

October 6, 2020

Dear neighbor:

**This is a call to action! Master Board is planning 8.8% increase in HOA fees for 2021!!!**

Join your Pembroke Falls neighbors in developing a plan of action to improve:

- 1. By-Laws and Community Representation,**
- 2. Financial Transparency and Contracts,**
- 3. Community Security & Safety, and**
- 4. Strategic Operating Plan for Facility Maintenance and Resident Access.**

**Who we are:** We are a group of homeowners who are aware of problems in Pembroke Falls and are looking for solutions. **We invite you to be involved in this process by communicating with us.** We want to bring positive changes to the direction of our community. The Master Board should be congenial, accountable and transparent in service to the homeowners. Many are frustrated and feel the Board is not respectful of their concerns and input. Most are concerned that after a 7.2% increase in monthly assessments, **the Board is now considering an 8.8% increase for 2021.**

**1. By-Laws and Community Representation:** The Master Board is the sole decision-making group with final authority over all contracts and finances. Phase Boards are essentially powerless. Changes in our Bylaws (written by the developer over 20 years ago) must give every homeowner a vote in determining who represents them in the Master Board.

**Action Plan:** Immediate review of Bylaws by a representative group of homeowners. Term limits are needed to provide fresh leadership. The Good of Order (where residents can speak) must return to the beginning of the Master Board meeting, so residents are heard before votes are taken. Remove time clocks and penalties that intimidate & limit the speaking time of residents. Review best practices of other HOAs. Consider online voting & email/mail surveys so we all have a voice in improving Pembroke Falls. **Your ideas are needed!**

**2. Financial Transparency and Contracts:** The 2020 HOA budget lists over \$7 million in income (homeowner fees). Troubling signs are our rising HOA fees (8% this year and proposed 8.8% for next year), and our insurance premium jump (over 270% increase in 2 years). Contracts must be awarded to qualified (vetted) vendors in a professional & ethical process. Our annual major contract expenses (from 2019 audited Financials) and the Board-estimated 2021 budget are:

***Cable & Internet: \$2,047,777*** The Hotwire contract expires in January 2021; *there is no movement in the Master Board to seek competing bids for this!* In 2013, a 7-year Cable and Internet Contract was awarded to this upstart vendor over the overwhelming objections of homeowners with a three-year automatic renewal for same terms.

***Management: \$948,985*** Eyebrows were raised in 2015 when Castle Management withdrew from the interviews during an extensive review of competing management firms, yet *were still awarded the contract by the Master Board*, disregarding months of work by a committee specifically created to identify and evaluate potential management companies.

***Landscape: \$796,454*** Expenses are way up due to tree removal & sidewalk replacement. The developer installed the wrong trees (live oak & mahogany) in the wrong place (5-foot swales). Roots are breaking irrigation lines and utility conduits. Our Reserves are funding these repairs. Homeowner's driveways, garage floors & concrete house pads are cracking as well (a private expense).

***Security Company: \$856,149 (2019 expense) and \$1,050,000 (estimated for 2021)*** (see 3. Safety, below)

***Other Contracts: Basic Alarm Monitoring \$334,189*** plus resident add-ons. *Playgrounds* were closed for 2 years (we contracted with an unproven vendor who received \$50K upfront & walked off the job). Our last *Pool Maintenance* vendor resigned due to payment delays of over two months. The list goes on.

**Action Plan:** All contracts must be reviewed now to identify cost reductions that will balance our revenue & spending. The contract process must give us a wide choice of well-vetted vendors and be transparent, with sealed bids opened in a

public forum. (In recent years, some contracts were negotiated by a select group of Directors, a very unhealthy situation.) Oversight is needed to ensure quality & timeliness of completed work. **Your input is needed!**

**3. Community Security & Safety** We had a Security wake-up call last August when 17 cars were broken into and two were stolen overnight. Our cameras were useless. Residents trusted our Board to fund gates, camera, ID system and Security vendor to prevent intrusive crime. The Master Board is now investing \$100,000 in an antiquated bar code reader system. Law enforcement professionals living here suggest we use technology linking our security with resident cameras/doorbells and potentially the Pembroke Pines police.

Uneven sidewalks caused by tree roots are a safety problem and a major liability. Trip & fall accidents incur injuries; we have several pending lawsuits. Our HOA Liability insurance has risen to over \$410,000 this year from less than \$150,000 two years ago. A Risk Management program must be implemented to document: (a) these & other risks, (b) our immediate response and long-term solution, and (c) our risk-prevention efforts.

We need to keep cars off the streets overnight. At this time, more college students & adult children are living with their parents. Most residents struggle to park more than 3 vehicles overnight. Our landscaping vendor parks vehicles on-site. Let's extend the same courtesy to ourselves, allow residents & guests to park in the clubhouse lot, and decrease the number of parking violation notices issued.

**Action Plan:** Closing some of our manned gates overnight is an opportunity for cost-reduction. Advances in camera technology/license plate readers need to be considered. Partner with Pembroke Pines police for best practices. Create a Risk Management program to address current needs and project future issues. Hire a certified arborist to make recommendations for tree removal & replacement. Work with the City of Pembroke Pines for batch permits for tree removal/planting. Permit overnight parking at the clubhouse for residents & guests beyond a few days a year. **Your thoughts are needed!**

**4. Strategic Operating Plan for Facility Maintenance and Resident Access** There is no long-term operating plan for scheduled/preventative maintenance & repair of our systems and structures within the community. Neither the Master Board nor Management possess a functional knowledge of facility upkeep to properly care for and maintain our assets and amenities. We are paying with expensive emergency repairs (clubhouse roof leaks, potholes in the roadways, irrigation pumps, etc.).

Residents are denied access to our recreation facilities by management with a 9 to 5 office mentality. Recreation amenities can be made accessible with bar code IDs or similar technology for self-check in.

**Action Plan:** Hire people with experience and functional competence in building & facility maintenance. Procure price agreements with companies to provide preventative maintenance. Keep facilities staffed and open to residents, with a supervisor on duty, on all Holidays (with limited hours on Christmas and New Year's Day). Provide bar code self-check in as do other facilities. **Your insights are needed!**

This letter is to make our neighbors aware of serious challenges facing our community, and to ask for your support in facing these challenges. We need solution-oriented attitudes and fresh perspectives. As our community approaches the 25-year mark we are at a turning point. Please join other residents in our **Welcome To Change in Pembroke Falls** movement. Please send us your contact information such as email and phone number to [change@pfallsvoice.org](mailto:change@pfallsvoice.org) or by joining at [pfallsvoice.org](http://pfallsvoice.org). We will use your information only for the purpose of communicating about community issues.

Please contact us to share your ideas. Your neighbors,

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Phase 1

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Phase 2

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Phase 5

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