

Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Rich Horvath / Tom Roberts / Tom Cullen

CALL TO ORDER	Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm
ESTABLISH QUORUM	A quorum was established, all three Board members were present.
HOMEOWNERS PRESENT	22 homeowners were represented in person.
PROOF OF NOTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of meeting in compliance: signs were put up at the entrance August 30. • In addition, notice of the meeting was posted on the Cypress Trails Facebook page.
APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES	Rich motioned to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2024 Board meeting, seconded by Tom, and the motion was approved 3-0.
BOARD UPDATE	
Retention Ponds / Grass cutting	<p>All the ponds with the exception of the front three are owned by the homeowners in that area; their lots extend across the pond to the preserve on the other side.</p> <p>There have been some recent complaints about people fishing in these ponds and not respecting that they are private property. In addition, small children have been observed near the ponds; this is a safety concern due to the likely presence of alligators.</p> <p>There have also been a number of recent complaints about the grass cutting around the ponds and at some of the cul-de-sacs. Although owned by residents, the HOA maintains the grass around the ponds and the pond algae control per an agreement made by the original Board. On August 7 Rich and BCM met with the landscaper supervisor to discuss the maintenance issues. Due to lack of manpower we agreed to go to only cutting the grass around the ponds every 2 weeks.</p> <p>When the landscape contract was initially approved it called for cutting the grass every week from April to October and every other week the remaining months (42 cuttings per year). This is more frequent than what other organizations do for similarly located ponds: other Nocatee HOAs and the CDD cut every other week, while the city cuts around its ponds only nine times per year. Until the end of the year, we will work to the following plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas along roadways and paths will be cut every week from April to October and every other week the other months. • Areas around the retention ponds will be cut every other week from April to October and once per month the remainder of the year. <p>Joe Crespi, the General Manager of our landscape company Down to Earth, attended the meeting and provided the following plan to improve the situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A different crew will come in to do the grass cutting • The crew supervisor will remain on site while they are cutting • A mulching mower will be brought in to cut around the ponds to prevent grass being blown into the ponds.

	<p>A number of residents were unhappy with the decision to cut around the ponds less frequently. Rich stated that we would revisit this change at the February Board meeting and determine if we need to change the grass cutting plan and/or landscapers.</p> <p>Residents can cut the grass on their property more frequently if they desire. The areas around the ponds were never intended to be frequently visited or maintained like our lawns; they are buffer areas around the ponds and generally not visible from the road.</p>
Architectural Review Committee	<p>The Committee has been meeting regularly as planned with a continuing significant number of submittals.</p> <p>When the Architectural Review Manual was originally issued prior to 2015 it did not allow rock to be used as mulch. This was changed in 2017 when red and brown rock were added. In later revisions beige and gray rock were added. In the last year several residents added very light-colored rock, but they were able to show that the supplier called it brown river rock. Recently a resident put in very white rock which is not approved. There seems to be more and more interest in the very light color rock. Rich asked the other HOA Presidents if they allow white rock: 11 responded, 5 allow it, 6 do not. For several it depended on the overall color scheme of the neighborhood; beachy yes, earthtone no. Rich then opened it up for discussion to see what the community preferred. Some were ok with the white rock, but most were not. The Board and ARC will take all this input into consideration to make a decision on how to proceed.</p> <p>The Covenants and Architectural Review Manual can be found on the HOA website – cypresstrailshoa.com.</p>
Nocatee HOA Officers Group	<p>This group only had one meeting in May since the last HOA Board meeting. Ten of the 30 HOAs that are now members were represented at the meeting. The major subjects discussed that affect residents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were joined by C.W. Cook, David Ray's replacement. • July 4th fireworks – Discussed final plans for the 2024 show, which was successfully completed on July 3. A total of ten HOAs provided financial support: our contribution was \$1500. • A number of communities are having safety issues with electric bikes; state law treats them like regular bikes. A resident stated that there are some in our neighborhood, but they have not caused a problem. • A number of communities also having problems with fishing in ponds due to trespassing. • Two new communities are being built just north of us: EverRange is 1,000 acres and Estuary 11,047 acres. The road to Timberland Ridge will connect to the Estuary; a resident asked if there would be a gate at the property line – probably not since it is a county road.
