

Sands Ocean Club Newsletter

October 2015

All is well after the storm.....

As most of you know our area received over 11 inches of rain in a three day period, and considerable flooding occurred. I am happy to report that Sands Ocean Club did not receive any damage. Unfortunately, the homes and vehicles of some of our staff members were not so fortunate and we wish them the best in their efforts to recover. We also wish to thank the many staff members who reported to work under very adverse conditions and kept everything running smoothly. Some roads remain closed, but things seem to be getting cleaned up fast.

Just a reminder

This will be the last newsletter to be mailed to each of you, except for those who have notified us they do not have Internet access. Newsletters will continue on a monthly basis and all future additions will be posted on our website: socowners.com, together with bulletins and notifications. We are also preparing for our luncheon on ***Friday, October 23 at 12:30 PM*** in Sandals Lounge. The Board of Directors has been kind enough to allow us to insert an RSVP form in your annual meeting notice and proxy letter. We ask that you use this form to let us know if you will be attending so that we can order the correct amount of food and beverages. We do encourage you to attend, as we have much to discuss in preparation for the Annual Meeting the following day.

Update: Our renovation project has begun.....

The common element renovation project recently approved by the Board of Directors and reported to you on our website has begun. New door locks for all units have been ordered from Saflok Corporation. These devices are truly state-of-the-art technology. Access is achieved using an RFID key which need only be held in close proximity to the lock. Both the key and the lock will record every entry into your unit. The locks can also be accessed via a standard metal key. All entries using a metal key will also be recorded in the lock. This will be a tremendous benefit for security. The RFID keys will also grant owners and guests secure access to our parking garages. Master keys will now be coded to allow the key holder access only to those units for which they have authorized access. (Example: A timeshare master will only allow the key holder access to a timeshare unit.). Owners and guests of all units will be able to obtain keys and parking passes at either the front desk or the HOA office. This system will help us greatly to be in compliance with the South Carolina Innkeepers Act, facilitate quicker and easier access in emergencies, and provide much needed additional security. Together with the replacement of entry doors, the initial appearance of your condo should be greatly improved. We expect to have a sample of both the new doors and the new locks at the Annual Meeting. It will be operational and you can try it out.

Work has also begun on repairing all corridor walls and other common element areas in preparation for new paint and chair rail molding. This work will not disrupt occupancy, although

patched areas will remain visible until the walls are repainted. The painting process will immediately follow wall repairs. These renovations are badly needed and it is exciting to see them beginning to take shape.

Also on an improvement note, new heavy-duty commercial hallway vacuum cleaners should arrive by mid-month. These machines are very powerful and very durable but also very quiet. We expect them to improve and speed up our care of the property corridors and create less inconvenience to unit occupants.

Our landscaping project is moving along nicely and we have posted A few pictures on the website gallery so that you can monitor and review the progress. It has been noted that some of you would also like to be able to post pictures on our gallery. We apologize for not having already made this possible and we are taking corrective action. Keep an eye on the website and check the gallery button as we expect to have this operational in the very near future.

A discussion on HOA provided services.....

A few months ago the Board of Directors approved a \$25 fine for those units placing their trash in the hallway rather than transporting it to the compactor. The homeowners association like every other homeowners association in our area does not provide this service as part of its budget. Just to be clear, In the 30 year history of our association this service has never been provided by the HOA. The HOA, through it's assigned contractor is responsible for collecting trash from hallway canisters only and trash generated from the inside of individual units is not to be placed in or about these canisters. The in-house rental company and perhaps others have always provided this service as a part of their rental management agreement and therefore it is taken care of for those owners on those programs.

Everyone agrees that we cannot have trash littering the hallways for days at a time. Often this trash contains food leftovers, which very quickly generate undesirable odors. The site and smell of such is not very welcoming to those walking down the hallway to get to or from their unit. Accordingly, all owners and their guest who occupy a unit that does not have this service provided by their rental agent or a cleaning service are expected to take their trash to the compactor. It is the unit owner's responsibility to keep all of their guest informed of this requirement.

Some have suggested that perhaps this should be an HOA service. If that were to occur it would of course increase our monthly maintenance fee and still require that trash be collected at a specific time of day. As every area developer knows, higher maintenance fees result in lower property values. That is why the developers of our property as well as virtually all like properties in our area, made the decision to not include such services in their original HOA's budget. To date we have not been able to find a single area HOA that has chosen to change this by including that service in their budget.

