

June 2023 NEWSLETTER
Official website: Fontana-Estates.com

Fontana Estates Community Homeowners Association, Inc. Orlando, FL 32820

President: Dr. Telka diFate Vice President: Joe Rybarczyk

Secretary: Bill Bell Treasurer: George Kriss

Board of Directors

Edilma Alvarado Beverly Hamilton Thanh Ngo

Dear Homeowners of Fontana Estates,

Please check our official website at FONTANA-ESTATES.COM on a regular basis to get all the facts and up to date information on our community. We have had guest speakers with helpful information provided to help protect you, your home and personal property that is all posted on the website.

Under photo news we have information about the numerous **gators** that live in our ponds. We have signs posted in common areas about not feeding the gators and please do not try to go near them. They do move faster than humans so don't think that you can outrun them. The county has been contacted and a trapper will be coming to see if they are 4 ft or larger. **Please let a Board member know if the Gator Trapper is on property since they can update him.**

HOA fees are due July 1st and then October 1st. Please be on time since these funds pay the bills to keep our community looking so fantastic. We all benefit from having a community that is run so efficiently in order to keep it pristine. It is standard procedure to accumulate late fees and interest when HOA fees are not paid on time. This has been the policy since the community was built. That is why it is important to pay the \$521.47 on time. If you are mailing a check, please do so at least 1-2 weeks before the first of the month. If you pay online, please check your account periodically to make sure that it is paying the correct amount and on time.

Many thanks to owners that keep their properties in such great shape with trimming, cutting, edging, plantings etc. Every vendor, police officer, fireman, manager etc. that comes here comments on how beautiful this community looks. This takes time and effort to accomplish. So please keep up the good work. The Board will continue to keep good vendors to take care of the common property, so those areas stay great too.

In most places volunteers are thanked and greatly appreciated. Many residents here recognize the time and efforts that the BOD's put into the community along with homeowners that volunteer here and we thank you all. We are very lucky to have about 50% of the residents volunteer to help keep the community looking so great. Unfortunately, a few people here at Fontana Estates criticize and make fun of these volunteer efforts as is clearly stated in the unwanted emails and postcards sent to residents. What is even more odd is that volunteers save the community tens of thousands of dollars. If these volunteers stop helping the community the consequences are not good. The choices will be either a large increase in the HOA fees in order to keep up with repairs and other necessities or many things will not get done in the community. The appearance of the community will quickly go downhill. This is fact not fiction.

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Just some of the activities/repairs done by volunteers include but not limited to:

| <u>Volunteers activities/repairs/jobs</u> | <u>Amount saved for Fontana Estates/yr.</u> |
|--|--|
| Fence repairs | \$1,000/yr. |
| Landscaping: tree trimming, plantings, outflow clean up etc. | \$7,000/yr. |
| Fire Ant control | \$200/yr. |
| Mailings saves HOA about \$250 per mailing | \$1,000/yr. |
| Holiday Decorations storage Debbie Creore charged the HOA to store these items in her self-storage facility. Now it is free in the HOA Presidents garage. | \$1200/yr. Prior to Oct. 2018 |
| HOA boxed records storage | \$120/yr. |
| Upkeep to swings, gazebo & Park | \$1,000/yr. |
| Clean & Paint storm drains | \$1200 |
| Fulltime manager for community | \$70,000/yr. |
| Design and upkeep to website | \$3,000 |
| Interview/hire vendors | \$2,000 |
| Swing repairs and installation | \$500.00 |
| Pursue lightning strike repairs | \$48,000 more received from insurance claim due to HOA president working on case while manager only wanted to accept \$5,000 |

In the past the Associa Director of the financial department spoke on a zoom presentation along with the branch President. They work hard at keeping the Board totally informed monthly of all of the expenses and a totally different company does the tax returns. Everything is accounted for as per the budgeted expenses. You can't logically cut costs and keep the quality and standards you have here at Fontana Estates. For example, we presently have another increase in the insurance for the common areas. In **20221-22 the insurance for the HOA cost \$5,501 today the same policy cost \$11,677.** Many of you may be facing similar insurance problems. With so many insurance companies leaving the state we do not have many to choose from and the \$11,000 was the best deal. If any resident knows how to finagle getting HOA fees down with the way prices are please let us know ASAP since we all pay the same amount for HOA fees, and no one wants to have to pay more than is necessary.

