

Sugarmill Woods Civic Association



December 2010
Newsletter

108 Cypress Blvd West
Homosassa, FL 34446
www.sugarmillcivic.org

Annual Meeting

Monday, January 10th, 2011
7:00 ~ 9:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
8831 Bradshaw Blvd., Homosassa

Agenda

Call to Order ~ Duane Dueker, President
State of the Association

Introduction of Candidates for the Board of Directors

Guest Speakers:

Commissioner Joe Meek, President

&

John Siefert, Executive Director Citrus County Economic Development Council

The Council works with local and state governments to attract new business investment to strengthen the county's economy. After brief remarks, both gentlemen will be available to answer questions from the audience.

Meet the new Commissioners

So that Sugarmill Woods residents can become acquainted with the County Commissioners elected in November, the Civic Association has planned two Community Outreach Programs.

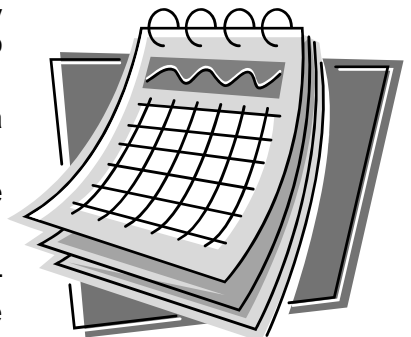
On **Wednesday, January 19**, District 2 Commissioner John "JJ" Kenney, a Sugarmill resident, will discuss his goals and aspirations for the county in 2011.

On **Tuesday, February 1**, District 4 Commissioner Rebecca Bays will describe her views on the county and its immediate future.

Both meetings will be held at the Sugarmill Woods Country Club from 6:30 PM to 7:45 PM.

Because of the critical issues facing the county in 2011, President Duane Dueker says it is important for our residents to get an early insight to the views of the new Commissioners.

Please consider attending these two meetings.



Veteran County Official Explains Citrus County Government

Gary Maidhof, a longtime Citrus County employee, is the Operations and Projects Officer. His job is to oversee all of the county operations to determine where improvements can be made and suggest ways to improve interagency cooperation.

In October, he brought his expertise to a Civic Association Community Outreach Program and gave Sugarmill residents an overview of how their county operates and listened to their concerns.

On describing budget constraints, he explained that the Board of County Commissioners has little or no input with budgets for separate agencies: the school system, constitutional offices and the mosquito control board.

The school system has its own taxing power which accounts for about 41 percent of Citrus County real estate tax revenue. Budgets for the Sheriff, Tax Collector, Clerk of Courts and Supervisor of Elections are established by the state as are the salaries of the County Commissioners.

His overview is that local government budgets are strained because of reduced tax revenue which "is today's norm" and we must get used to it. He warns that Citrus County can no longer save money by reducing staff. "We've done that. We now have two people doing the jobs of four. Any future reductions must come by cutting back programs and services."

Of particular local interest, the fire service must be expanded over the coming years, but the likelihood of the fire station on Oak Park Drive being converted to a full time operation is slim. A new fire station must be situated in a central area with quick access to major highways. The CR 480 station meets neither of those requirements. The preferred location for a station on the west side is in the vicinity of Cardinal and Route 19.

To the often cited complaints that Sugarmill Woods pays more real estate taxes than it gets in return, Maidhof explained that the tax system does not work that way. Residents cannot expect a dollar for dollar return and, he added, Florida residents receive a generous tax break with the \$50,000 Homestead Exemption granted by the state. That leads to a vexing local tax problem: unfunded state mandates. The state solves some of its revenue shortages by simply handing off programs to local governments while it continues to collect its main source of revenue: the sales tax.

On the subject of privatization of services, Maidhof agrees that privatizing such things as operating the jail, highway construction and right-of-way mowing may make sense, but when it comes to public safety, including water and sewage, he draws the line. Those should remain the domain of local government.

On the subject of water, he reported that old water meters in Sugarmill Woods are being replaced with digital meters that can monitor water use 24 hours a day, will help detect water leaks, help account for the unexplained pumpage of thousands of gallons of water in Sugarmill and improve water conservation.

Two Candidates Seek Election to the Board of Directors

Mary Lee Johnson, a resident of Cypress Village for the past four years.

A native of Lima, Ohio, she spent 35 years working in the Broward County School system as a teacher and in several top administrative posts. Since moving to Citrus County, she has been an active volunteer in a half dozen charity organizations. She devotes much of her time to serving on the We Care Food Pantry Fundraising Committee and organized the successful Fill the Truck food campaign in Sugarmill Woods this past year. Volunteering for the Board is an example of her desire to serve local community service organizations.

Marie Steidel has had extensive experience on administrative positions in both Manhattan and San Francisco. Originally from New Jersey, she obtained a real estate broker's license and spent 28 years in the mortgage banking field rising to President and Compliance Manager in one firm. Her husband, Ken, was also employed in real estate. Since they retired and moved to Sugarmill Woods in 2008, Marie has served as a volunteer for both the We Care Food Pantry and in the Citrus County Clerk of Court's Office.

Both candidates have volunteered to serve three year terms and they will be voted on by the membership at the Civic Association Annual meeting on January 10th.

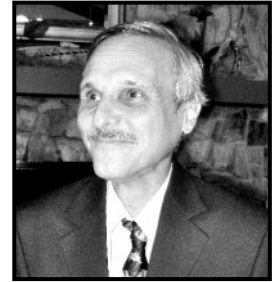
Fire Station Open House on January 15th

Citrus County Fire Chief Larry Morabito heads a professional fire service, but says volunteers are essential to provide the protection residents deserve.