Citizens Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC)	<p>Interesting things learned in the recent meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city repaints 5,000 fire hydrants per year. • JFRD is certified to ISO Class 1, which is the highest rating. • JFRD will provide a demonstration of how to use a fire extinguisher for a group upon request. • If you have the type car that is frequently stolen, JSO will provide a free steering wheel lock. • At the July meeting Dr. Christopher Bernier, the new Duval County Superintendent of Schools, gave us a quick summary of how he intends to manage the school district. He was very personable and approachable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The library has a new books by mail service for people not able to visit the library. See their website or call for details.
Financial Update	<p>The community continues to be in great financial shape. Homeowner equity at the end of July 2024 was \$63,020.</p> <p>Rich reviewed the budget for 2025. There are only a few changes from 2024 due to inflation increases. However, this results in a small deficit of \$2,175. We can easily cover this with our reserves so there will be no increase in HOA dues this year. Rich motioned to approve the 2025 budget, seconded by Tom, and the motion was approved 3-0.</p> <p>All homeowners are up to date with their HOA dues.</p>
Neighborhood Watch Committee	<p>The neighborhood has been quiet.</p> <p>On Saturday March 16 the committee members held a community meeting at the Pavilion to share best practices.</p> <p>On Saturday May 5 the sheriff and a large number of other JSO officers and other employees did a walkthrough of a portion of our neighborhood. For many years JSO has been selecting a different neighborhood around the city every 4-6 weeks for this type event. Rich shared with the Assistant Chief the only issues our neighborhood has: speeding, blocking of sidewalks, and cars parking across from one another on the street.</p> <p>Several residents stated that they had experienced several issues when calling 911: 1) it takes a while to explain that we are in Duval County, and 2) slow response time. St. Johns comes first per the reciprocal agreement reached some years ago, but it takes too long for either of them to show up. Rich will ask our City Councilmember what can be done to improve the situation. A resident suggested we put together an information sheet to explain what you need to tell the 911 operator; this committee will work on that. A resident asked if there was an AED at the pavilion; Rich did not think so, but we will ask the CDD if one could be installed.</p>
Communication Committee	<p>Last fall Lisa Kees updated the resident directory and we uploaded it to the Cypress Trails Facebook page. Several people have recently requested an update due to all the new residents, Lisa agreed to do so, and just sent the revised file to Rich.</p> <p>A resident stated that those not on Facebook do not have access to the directory. Rich agreed to put it on the HOA website also.</p> <p>The website is fairly basic so does not have the capability to send out communication like notices of events.</p>
Events Committee	<p>Upcoming events: chili / rib cookoff Oct. 27 and the holiday golf cart parade / cookies with Santa Dec 8. If anyone would like to help support this committee or the events, please discuss with a Board member.</p> <p>We just agreed to have the same company install the holiday lights at the entrance again this season. If a group would like to install more lights on the low bushes, please get with a Board member to discuss.</p> <p>Yard of the month (YOM) – This effort is going very well in 2024. The Board is very thankful to the four ladies that are running it.</p> <p>A resident asked about the annual yard sale. Rich stated that the HOA would provide help and financial support, but someone in the community needed to volunteer to be the leader.</p>
Maintaining the preserve	<p>The HOA is responsible for maintaining the preserve areas under a conservation easement from the Saint Johns River Water Management</p>

	<p>District. Homeowners are not permitted to remove any vegetation in the preserve. However, Rich continues to get reports of clearing taking place. The HOA is authorized to cut down dead trees if they risk damaging a homeowner's property.</p> <p>A resident asked about cutting back the preserve to their property line; this is allowed per state law.</p>
<p>Community Improvements: - JEA Easement Area - Butterfly Path</p>	<p>The butterfly path and garden are looking very good this year.</p> <p>The little library has been very well received.</p>
