

The Empress Condominium

Empressions

Quarterly Newsletter

July 2021

Hello Empress Family,

Thank you for your well wishes, it is good to be back. I am grateful to Mike McNeal who covered in my absence.

The Empress continues to shine no matter the obstacles. Financially it continues to recover from the large capital outlay for the balcony restoration, parking lot repaving and lighting, pool deck paving, gate entry system and yes, the elevator modernization.

Speaking of which, I have to say that the committee led by Jaimie Kiefer has done an amazing job in shepherding the modernization project from start to completion. Thanks to the team consisting of Carl Valdiserri, Mike Vinyon, Bill Borland, Ted Blanchard, former resident Dan Kelly and Jaimie Kiefer, the Empress community now has two (2) brand new state of the art elevators. (I have included some behind the scenes pictures of the Elevator Room.)

I would ask all residents who intend to have contractor work or moving, to abide by the times designated (please refer to page 4) and to ensure that the North elevator which is padded be used accordingly.

We hope to be able to remove the padding on the weekends so you can better appreciate the ride.

As the summer progresses our team is poised to take on several projects to further enhance the appearance of the Empress. One such project is the cladding of the entrances to the elevators on each floor with stainless steel, similar to that of the Lobby.

As the scourge of COVID abates and life begins to resemble normalcy, please continue to be vigilant by continuing those practices such as social distancing, washing of hands and when in doubt, wear a mask.

Have a truly great summer and stay close to family and friends.

God's blessings always!

Howard



Empress Board of Directors

**Bill Borland
President**

**Jaimie Kiefer
Vice President**

**Carl Valdiserri
Secretary**

**Mike Vinyon
Treasurer**

**Steed Johnson
Director**





The Elevator Modernization Committee is proud to announce that after 20 months of planning, negotiating and execution, the Modernization of our elevators was completed with the installation of the new interiors in early May!!! Currently the team is involved in the final stage which includes the steps necessary to ensure that all the contractual obligations have been met.

The photos show the new interiors which are lighter and brighter and complement our island and beach locale. The reactions of the resident community has been very positive from all aspects – the look, the ride and the overall performance.

Some new features include voice floor announcements as well as lit arrows to assist those entering the elevator. A video monitor is planned for installation by the BOD in the lobby at a future time. It will take the place of the plastic announcement holders that were in the old elevator cabs.

There is another project related to the elevator entrances on every floor, that when completed will enhance the appearance of our building, which bears noting, at this time. The project is about upgrading the appearance of the elevator entrances and as conceived was included in the original contract and schedule. It involves the overlay of the painted frames with a stainless steel veneer which is called cladding.

As the bigger project was underway, it was decided to hold this element to the end to avoid delays in the schedule of the actual modernization. Planned for completion over the summer, this project will be under the auspices of our building manager.

Have a happy and healthy summer!

Jaimie



Owners,
please make your contractors/delivery people aware:

The following is a list of rules for all hired contractors while on the Empress Property. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

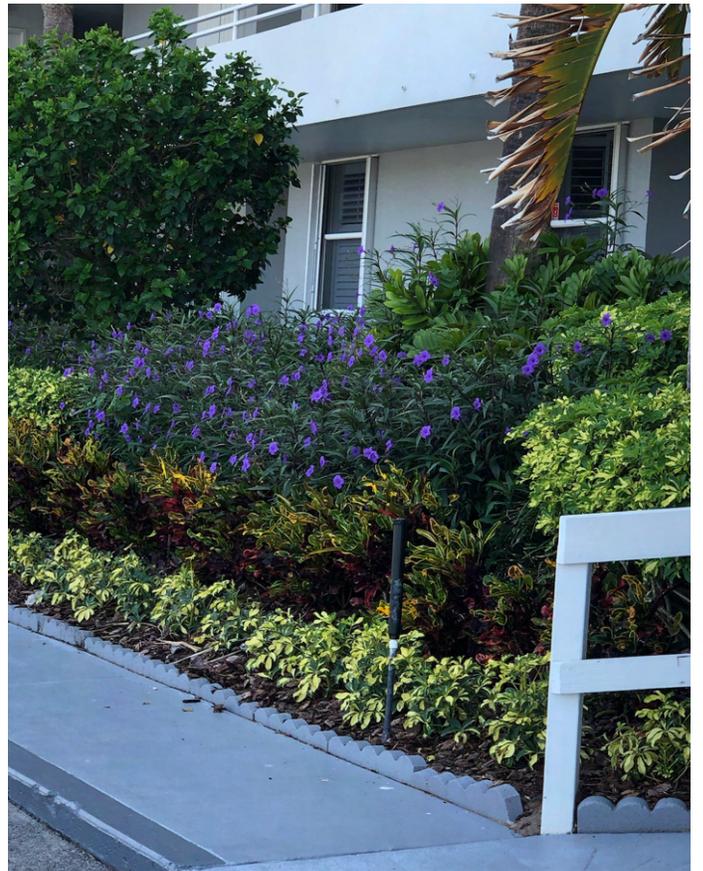
1. **Do not use Empress dumpster for construction debris.** They must be taken to an off-site location.
2. All contractors need to **sign in** at the Front Office **each and every day** they are on site.
3. Contractor working hours are: **Monday through Friday 8 to 5 p.m ONLY. NO WEEKENDS.**
4. **No transporting supplies on elevator after 3 p.m. on Fridays.**
5. All contractors transporting supplies to and from the unit **must use the North service elevator ONLY with pads.**
6. Contractor **must clean up ALL** common areas **during and after work is completed.** This includes catwalks, lobby, elevators and entrance.
7. Contractors must park their vehicles in the south side of the parking lot marked "**Maintenance Vehicles**" once supplies have been unloaded. **DO NOT** park vehicles under canopy, in front of building or in resident parking spaces.
8. Contractors are **NOT** permitted to use the shopping carts or luggage carts for transporting tools and materials; they **MUST SUPPLY** their own transporting device.
9. **Any furniture and/or appliance delivery and/or removal MUST ALSO USE the North Elevator ONLY.**

