

## FBOA Directors Listing

Jack Daly, President  
4 Myrtle LN – '19

Doug Felten, Vice-President  
17 Bittern ST – '17

Debbie Urato, Secretary/Treasurer  
13 Park RD – '17

Timothy Tanner  
51 SFB DR – '19

Larry LaBank – '18  
10 SFB DR

Mira Scott – '17  
10 Park RD

Open Position – '18

Dr. Gabe Fornari, Past President

John Snodgrass, Executive Director  
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www.forestbeachassociation.com

2017

## Where We Live...

Where we live is the maritime forest, the rural South, the Lowcountry.

We are among wild grape vines, palmettos, myrtles, and bay, sea oats and American beach grass, alligators and squirrels, sable palm and live oak, loblolly and long leaf pines. This is a seaside, marsh surrounded, forest covered, sub-tropical, ocean-bathed island. This is not to be an efficient, maintenance free, planned unit development. Here the roads are deliberately and delicately curved to hold the look of the woods instead of the look and efficiency of the boulevard. The light is subdued to hold the night, to give the stars a chance to be seen, to give the owl and the human a chance to experience it. You may have to drive a bit slower and you may have to strain to see the signs but you will have gained more than you sacrificed if you will savor rather than rush, if you will meander and enjoy.

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We are to refresh ourselves in the vistas and shadows. We are to enjoy the stillness that only great trees and the tallest pines can offer. We are to delight in the whimsy of brightly colored birds darting through the Spanish moss and we are to listen to the rattle of the palm shaking in the grasp of the sea breeze.

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We are not here to strip out rectangles and to build pastel houses nor to decorate the dark roads in the forest with glowing paints and glittering reflectors. We would not put stark white concrete curbs where soft rural edges belong. The road edge and the drainage ditch, the intersection and the road are parts of a palette. We do not come here for efficiency. It is not maintenance cost effectiveness that restores the heart and refreshes the mind. We are not drawn to public works but to the divine mysteries of this still largely natural sea island. We are to be artist first and engineers second. Ecology is to blend with accounting; the natural blended with the infrastructure. This is the vision and a philosophy that has brought this island to here. It takes vision, courage, restraint and philosophy to follow it. The picture is big and it is one of a place where the spirit of man is restored by its interaction with the cosmos. It is about the refreshment of the body and mind, of rest and challenge, sports and relaxation, visually and chemically unpolluted nature along with the best facilities for relaxed dining, study, or recreation. There is to be a cherished sense of nature in the yards of finely designed homes as well as along the roadways and by ways and it is all to be laid out in the natural forest and along the waterways with finesse and sensitivity."

- Charles Fraser

## Annual Meeting

Our next Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 from 10am – Noon in the Fellowship Hall located at the Providence Presbyterian Church, 171 Cordillo Parkway. Please plan on attending this very important and informative meeting.

1. Review of Annual Meeting Minutes from October 2016
2. Welcome and Introduction of Board Members
3. Ward & Town Representative Introductions
4. Treasurer's Interim Financial Report and Previous Year End
5. Presentation of 2018 Budget
6. Update on Legal Matters
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Election of 2018 BOD Nominees (3 Positions & 1 Confirmation)
10. Closing Remarks

## Town Cuts Forest Without Notice

The forest at Forest Beach, located between North Forest Beach Drive and Park Road, Egret Street and Heron Street, has stood wild and beautiful since long before humans came to Hilton Head Island. As of Monday, August 7, 2017, that is no longer true. Here are the facts surrounding its partial destruction:

- After Hurricane Matthew, the Town determined that FEMA funds could be used to clean out storm water drainage ditches across the Island. In doing so, the Town realized that some of them had been neglected for many years. The Forest at Forest Beach (FAFB) is a case in point. It contains a small (4 ft. wide by 3 ft. deep) drainage ditch that runs parallel to and between the bicycle path on North Forest Beach Drive and Park Road, extending from Egret Street to just past Park Road, where it makes a 90 degree turn and ends at the lagoon on Lagoon Road. It is dry most of the year collecting storm water when needed and absorbing the water in to the ground and then drying out again.
- The Town engineers came up with a plan for cleaning out the drainage ditch. They did so without the input of the residents in the Forest Beach community, nor the Forest Beach Owners Association (FBOA). Neither were consulted or even informed of the project or its scope.
- This area is a narrow maritime forest that was home to many animals and specimen hardwood trees. It was purchased by the Town with monies from real estate transfer fees and designated to remain protected and undeveloped. There is posted a large Town sign indicating this. Our covenants specify that this parcel must remain as is and the only development that can be considered is that of a church or park.
- Crowder Gulf, the Town's debris contractor for Hurricane Matthew, was instructed to cut a 15-foot wide road through the middle of the Forest, paralleling the ditch to allow "heavy equipment" to gain access to the small drainage ditch. Crowder Gulf also cut a new 50-foot entrance into the Forest from Park Road, even though it is openly accessible from Heron Street. No one from the Town supervised the work, neighbors began questioning what was going on, and called the Town.
- The Town says that no records are kept of the number of trees removed. The neighbors counted the stumps left after the trees were bulldozed. By our count (visible stumps only) there were 287 trees removed. This doesn't include whole trees jerked from the ground with only holes remaining where they once stood.
- The drainage ditch however, has not been cleaned out as was stated by the Town as the reason for removing the trees. There is more debris in the ditch now than before this project began.
- The ditch, however, doesn't drain as it is a closed system; it only collects storm water and holds it in place for it to soak back in to the ground. There is, however, an underground drainage system (installed many years ago) along many of the streets in the area that works very well.
- Town officials now admit that the process could have been less destructive and that they should have informed the Forest Beach Owners Association in advance. After halting the work for one day, the Town came back and tagged a few trees to be saved. It was already too late for 75 percent of the forest.

So now, the Association has some questions for Town officials:

1. Why wasn't this process announced in advance?
2. Why doesn't the Town inform residents when they are planning to work in a neighborhood doing storm water system maintenance?
3. Were any environmentalists consulted?
4. Was the destruction of the Forest worth extra FEMA money that is to be received for this demolition?
5. Why is working with the Town so contentious?
6. In the future can the Town have dialog with the area residents? Can everyone work together?
7. Can the area residents help keep the ditch clean?
8. Could a small bobcat do the job in the future, with no harm to the rest of the forest?
9. Why is heavy equipment needed to clean out a small water collection ditch?
10. Why didn't the Town engineers consider the efficient under-the-street drainage system along Egret, Flamingo, Gannet and Heron Streets?
11. Was it because its maintenance wouldn't have been eligible for FEMA reimbursement?

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## Town Cuts cont'd. from page 1

12. As this system is working well, would any of the Forest destruction have been necessary?
13. When will the Forest receive mitigation from the Town, as promised?
14. Does the Town have an unstated objective for carving out a 15 foot wide roadway through the Forest at Forest Beach?

When the Town claims that the Forest is Town-owned property, that means it is owned by the residents. We are the Town. It is our Forest at Forest Beach, and that should be recognized. No Town official has apologized, and saying "I'm sorry" won't bring back the forest. Some underbrush will grow back, but magnolias, oaks, pines, palmettos, sweet gums, etc. take years to grow tall and strong. A barred owl that was vocal all summer, talking back and forth to the residents and tourists, was killed. What is left of our Forest is silent. Wanton destruction (for questionable purposes) of a disappearing maritime forest, for an Island that spends so much money on preserving the natural environment, is puzzling and shocking.

The Board of Directors Forest Beach Owners' Association, Inc.

## History of Heron Street Homes Controversy

Some Forest Beach owners and residents may not live here full time and/or may have been living under a rock. We would like to update you, as briefly as possible, on just what has taken place at the new single family homes located at 3 and 5 Heron Street.

Two homes on two adjacent lots were demolished and construction begun under a permit for two replacement homes on those same two lots. During construction, the 20 ft. side buffer between the homes containing trees and understory was left mostly intact. After the Town of Hilton Head issued a certificate of occupancy, the buffer was removed and a deck with other amenities was built within this buffer area joining the two new houses.

Neighbors noticed the removal of vegetation in the buffer and the decking, fencing, firepit, furniture, etc. now occupying the space between the houses. They contacted the Town, and staff issued a notice to the owner/builder that he would have to remove the decking, etc. Town Staff later rescinded that notice and approved the joining of the houses by way of a "loophole" in the Land Management Ordinance (LMO). Since that time, two things have happened:

First, two appeals of that approval were filed with the Town for a hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals (similar to a Court trial); one by the Association, and one by two residents. That hearing took place in July, and the 5-member Board ruled in favor of the appellants. What that means is that the owner/builder has a time limit on restoring the buffer and removing the decking, etc. That time is now running, but there may be an appeal to Circuit Court by the owner/builder or Town.

Second, in order to prevent any further joining of properties in residential, single-family neighborhoods on the Island, Association residents appeared before the LMO Subcommittee and requested that the Ordinance be amended to remove the "loophole." That action was approved, and at the Mayor's request, it has been fast-tracked (which still isn't very fast). At the Planning Commission meeting in September (as we go to press), a public hearing will be held, and we hope they will vote to approve the needed LMO changes, sending it on to the full Council, possibly by October.

In the meantime, the Association also has a cause of action pending in Circuit Court that charges the owner with violating the Covenants of the Association.

We have sent email notices of all meetings pertaining to these three situations. Thank you for your support at the Town meetings, and in Circuit Court when and if that is necessary.

## Times Continue to Change

It is with months of deliberation that your Association has reached the decision that a nominal increase in your dues for next year will be required. It has been eight years since we increased dues, and you will see that next year is a very nominal amount. We have determined the need more funding for several reasons, but are hoping that an increase in our membership numbers will keep us from considering raising dues again in the near future. And how are we going to increase numbers?

The Association will soon be undertaking a new membership drive. At this time we have only a small percentage of the total single family property owners who regularly support the Association. Those who have not will be receiving letters soon encouraging them to do so, and we would appreciate your support in talking to your neighbors about the benefits that the Association provides you and how supporting the Association is truly an investment in your property. Point out what the Association has done for you in the past. Here are some of the things we are hoping to do in the future with *more* members and adequate funding:

Have *more* fun as a community:

- Locate a meeting space that has enough room for occasional cocktail parties that provides us with comfortable seating space for Board meetings, and allows storage of all our records in one location.
- Organize get-togethers in our neighborhoods, condos, even on the beach.
- Form biking and walking groups.
- Re-do our Website and provide a blog.

Consider *more* improvement projects:

- If the Town doesn't do it soon, erect sand fencing on the Forest Beach beaches.
- Clean out our own ditches to allow storm water to flow and establish "clean up" days for litter control.
- Hire a safety patrol officer.

Be *more* proactive at Town Hall:

- Advocate for a dog park and for preserving the 9 acres of First Baptist Church property that composes the last inland dune field on the Island.
- Introduce Land Management Ordinance (LMO) changes that will enhance Forest Beach, such as monument signs.
- Attend Council and Committee meetings in support of issues that affect our neighborhoods in greater numbers than currently available.

In other words, we want to be able for your Association to become proactive, rather than reactive on issues that matter to you, our members. We want to be able inform our owners and residents of the requirements for making changes to their properties, rather than having to contact someone who has violated the covenants after the fact. We want to keep a dialog running, rather than catching everyone up our monthly meetings or worse, at annual meeting. Unfortunately, all of the above will cost more money. We believe if we increase our membership, the cost for everyone will be considerably less.

Times continue to change and we want you to be a part of it. More than your financial support, we want to know your ideas, your opinion on those ideas listed above, and any other plans or actions you think potential new members would appreciate. We appreciate your comments on the renewal forms each year—especially those that say "Keep up the good work." We can only do that with your help and support. Please remember to pay your dues when you receive your notice this year, and HELP US HELP YOU in our membership drive during 2018.

## Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are your first warning to get out of your house when there is a fire. Most deaths occur in house fires when people are sleeping. Smoke numbs the senses and causes deeper sleep. Without a smoke alarm, most people never even wake up when smoke fills the home.

There are many different brands of smoke alarms on the market, but they fall under two basic types: ionization and photoelectric.

Ionization alarms sound more quickly when a flaming, fast moving fire occurs. Photoelectric alarms are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires. There are also combination smoke alarms that combine ionization and photoelectric into one unit, called dual sensor smoke alarms or smoke and fire alarms.

In addition to the basic types of alarms, there are alarms made to meet the needs of people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may use strobe lights that flash and/or vibrate.

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Inside and outside sleeping areas is ideal. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and installation because there are differences between various brands. Do not install smoke alarms in the kitchen, garage, bathroom or workshop. Cooking fumes, steam and other air particles can create false alarms and/or damage the alarm's detector. Also check to see when alarms should be replaced – most are every 8-10 years.

If your smoke alarm activates while you are cooking, then it is doing its job. Wave a towel to clear the air but leave the batteries in place.

A house fire moves with deadly speed, but the real killer is smoke. A person can die of smoke inhalation in less than a minute. A smoke alarm is the single most important means of preventing house and apartment fire fatalities by providing an early warning signal for early escape. It is one of the best safety devices you can invest in.

Test your alarms monthly by pushing the test button (use a broom handle if you cannot reach) and replace batteries twice a year or when you hear the battery "chirp".

Practice your escape plan at least twice a year - and remember, once you're out - stay out!

## Email Notices Keep You Up-To-Date Make Sure to Receive Yours

The Association continues to utilize Yahoo! Groups to maintain and process our email notices to members. In order for your email address to be added to this "opt in" group, we must send you an email request to join our group. Once received, you must follow the instructions in the Yahoo! Email to "opt-in" to the Forest Beach Association email group in order to begin receiving our electronic communications. If you do not do this, your email address is not added to the list and we cannot communicate with you via email effectively.

With the ever increasing costs of printed materials, we have increased our utilization of this electronic media. We do not send out "junk" or "spam" email. We do send notices of our monthly Board of Directors meetings, meeting minutes, Annual Meeting notices, Special Meetings at the Town that concern Forest Beach, notices of problems in the area, such as crime patterns, etc. and, more importantly, lately we have had the need to keep everyone informed on the conditions of the neighborhood due to storm related conditions. This method of communication has proved very timely and effective and we encourage you to become a Group Member and begin receiving our communications.

In order for your email address to be included in the Yahoo! Groups email system, it must be able to accept "MX" or "A" type email. Basically, this is bulk email as this is how Yahoo! Sends out the communications. Many corporate email systems either do not accept or in some way block this type of email and you will never receive our messages, even if your email address is in our system and an email is sent to you. Please be sure to use a personal email address for the Association email list, and not a corporate email contact where "bulk email" is blocked from delivery to you.

We will continue to email invitations to the email addresses we receive each year on the Dues Notices, so please print clearly. We have also added the ability for you to request to receive an invitation to become a member of our Yahoo! Groups email list on our Web Site at [www.forestbeachassociation.com](http://www.forestbeachassociation.com). Our Web Site will be undergoing changes as it too is a bit behind the times. So, one way or another, please keep up with the Association as we do our best to keep you informed. Don't be left out of the loop!

## Carbon Monoxide Safety

Carbon Monoxide poisoning can happen within a matter of minutes and is responsible for more deaths than any other single poison. Becoming educated about carbon monoxide poisoning can significantly reduce the health risk as well as save lives.

**What exactly is carbon monoxide?**

It is an invisible, odorless gas. Because you cannot see it, taste it or smell it, carbon monoxide can hurt you before you know it's there.

**Where does carbon monoxide come from?**

It is produced by appliances that burn gas or oil. Examples are clothes dryers, stoves, ovens, furnaces, water heaters or space heaters. An appliance malfunction, clogged vents and vehicle exhaust can all produce unsafe levels of carbon monoxide.

**How does carbon monoxide affect me?**

Even small amounts of carbon monoxide can rob you of oxygen. It produces flu-like symptoms. This might include headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizzy spells, confusion and irritability. Continued exposure can lead to vomiting, loss of consciousness and eventually brain damage or death.

**What can I do to protect myself?**

Every home should have at least one carbon monoxide alarm installed near the sleeping area. For added protection, have one on each floor. The height of the alarm doesn't matter - just make sure it is out of reach of children. Make sure it is accessible for testing, cleaning and maintenance.

**How does a carbon monoxide alarm work?**

A carbon monoxide alarm is not like a smoke alarm. Its' alarm is based on a timed exposure. It's the concentration of carbon monoxide over time that poses a threat. The alarm triggers before a healthy person would notice any symptoms.

**What should I do if my carbon monoxide alarm is activated?**

Call 9-1-1. Don't panic - move everyone to fresh air. Do not re-enter the home until emergency crews have checked out the problem and given you the ok to go back inside. Correct the problem as soon as possible.

For a free brochure, contact Cinda Seamon, Fire & Life Safety Educator, Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue, 843-682-5141.