"They serve a special need, play a special role. In fire response, time is the critical element. Sometimes, volunteers are first on the scene."

The problem is: volunteers are in short supply. To add to the ranks, a series of Open Houses will be held on January 25th from 10:00 AM to 1 PM. Sugarmill Woods residents interested in volunteering are invited to attend at the fire station on West Oak Park Drive. This local station has been unmanned in recent times because of the lack of volunteers.

Fire department officials will explain what is required of volunteers, how training is provided and the rewards of serving.



Civic Association has created a new Web site

Association Board Members invite residents to take a look at the new web site that has been created with the assistance of Nature Coast Web Design and Marketing.

While the Association has maintained a web site for several years, this handsome new site provides more content and information with a more user-friendly access. The updated site has an entirely new section featuring the many attractions of the Nature Coast with attractive illustrations and descriptions that draw the user's attention to the many advantages of life in Sugarmill Woods.

Go to www.sugarmillcivic.org and "Take a look" today and throughout the year to keep up with your neighbors and immediate community.

"Skip a Week"

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) is asking all residents to give their lawns a break during the cool winter months by limiting watering to every other week.

University of Florida research confirms that grass does not need excessive water in the winter. To the contrary, too much water encourages disease and pests to flourish in the lawns.

One-half to three-quarters of an inch of irrigation every 10-14 days is the recommended amount to maintain healthy lawns. If there is significant rainfall, irrigation is not required.

Residents are urged to turn their irrigation system timers to "Off" every other week.

Sugarmill Woods resident and former Civic Association Board member Ardath Prendergast, who is working with SWFWMD to promote "Skip a Week", reminds citizens that water restrictions remain in place and adds that if every resident skipped one week of irrigation, it could save 1.7 billion gallons of water, especially important in light of the very dry conditions experienced this fall.



Civic Association Continues Its Support of Local Charities

Since September, the Sugarmill Woods Civic Association has made contributions to a number of worthy Citrus County charitable organizations, continuing a long-standing practice of aid to our neighbors.

The Path Shelter of Citrus County was provided funds to donate Thanksgiving meals; Hospice of Citrus County, Key Center Homes and Habitat for Humanity were recipients of Association support this month.

Civic Association Member Drive Underway

The Civic Association Annual Membership drive is underway and over 1200 families have responded, to date.

It's a bargain that for only \$15.00 a year, members receive periodic bulletins and the talents of a number of Board members who devote their time to monitoring government activities and representing the community in public and civic affairs.

Every resident, member or non-member, receives a quarterly newsletter and the annual telephone directory.

A membership application can be found in the front of the telephone directory. Fill it out, send it in and join your neighbors in supporting your community.

2011 Telephone Directory to be Delivered in Late January

The 28th edition of the Sugarmill Woods telephone directory has been submitted to the publisher and is expected to be in the mail toward the end of January.

The directory is produced by the Civic Association and will be delivered to every home in the Sugarmill Woods community without charge. Any questions about the directory or delivery may be addressed to its editor, Norm Wagy, at 382-4462 or nwagy@tampabay.rr.com.

The Florida-Friendly Entrance to Sugarmill Woods

Many of you may have noticed the new Florida-Friendly Garden at the Cypress Boulevard entrance to Sugarmill Woods. The 200 foot by 300 foot garden was a joint project of the Cypress Village Property Owners Association and the Citrus County Water Resources Department. It was recently completed this fall and adds a pleasant view to people entering and leaving the community. It is hoped the garden will inspire homeowners to consider similar ideas for their own landscaping as a matter of water conservation. If you would like more information about Florida Friendly Plantings, please visit the county Florida Yards and Neighborhood web site at www.bocc.citrus.fl.us/commserv/extension/fyn/fyn.

This Newsletter is published by the Sugarmill Woods Civic Association as a community service to all residents of Sugarmill Woods.

Board of Directors

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Vice President ~ Ed Schiller
Treasurer ~ Charlie Hoke
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Board Members

Richard Eisner ~ Richard Hirsch
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Consultants

Skip Christensen ~ Norm Wagy

Newsletter

Content - Norm Wagy
Design - Madelyn McCorkle

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Message from the President

It's time to again reflect on the events and memories of this past year and to be thankful for all of the good things that we have experienced with family and friends. Please take this time to enjoy the holiday season with those close to you.



Looking back on 2010, we held eleven Community Outreach Program Meetings to give residents a chance to meet and discuss issues and concerns with local government officials and community leaders. Some of our guest speakers included a Progress Energy expert on how to conserve energy and save money, Citrus Memorial Health System CEO Ryan Beaty, Citrus County Property Appraiser Geoff Greene, Water Conservation and Management experts Dr. Joan Bradshaw, Audrey Durr, and others, Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsy, Supervisor of Elections Susan Gill, Emergency Operations Center officials, Fire Chief Larry Morabito, Nature Coast EMS CEO Michael Hall, Water Conservation Specialist Debbe Hooper, and Citrus County Director of Operations and Special Projects Gary Maidhof. As part of our effort to keep residents informed, we issued approximately 80 Sugarmill Woods Bulletins.

We worked closely with F.D.S. Disposal to influence the completion of their implementation of residential pick up of recycled materials on a weekly basis for all of their customers throughout Sugarmill Woods. This was completed March 1, 2010.

Water related issues with Citrus County Utilities and the lack of an operational Fire Station in our area, are two major focus items which we will be working on in the coming year.

We want to hear from you to get your input on meeting subjects and speakers of interest as well as any issues and concerns that you might have so we can address them real time. You may contact me via email at President@SugarmillCivic.org or via phone at 352-246-5597. Thank you for your continued support.

Again, best wishes to all of you and your families for a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

*Thank you,
Duane Dueker*