to be in the vicinity of \$100K to \$125K. The CDDs will be utilizing a portion of their undesignated surplus fund balance within their General Operating Funds to pay for the initial construction of these facilities and will replenish these funds as current financing obligations roll off. This will be accomplished by continuing to keep annual assessment levels at their current rates. In short, there will not be an increase in assessments.

In order to ensure efficient and effective daily operation of the new facilities, the Commons Club has offered their on-site resources to support the CDDs efforts. As a result there will be no cost to the CDDs (or its tax payers) for daily maintenance and oversight of the courts, including administration of a reservation program. Annual cost for periodic pressure washing, net replacements and surface refurbishment is anticipated to be approximately \$7K. It is anticipated that the CDDs will identify savings in other portions of their operating budget to offset this cost and therefore, do not anticipate any increase in the assessment levels for the annual operating cost of these new facilities.

When Will The CDD Bond Mature and The Capital Assessment Roll Off?

Even though we have written on this subject in the past, we still receive periodic inquiries. Between the two CDDs, there were four bonds issued. Please visit the CDDs website (noted below), visit the Documents section and scroll to CDD Bond Maturity link to view the bonds (by neighborhood) and their maturity dates.

Also, please make sure you visit our website for more information regarding your CDD at www.brookscdds.net

Landscape Maintenance Contractor Change

The contract with the Brickman Group, for landscape maintenance of the Coconut Road and Three Oaks Parkway corridors, was set to expire November 30, 2014 and therefore, the CDDs went out to sealed bids for this service. Though The Brickman Group had provided a satisfactory service for the prior four years, as a result of the bidding process and significant cost increases proposed by Brickman, the CDDs awarded the contract to Girard Environmental Services. Girard is relatively new to the Southwest Florida market, but they have a very large and successful long term presence in the central Florida markets of Tampa and Orlando with one of their premiere clients being Celebration (Disney). After a rough transitional start up, Girard appears to have their feet underneath them now and are not only on schedule with seasonal activities, but are making good strides in picking up where the Brickman Group left off and moving the program forward in regards to improving the maintenance standard.