<p>New Florida Legislation affecting HOAs</p>	<p>At the Feb. 2024 HOA Board meeting Rich briefly reviewed the ten bills the Florida legislature had proposed in 2024 that could impact HOAs. Three bills passed and became effective July 1, 2024. The major changes are:</p> <p>HB 293: Hurricane protection in HOAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOA may not deny an application for the installation of hurricane protection – the only thing that has been requested is a generator and they have all been approved. <p>HB 59: Rules for HOA members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new members must receive a copy of the rules and covenants • When amended, new copies must be provided to all members • This may be satisfied by posting the rules and covenants on a website available to all members and providing notification this has been done. <p>HB 1203: CAMs and HOAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAM must attend at least one Board meeting per year • The CAM must provide their contact information to the members • Official records must be maintained at least 7 years • By Jan. 1, 2025, HOAs with more than 100 parcels must post the following documents on their website or make them available: rules and regulations, contracts, budgets, financial reports, insurance policies, Board meeting notice and agenda 14 days prior to the meeting, any documents to be voted on 7 days prior to the meeting. • Website must be available through the internet and have a protected location only accessible to parcel owners and employees of the HOA. • Upon written request by a member, the association must provide a username and password that will allow access to the protected website location. • The HOA must ensure the information exempt from member inspection is not accessible or posted on the website. • HOA must adopt written rules governing the policy for official record retention. • Any director or CAM that violates a member's right to inspect HOA records may have committed a second-degree misdemeanor. • A person that destroys or fails to maintain required accounting records may be charged with a first-degree misdemeanor. • Anyone that refuses to release or provide official records commits a third-degree felony. • If an HOA receives a subpoena for records from a law enforcement agency, the records must be provided within 5 business days. • A member that makes a written request for what they owe must be provided that information within 15 business days. • Directors must attend a Board Certification course. Directors of less than 2,500 homes must also complete 4 hours of continuing education annually. • Kickbacks are a third-degree felony.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ARC must “reasonably and equitably” enforce on all parcel owners the architectural standards. • The ARC may not limit or place requirements on the interior of a structure that is not visible from the road or an adjacent lot. • The ARC may not require review and approval of plans for air-conditioning or heating systems if the system is not visible from the road or an adjacent lot. • If the ARC denies a member’s request for “the construction of a structure or other improvement on a parcel”, they must provide written notice stating the rule that was used to deny the request. • Vegetable gardens and clotheslines cannot be restricted if they are not visible from the road or adjacent lots. • Fines and enforcement – fines may not be imposed for leaving your garbage can out within 24 hours of the designated time limit or leaving holiday decorations up for one week longer than allowed. • Fraudulent voting is a first-degree misdemeanor. • The HOA may not prohibit the parking of personal vehicles, including pickup trucks, in the owner’s driveway or the street. This does not apply to commercial vehicles. • The HOA may not prohibit a homeowner from using a contractor that is not a preferred vendor of the HOA or that does not have a professional or occupational license. • Payment of assessments – Compound interest may not accrue on assessments that are not paid when due. • First responder vehicles – The provision that allows law enforcement to park their vehicles in the community was expanded to apply to all first responders. <p>The following change has been made to address the new laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCM has set up a portal that will provide access to each homeowner’s account and contain all the HOA documents that are required to be available to homeowners. The portal is password protected and each homeowner must request access if they desire to use it. Information on how to access the portal will be provided with the distribution of these minutes.
OPEN FORUM	<p>Signboard at front – discussed at Feb. meeting, cost range is \$900 to \$1,800. Rich asked if residents were interested in us installing one and most were, so we will look into it.</p> <p>Renters – Rich has received a few complaints about renters. Some HOAs are changing their covenants to only allow a percentage of homes to be rented. The only rule that we currently have is that the rental must be for at least seven months.</p> <p>Sidewalk shaving – 54 locations with steps that could cause someone to trip have been identified to the city and they have agreed to fix them.</p> <p>Road damage – A resident stated that the road in front of their house was severely cracked and needed repair. Rich was aware of a pothole in a different location and agreed to submit requests to the city for repair.</p> <p>One of the Board members reminded residents of the need to trim your trees near the sidewalk so that they are not in the way of walkers.</p> <p>Next meeting in February – Board election, need volunteers to run.</p>
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm