

Inverness Homeowners' Association

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Summer Newsletter

August 2024

Old Business

Below is a listing of significant expenditures year to date:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Replaced the controller for the irrigation pump (again) | \$2,200 |
| 2. Attorney Fees | \$8,500 |

New Business

The major effort in the first half of 2024 was the re-establishment of the Covenants. They expired at the end of 30 years and attorneys were needed to prepare the paperwork and the vote to reestablish the Covenants. The vote easily passed; the paperwork was filed with the Department of Commerce. The approval of the Covenants by the Department is expected by September 1.

A portion of the attorney fees went toward an enforcement action for an unfinished garage. This is a tortuous tale of an unscrupulous home builder, a hurricane, family issues, city involvement, and the HOA trying to expedite the completion of the construction process. This enforcement action could not move forward by the HOA until the Covenants were re-established.

The other new business item was the change in Florida Statute 720 that applies to the organization and operation of condominiums and homeowner associations. As fallout from the Champlain Towers South condo collapse in Surfside, Florida, the Florida legislature changed laws that dictate how condos and HOA's operate. Inverness HOA is 211 members, and we do not own any land, a clubhouse, pools, tennis courts, etc. Our dues are \$125 per year. But we must follow the rules established by the legislature for operations by organizations far bigger than us. Some of the issues the legislature struggled with were HOA's and condo associations that neglected building maintenance, that misappropriated dues, that underfunded repair accounts, and that enforced the covenants unevenly and with malice.

Many of the HOA's in Pensacola have gone to a third-party manager to provide logistics for the organization: Reports, dues collection, bill payment, maintenance contracts, enforcement actions, estoppel letters, and notices to members. Inverness is still a volunteer organization – however, our Board of Directors is getting older, and the workload has dramatically increased due to the new requirements.

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These third-party managers get paid by:

1. An annual fee, plus
2. Management fees for things like estoppel letters, architectural reviews, and special requests, plus
3. Enforcement actions and fines – garbage cans visible from the road, your grass looks poorly, a boat in the driveway, - you get the idea.

The result of hiring a third-party manager is that annual dues will go up significantly, plus you will pay for services currently done (or not done) by volunteers. Your BOD will continue to work on a volunteer basis, and we will share the workload to provide better service.

As a result of the changes to FS 720, Inverness HOA has made the following changes:

- A. All of our meetings going forward will be held at the East Pensacola Heights Clubhouse at 3208 East Gonzalez Street.
- B. Notices of meetings will be posted at the entrance island and on the website 48 hours before the meeting.
- C. Members of the HOA Board of Directors are required to pass a 4-hour training class every year.
- D. The BOD must prepare and publish a yearly Budget, to be approved at the Annual Meeting.
- E. The Annual meeting must have accurate attendance or proxies.
- F. The Annual Meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of December at 7:00 pm. This is codified in our By-Laws.
- G. There will be 7 directors – also established in our By-Laws..
- H. We will likely hire a consultant to run our website. FS 720 directs more transparency in the operation of the HOA. The best way to comply is to post meeting minutes, Covenants, By-Laws, budgets, expenditures, etc. on the website.

As you can imagine, the BOD has been very busy so far this year. We could use some volunteers to help carry the load. One such volunteer is Dennis Seaman. Dennis was not happy with the look of the entrance and asked if he could do some pruning. We said sure, knock yourself out.

Dennis cut the branches hanging over the fence, and in the area behind the sign and along Inverness Drive. All on the hottest days of the year. Thank you, Dennis.

Following is a repeat of previous years. We include it for the new members, and for the old members that read it and ignore it.

Enforcement of the Covenants / City Codes – Oldies but Goodies:

- a. **Garbage cans** are very visible from the street at several homes. Please make a change where you store your garbage can. (Covenant)
- b. **Parking** on the street: We strongly request that you do not park your car on the street at night. This is for both safety and for the appearance of the subdivision. (Covenant)

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- c. When you **replace** your driveway, make sure the stormwater does not drain onto your neighbor. This has happened several times, surprisingly. It should drain to the road. (Covenant)
- d. When you replace your driveway, do you know that the sidewalk portion of the driveway is governed by the **ADA**? That 42-inch width must be relatively flat, no more than 2% cross slope. This is for easier access for people with trouble walking. (Ordinance)
- e. If your yard does not look good with all the rain we have been getting, you are not trying. At this time of year, you do not need to bag the **clippings**, put them back on the lawn for nutrients. (Covenant)
- f. **Buy electric**. Small gas engines are horrible polluters – fumes and noise. It drives me crazy to see lawn maintenance contractors working without hearing protection. By the time they are 40, they will be shopping for hearing aids.
- g. **Noise** is one of our most common complaints. Currently it is regulated by the City – but with little teeth.
- h. **Things in your driveway**: Boats, Pods, and broken-down cars have all been sitting in the driveways of Inverness this past year. (Covenant)
- i. **Parking on the sidewalk**. This is a Code Enforcement issue by the City of Pensacola. If this frustrates you, send a request to 311. That City Clearing House will route your issue to the appropriate office, and they will write a ticket to the offender. The first offense is \$25. Second is \$100. Third is \$250. Violations include: Parking on the sidewalk, parking on the lawn, lawn debris in the street, noise on Sunday morning by contractors (roofers are generally exempt due to hurricanes). (Ordinance)
- j. No **motorized vehicles** in the airport woods just north of Inverness. The City tolerates pedestrian access to those woods, but draws the line at motorcycles, 4-wheelers, and golf carts. (Ordinance)

Speeders

What more needs to be said? The Inverness speed limit is 25 mph. The enforcement responsibility falls to the City police. If you see a perpetual speeder, get a description of the vehicle and time of day, call the police and ask for the traffic division. They may set a speed trap and quite often will provide the offender with a ticket.

Florida Friendly Landscape (FFL)

The University of Florida prepared a program entitled Florida Friendly Landscaping. It offers practical as well as philosophical guidance on ways to rethink your yard. Lower water use. Lower maintenance hours. Less fertilizer. And FFL conforms with HOA guidelines for appearance. This program does not mean that you do not have to sod your front yard as it says in the Covenants. What it says is that you can do both – have an attractive yard with less sod, less water demand, and less fertilizer. Larger beds, use of native plants, and groundcovers. Go to IFAS FFL

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Contact your HOA Board Member: Kent Nesvik has recently updated the website at Invernesshoa.com

Be careful to get the correct website, there are many Inverness Homeowners. I regularly get complaints from other Inverness subdivision members in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. And they are very similar to our complaints: boats, lawns, trash cans, noise.

New law: We will need you to sign a form if you want to get HOA information via your e-mail address – even if we currently have your email on file. We have attached the form with this letter.

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For some comedy relief, I would like to share some past enforcement stories from Inverness:

One man pulled an old car into his driveway and intended to rebuild it. Not allowed in the covenants. He was very nice but frustrated that he could not work on that car late into the evening.

A lady called and wanted to know if she could board dogs in Inverness. The Covenants say you can have 2 pets – but she wanted to board between 8 and 15 dogs. “But they would be very nice dogs.”

One man needed to park his very large over the road truck in front of his house. We asked him not to do that, but he ignored us. City Code Enforcement talked with him and he complied.

Finally, a lady continued to park her boat in her driveway. We asked her to comply with the rules, but she offered that the rules do not apply to her. You see this was a comfort boat – like a comfort dog, and she needed it for her mental health.