



Duke round bulbs shine in all directions



Solar flat panels shine downwards

Solar streetlight information 09/09/2022

The Board of Directors of Fontana Estates Homeowners Association would like to start by going over information that has already appeared on our website or in our newsletter concerning the streetlights. Over the last several years we have received inquiries from homeowners concerning whether we could do anything to improve the lighting situation on our streets. In response, we met with representatives from Duke Energy to discuss why our streets were so dark and what could be done to improve it. Here's what we found out after countless phone calls and meetings with various representatives of Duke:

- During meeting, on property, with a representative of Duke he indicated that when the community was built the streetlights were placed 40 feet further apart than what is recommended.
- Having Duke come in to add more light poles would be prohibitively expensive. Then we would have to pay monthly rental fee.
- We rent the streetlights from Duke and it is not an option to buy them. The contract with Duke is due to expire soon and they have stated that they will not renew it. Instead, we will pay whatever the rate Duke is charging on a month-to-month basis.
- Our original contract gave us a 10 year fixed rate for the rental of the equipment. Duke has not been forthcoming with the new rates but there is little doubt it will be much higher than it was a decade ago.
- Any changes to our current equipment, like replacing the soft yellow halogen lights with brighter LED lights, would void our current contract and place us in the month-to-month situation.

After discussions with the board members, it was decided to run a proof-of-concept experiment utilizing solar streetlights on two of our existing stop sign poles to see how they work out. They were installed by volunteers in the fall of 2021 and have been operating flawlessly since. Pictures of these units have appeared on our website since October 2021. There have been ZERO complaints about these lights and many positive reviews. With that trial having gone well the board approved adding 9 additional light posts with solar lights in the darkest areas of the community. These will prove most useful when we have blackouts since we will have operational solar streetlights.

Unfortunately, that's when the rumor mill started. "They will shine into my house, Duke Energy won't allow this, we would be removing Dukes electric lights, I won't like the way they look, etc." We have chosen to answer these questions in a community format. First, let's address the question of Duke. No, there are no immediate plans to discontinue service with Duke. We will, however, be evaluating future costs of continuing to rent from Duke. Currently, Duke Energy is charging us nearly \$9,600 per year. The cost of the 9 solar street lights, that we own, pretty much is the same as renting the electric street lights from Duke for a year.

As far as shining into your home, the solar lights were not engineered to do so. They will illuminate the street and the sidewalks but not much more. Dukes lights, on the other hand, are a globe which radiate light in all directions. Those are the kinds of lights that are most likely to shine into your home. So says physics. (See illustrations above).

The color of the lights will be a more white color. As part of the Neighborhood Watch program the sheriffs have reiterated that lights help to deter crime. Having outside lights on at night, both inside and outside, and streetlights make a difference. Having a dark community give criminals opportunity especially with blackouts. Solar streetlights will help keep our community illuminated. White lights do a better job of illuminating the community as compared to soft yellow. Sheriff Felix Cadevilla did a really helpful presentation on September 6, 2022 where he recommended white lighting. Please watch the video posted on the Security section of our website.

As far as their appearance, that's in the eye of the beholder. The new poles will be burnished, hurricane resistant aluminum and not lichen covered concrete. The area where the poles will be placed is on the verge between the sidewalk and gutter. We have the right to utilize this area. We will not be placing anything on your personal property.

As you can see. This is a safety issue as well as a pocketbook issue. The BOD has a fiduciary responsibility to keep the community in top condition for financial reasons along with keeping the community a safe place for everyone. The Board doesn't conduct business for their own self interests but rather for the community as a whole. Remember that the Board of Directors are all full-time owners and volunteers here. We take our positions seriously and spend countless hours hiring the best vendors, taking HOA courses, and working to keep this community a beautiful place to live.

Your Fontana Estates Board of Directors