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HOA fees are based on the costs to keep the common areas properly maintained and that is required by law. This includes legal advice and mandatory reserve funds for infrastructure maintenance, repairs and replacement. **As a gated community the Board is responsible for the proper upkeep of the roads, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, drainage systems, gates, walls, fences, ponds, landscaping, playground and equipment, pump for pond and well, pavers and masonry, gate operating system, irrigation system, call box, front area lighting, streetlights and much more.** Of course, you could have a Board of Directors that doesn't follow up on all the issues here in our community but then property values would drop dramatically.

The recent street repairs, that included crack fill and 2 coats of sealant cost \$16,112 but since we had extensive cracking in areas, we had more filled for another \$6575. These funds came from the reserves. Other local communities have had their Board members contact our Board to get information on this process since our community roads looks so much better now. Interviewing and overseeing the street repair job was a large and involved task. Even the contractor and staff commented on how organized our community was with the street repairs. We had signs, organized locations for residents to park etc. The next upcoming maintenance will be sidewalk replacement in specific areas to comply with county safety standard ordinances. Quotes are still coming in at this time. Meeting with potential vendors falls on the BOD's shoulders since they know the community the best and negotiating prices doesn't seem to be what management companies do. Funds for this come from the reserve account.

The Reserve study is conducted by an engineer every 3 years and cost about \$2300. This expense must also be figured into the budget annually. The engineer for the reserves has informed all homeowners that if the reserves are not pooled that we should be putting into the reserves **\$117,543** annually rather than **\$62,000**. Unfortunately, the homeowners didn't approve that initiative back in February when it was explained in the letters mailed to all owners. As a result, the community will fall short by 2028 in order to mill and repave the streets that we are responsible for. Please do not let unreasonable unrealistic residents try to sway you from understanding what a corporation HOA is all about. We must put the funds into the HOA reserve account in order to pay for the planned expenses.

Engineers analyze the ponds for recertification every 2 years because it is required by law and costs about \$2400. If we fail that re-certification, we must do repairs outlined by St Johns Mgmt Water Authority and that expense would come from the reserves. That is why proper monthly maintenance of the ponds is so important. Part of the maintenance is not polluting the ponds with golf balls, trash, fertilizers etc. It is everyone's responsibility to pick up what doesn't belong in the ponds and not allow grass clipping to get into the drainage and pond system.

HOA common area property is the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Directors. Any construction at Fontana Estates is ultimately overseen by the Board since vendors must use the streets, cross over the gutters, drains and sidewalks etc. All of this land is the paid for out of HOA funds. These contractors must follow the same covenants/rules as owners by having a timeline, proper behavior and approval from the ARC Committee. If any vendor damages common area property it is the HOA Board that must pursue the proper repairs. These repairs are paid for by the vendors. Any such repairs should not have to come out of HOA monies. All

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owners may not know this but the management company cannot answer any legal questions but the HOA attorney can and does in all of these types of matters.

Each election cycle we also have a woman candidate declare that our HOA fees are too high and that we should audit the books because of mishandling of funds. She also states that other communities pay so much less in HOA fees. The promise is to lower the HOA fees. Please do not be fooled by these false statements. The facts are much different. It is vital to understand that an HOA is a Florida Corporation. The budget is based on actual expenses, planned and potential expenses. No other community is exactly like Fontana Estates with the number of common areas that must be maintained i.e., ponds, gates, sidewalks, walls, fences, trees, etc. Even the age of the community is important when it comes to the Reserve Study infrastructure reports and upkeep that's planned for. So various other communities should not be compared to Fontana Estates.

Fixing infrastructure can only be put on hold for a short period of time but will cost a lot more down the road. **Unfortunately, we do have owners who do not believe that the HOA is a corporation. Each of you can see that the covenants state that we are. Luckily our community has 7 Board of Directors who know how an HOA is to function and take the position seriously. They logically discuss issues based on what is best for the entire community in order to keep all of our property values up.**

We have had a resident walking the community with a camera attached to his hat. Numerous other residents, especially women and new owners, have complained about this and asked about this man. Raymond Reeves does live here. No one seems to want him to take photos of their property. Numerous Board members have been the victims of him posting our photographs on various sites without our permission. This is not okay.

The County Permit Inspector has been to the community recently for 8 complaints filed against homeowners. Mostly against Board members and the complaints are false statements. The inspector dislikes this and feels that the Board members are being targeted, harassed and that laws are there to protect them. According to the inspector R. Reeves has been calling in these complaints. The one complaint that is most disturbing is against an owner who takes care of a totally disabled husband and her elderly disabled mother. Almost 10 years ago these homeowners put up a pergola with Toll Bro. permission. Toll Bro. even put in the patio underneath the pergola. And now with this complaint the owner needs to remove it. This has put a hardship on this family, and it is very disturbing that a vengeful complaint would be filed. This is not okay.

If a small car, with a man driving it, goes by you in the community and he gives you the middle finger then the BOD's has found this to be the same man wearing the hat camera. This is not okay.

The same homeowner has an attorney write letters to the HOA so then the HOA attorney must respond. This is a waste of your HOA funds. This is not okay.

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Also, if you've found a Fontana Estates community wifi address called," FUCK YOU Telka diFate." This is without permission also. This is not okay.

We have a few naysayers that mail out post cards with the return address that includes FU Fontana Estates. The FU being a vulgar abbreviation. This has happened numerous times. This is not okay.

The Board of Directors would like to make it clear, along with all those Board members since October 2019, that the false information being spread through social media, postcards, walking the neighborhood, are accusations that are fantasies meant to create hate, distrust and misunderstandings. Please talk to your present Board members about helping to solve these issues. Be part of the solution not the problem. It has been suggested that we organize a homeowners forum to resolve negative issues that are detrimental to the community Article XII of the covenants state," Nuisance- no activity shall exist that constitutes a nuisance or is detrimental to the community." What is going on is detrimental to the community. As homeowners here we have the right to freedom of enjoyment. The right to live in a community without being annoyed, harassed or interfered with. This is especially true when Board members are conducting HOA business and we do that on a daily basis. **The Board members are volunteers working in the community helping to make sure that projects run smoothly. It's called helping your neighbor and being neighborly. Sign up for the forum on problem resolution by sending an Email to: FontanaEstates2@gmail.com**

Import updates from June Board Meeting in case you did not attend:

• **July 19, 2023: Save the Date for Breast Cancer Awareness** this group will come with a truck to the community and pick up donations left at the gazebo. Items to donate can include: clothing, household items , jewelry, antiques, shoes, home-goods and more. No furniture. All items must be bagged or put in boxes. **You may leave them at the gazebo starting the day before on July 18, 2023.** Residents can sign up ahead of time if you want a receipt by going to the website PickupsForBreastCancer.org plus label the box and bags with your name and address if you want a receipt. This is a voluntary project, but we hope that many residents will contribute to this worthwhile cause.

• **October 4, 2023: Save the Date: the Orange County Utilities has the WaterWise Neighbor Program,** and they will come and give out free water conservation items to residents and friends that sign up. **They will be at our gazebo from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** They have shower heads, faucet aerators, spray nozzles, outside rain sensors and more. **Pre-register by going to: Oconservewater.net/programs/incentive/waterwise.**

• The Board of Directors is trying to book a **Hurricane Safety** speaker but, in the meantime, remember that **hurricane season is upon us from June 1st and runs through November 30th.** You can access important facts on our official website with information to help you be prepared at: **FONTANA-ESTATES.COM** under the Hurricane section. Be proactive. If you go away on a vacation, please remove objects that can move in high winds or anchor them down or put them indoors. Know that your Board is on task preparing for this season.

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- **As part of our Neighborhood Watch Safety Program the sheriff has made numerous recommendations. Please review our website with his informative video.**
- **Rule clarification: Stated in the covenants is that all pools must have an ARC application and the application must be approved before installation. This rule was clarified in that a pool permit from the county must accompany the ARC application. The rule was further clarified that only in-ground permanent pools will be accepted. Above ground style pools will not be accepted in this community.**
- **Rule clarification: Keeping sidewalks clean of dirt, stains, mold and rust will first be a courtesy letter from the management company. Other letters will be violation letters. It is the owners responsibility to keep sidewalks clean of all debris and dirt . Mold and rust are also homeowners responsibility since it helps to keep this Toll Brothers community more upscale in appearance.**
- **Last June the Board had our attorney, Scott Kiernan, speak at a zoom Town Hall Presentation for all owners. He made it very clear that all of the information he was providing was confidential and that the case was being handled most appropriately by the Board since it is their fiduciary responsibility. All attorneys are hired and report to the Board of Directors and therefore attorney/client privilege prevails. And that is just one of the reasons why only certain information is a matter of public record when going online. It is not because the Board is doing anything illegal or hiding anything. These are the facts. Non-disclosure agreements are frequently done with lawsuits. It is an agreement not to tell what was finally decided. **By breaking a non-disclosure agreement, you can lose everything plus be penalized. Don't let the nasty postcards fool you into thinking that something illegal is going on, or that your money is being wasted, or even more legal fees will be coming. None of that is true.****
- **We have had a code of conduct for many years and that is announced before meetings. This is common practice for HOA Board meetings. This was implemented due to out-of-control behavior by residents and inappropriate outbursts. The Board meetings are corporate meetings and participants should act accordingly. No one should feel threatened, especially Board members, at these meetings. Safety is of the utmost importance at Fontana Estates.**

In previous years other rules were approved unanimously by the Board. They were sent to all owners but here are a few reminders:

- **Golf Cart and ATV's rules include that drivers on the Fontana Estates roads must have a government issued driver's license and follow all driving laws, have turn signal, rear mirror. At night must have lights that turn on.**
- **Political Signs cannot be greater than 12 in. by 12 in.; they cannot be more than 5 ft from the front door of your home; sign must be of weather resistant material; can only be placed in the ground using a metal frame; if the weather is windy or stormy it must be removed; no vulgar language; one sign per address; can only be posted during the first Tuesday of November and for no more than 30 days; Not more than 23 days before the election and no more than 6 days after election for a total of 30 days. Then the sign must be removed.**

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Know your BOD's: Vice President Joe Rybarczyk- is an original homeowner here at Fontana Estates. He lives here with his wife. As a very active Board member overseeing all of the landscaping issues and is very knowledgeable on property maintenance repairs.

Secretary Bill Bell- is an original owner and lives here with his family. His working knowledge of the laws for litigation and reviewing contracts is important in helping the community.

Mimi Alvarado. Mimi was in Business Administration as a manager for a finance company in her native country Colombia. She has been very helpful on financial topics and has been living in the USA for more than 25 years.

Treasurer George Kriss -is also an original homeowner here at Fontana. He lives here with his wife and adopted dog Buster. These owners are also avid gardeners.

Beverly Hamilton is originally from Guyana and worked there in the Defense Force within the office of Chief of Staff for 7 years, plus 2 years in Parliament in administration. She also was an important member of the Ethnic Relations Commission to help mediate with racial relation issues. Bev lives here with her family.

Thanh Ngo is an original homeowner here and lives here with his family. He is very enthusiastic about our community and works long hours in keeping a beautiful garden.

Dr. Telka diFate-The president lives here with her family and 2 pups. She is responsible for coordinating with the Board members concerning matters pertinent to the HOA. She does not make decisions unilaterally; everything is done with Board approval and involvement. She liaisons with our management company to update them on community issues and concerns. Telka has spent literally hundreds of hours doing this and many other jobs for the HOA. She also has over 30 years' experience as president of various non-profits and city-wide organizations. She is used to million-dollar budgets and being fiscally responsible in the process.

Some of her community service awards include: President Of The United States Call To Service Award, for Lifetime Achievement in Volunteerism; Mayor Youth Award as Advisor for the Milford CT Girl's Volunteer Organization; The White House Millennium Council-Millennium Green Project Award.

All homeowners have the opportunity to work together for a common goal, to keep our community at the luxury level that we all bought into as a Toll Brothers community. Many thanks to so many that do since this promotes positive civic engagement for those that want to participate. Please sign up to participate in a structured resolution forum asap so plans can begin and a date established.

Email to: FontanaEstates2@gmail.com