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Someone turned on the light at the end of the tunnel!

Although we have not had any organized TGIFs, Meet-and-Greets nor Farewell Brunches this year, we are looking forward to our Memorial Day BBQ to be held in the Social Room/Patio Deck next week. It's a new leaf, we're "turning the page," "making a fresh start" and "getting the ball rolling" – have I left out any other idioms? – so we can become the Empress Community we miss so much. Oh, "onward and upward!"

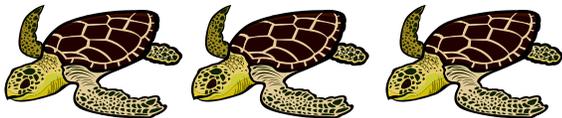
Empress Social Committee



New Plantings



Thanks to Carl Valdiserri for the 'Next Up' rack he built for the Empress pickleball players.



Please remember that it is ***Turtle Season*** and it is ***imperative to close your drapes or verticals at night*** to prevent the light being emitted onto the beach area. ***Believe it or not, even lights from the 15th floor can be detected by the turtles!*** Also, please turn off all unnecessary lights that are visible from the beach by sunset.

If we do not comply with these guidelines, we can be cited by the County.



New Social Room shutters

10 Things to Know about Florida's New Emotional Support Animal Law

The amendments to Chapter 760 of the Florida Statutes became effective on July 1, 2020. In addition to the eye-opening provisions which make a fraudulent request a crime in Florida subjecting the perpetrator to fines, possible court-ordered community service and, in extreme cases, jail time, the new law provides these lesser known changes:

Section 760.27(1)(a) defines an "emotional support animal" to mean an animal that does not require training to do work, perform tasks, provide assistance, or provide therapeutic emotional support by virtue of its presence which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. This underscores why those ESA certificates printed off the internet are meaning less and therefore provide no credibility to the request.

1. Section 760.27(2) makes it unlawful for a housing provider (aka a community association) to require a person to pay extra compensations to keep the ESA. This means that 'pet deposits' and fees associated with tags or DNA testing for pets in the community cannot be charged to ESAs and service animals.
2. A housing provide may deny a request for a reasonable accommodation if the animal poses a direct threat to the safety or health of others or poses a direct threat of physical damage to the property of others (e.g. the animal has a history of attacking people or other dogs.) An aggressive breed alone would not be sufficient to deny a request; your board would have to have specific knowledge of the requested animal's aggressive behavior.
3. If the person's disability is not readily apparent, the housing provider may request 'reliable information' to support the person's disability claim. Residents and guests who claim that you cannot inquire about their need for an ESA are wrong. Speak to your association attorney about the nature of your inquiry before proceeding.
4. An out-of-state practitioner providing supporting information must have provided 'in-person care or services' to the individual on at least one occasion and that practitioner must have personal knowledge of the person's disability and must be acting within the scope of his or her practice. This portion of the new law is designed to eliminate the medical letters that can be printed out online without the person every being seen or treated by that medical professional. Don't assume that tele-counseling does not qualify as 'in person care or services' – speak to your association attorney and get a legal opinion.
5. If a person requests to keep more than one ESA, the Association can request information to support the need for each animal.
6. An association can also require proof that the animal's owner has completed with state and local licensing and vaccinating requirements. Many boards ask if they can request this information annually – this new law answers that question.
7. Section 760.27(3) provides that an Association CANNOT request information that discloses the person's diagnosis or the severity of a person's disability and/or medical records related to the disability. However, an individual is allowed to share this information voluntarily with the association. Many of the discrimination claims brought against associations have not been based upon an outright denial but have been based on the manner in which repeated requests for information were handles. Requesting additional and often sensitive information should be handled solely by your association attorney.
8. While an Association can establish a standard policy or procedure for receiving and processing ESA requests it cannot require the use of a specific form or notarized statement and cannot deny the individual's request for failure to follow the policy. Many communities are still using forms and protocols that were created years ago. Often, less is more in this regard; overly complicated policies and forms can be counterproductive.
9. Section 760.27(4) provides that the owner of an ESA is personally liable for any personal or property damage caused by his or es ESA. It's important to remember that the Fair Housing laws require a reasonable accommodation not an unconditional one. If the accommodation for a previously approved ESA or service animal has become unreasonable speak to association counsel about your ability to revoke that accommodation.