This is but one service that is currently the responsibility of individual owners, their rental agents, or their cleaning service. Other such services, such as bellman service, concierge service, linen and terry replacement service, in unit maintenance and more have also been

suggested to be made a part of HOA provided services. All the reasons set forth above would similarly apply. During the past year we have seen our property values begin to grow and certainly we all wish for that trend to continue. Accordingly, it would not be in our interest to increase the scope of HOA services that would generate a corresponding increase our monthly maintenance fees and likely reverse that trend. Currently, we enjoy very reasonable and competitive fees, which are attractive to prospective buyers.

Better communication and homeowner involvement.....

Many owners, including this owner, are interested in how our monthly maintenance fees are spent. Even though we all receive a copy of the annual budget and can obtain a copy of our annual audit, not being able to view the actual expenses often leads to concern and speculation. We are blessed to have property management with an on-site office and accounting staff able to answer any questions we might have. I have recently requested that the board of directors consider publishing our monthly check register on the RAM (property management company) website for all owners to be able to review. They are considering this request and I am hopeful that it will not only be approved but will also be helpful in providing better insight and understanding for every interested homeowner. The Board of Directors is also considering the establishment of more committees consisting of interested homeowners to better utilize the input and skills of those homeowners willing to contribute to improving our association. It is the Board of Directors who create our annual budget and review its progress at each bimonthly meeting. The property management company is only empowered to spend money as specifically directed by the board. Having more owners willing to participate on committees could be a great asset to our Board of Directors and our association. We are a community of neighbors. Nearly every owner I speak with purchased here primarily to have a place at the beach they could call home, to come here and relax and enjoy the many amenities that Sands Ocean Club has available. To keep that wish intact, we must all work together. We all want our condominium to be our condominium. We all have our preferences concerning rules, regulations, and services. While our preferences are important to each of us, we must also remember that we share a building with nearly 600 others. That awareness and responsibility often requires compromise, respect and a willingness to make things work as a team. These newsletters, Together with our website, are designed to give us a forum that will help us achieve that goal. Your participation is very important to achieving that goal.

Candidates for the Board of Directors.....

We will be electing directors at our annual meeting later this month. Socowners.com will be happy to publish information from any homeowner seeking a position on the new board. Below is information submitted to us by Mr. Bill Brackner, owner of units 735/736 and 805 who is seeking a seat on the Board.

I ran for the board in 2013. I have lived here at Sands Ocean Club full-time since 2013.

I attend all Annual Board Meetings and most of the regular called HOA board meetings and know all the board members.

I believe living here full-time, knowing many of the owners, the current HOA board members and the fact that I have been a realtor for eight years, ran my own Corporation for 22 years.

I can be a valuable asset to all concerned in helping everyone understand the goals and direction we all would like to see the Sands Ocean Club become ! Also by being impartial, clear up the “misunderstandings” and to have clarity with the HOA board, the below companies and the homeowners.

I have NO affiliation with ANY corporation RAM, IROC, Island Investments, or any other company working here at Sands Ocean Club.

Thank You

Bill Brackner (cell 843-655-6656)

Other Owners interested in being a candidate for the Board of Directors and/ or interested in serving on a committee of the Board of Directors are welcome to post their resume’ on the “BLOG” at socowners.com. Further, we encourage all owners to periodically check that site in order to be better informed of their fellow owner’s interests.

Annual meeting agenda.....

The Board of Directors have a number of important items on this year’s annual meeting agenda. Not the least of which is a review of the renovations completed during the past year and the major hallway and ground floor renovations now underway and continuing into 2016. The board has informed us they will limit the number of comments or questions and the length of discussion for each owner. Further, only one representative may speak for a unit.

As a note, many years ago the reception held the evening before the Annual Meeting was designated as the time and place for owners to present individual concerns to members of the Board and/or Property Management staff. It is my understanding this is still the case. We encourage you to attend the Reception and discuss these matters with the appropriate parties as everyone’s concerns are important.

For those who cannot attend, we will provide a synopsis of the matters handled at the meeting within a few days on socowners.com. You may respond or comment in the “Blog” section. This WILL NOT be the official minutes of the meeting.

Let us know how we’re doing.....

This newsletter and our website are designed to keep you better informed and provide a forum for the constructive exchange of ideas. We also share your information with the Board and others to support better communication. Please use the “Blog” to let us know if you think of a way for us to improve.