

Summer is almost here!



GENTLE WOODS HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

Gentle Woods

Board's Message...by Elizabeth Smith

Summer is almost here and the Board is very glad to see that there have been many improvements in the neighborhood over the past few months. Many people have begun to fix their lawns, we've seen a flurry of homes being pressure washed, and just a general attitude of improving homes has flourished. The goal of this year's board has been to first invigorate all homeowners to take pride in our community and get everyone up to a level of excellence in how we are seen.

Secondly it is our goal to make sure that all homeowners are treated fairly and uniformly when dealing with the covenants. While this has not been an easy road to travel and as a result the Board has decided to change to a better management company on June 15th to ensure everyone is inspected fairly. We believe this change will greatly improve this community and will help drive home the fact our



community has covenants regarding the appearance of everyone's home and if you choose not to follow our guiding documents then the enforcement allowed by in the covenants and Florida law will take place. Our goal with enforcement has

never been to fine homeowners and profit, it is more a way for us to bring problems to ones attention and get a plan together to fix it within a homeowner's means and timeframe.

The other area where the new management company will help us is in the area of collection of annual assessments.

The new company has a tremendous track record of providing a steadfast and fair collection process which will ensure all owners will be treated fairly. No matter how this item has been handled in the past, this is the most important work for the association for the entire year. We will send each of you more details as June 15th gets closer.

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2008 Collections Status...



As of this newsletter, all accounts with past-due amounts have been turned over for collection through the Association's attorney.

One area most owners do not understand is the application of payments received. As per Florida Statute 720.3085 the interest rate charged on past due accounts is 18 percent and the late fee is the greater of \$25.00 or 5 percent of the amount due. Additionally, any payment received shall first be

applied to any interest accrued, then to any administrative late fee, then to any costs (certified mail, postage, duplicating, etc.) and reasonable attorney's fees incurred in collection, and then to the delinquent assessment. This paragraph applies notwithstanding any restrictive endorsement, designation, or instruction placed on or accompanying a payment.

This means all the up-front fees are collected first before any portion of your payment is applied to your dues.

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HOMEOWNERS' MEETING:

MAY 28th @ 6:30 P.M.

At Webb-Wesconnette

Regional Library on 103rd St

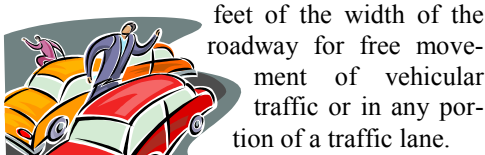
Yard Sales, Leash Laws, Junk Vehicles & Street Parking...

The Association has received numerous inquiries about reporting violations of excessive yard sales (more than 10 per year), pets roaming free, or vehicle parking issues. Since some of these are violations of city codes and not areas the Association has jurisdiction over, we may ask you to call the city's One-Call center at (904) 630-CITY (2489) and report these matters.



The city will have code enforcement inspectors look into the situation. They will also give you an incident number to track their response to your inquiry (which is kept confidential). To help you, here are a few excerpts from the city codes on these areas (you can look up the full text of the codes at <http://www.municode.com>).

Sec. 804.1004. Parking not to obstruct traffic: (a) No person shall park a vehicle upon a street in such a manner or under such conditions as to leave available less than ten feet of the width of the roadway for free movement of vehicular traffic or in any portion of a traffic lane.



Sec. 462.301. General. (a) Animals shall not be kept on property in a manner that causes any one or more of the following: creates unsanitary conditions; is a source of infestation by insects or rodents; creates physical conditions that endanger the health or safety of humans, that are detrimental to property values, or that tend to degrade the appearance of a neighborhood.

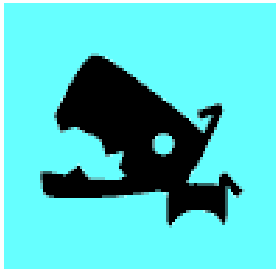
Sec. 462.302. Noise. (a) It shall be unlawful for the owner, or any person having temporary custody, of an animal or animals to allow the animal(s), to bark, meow, whine, howl, or to make other sounds common to the species, persistently or continuously for a period of 30 minutes or longer when every animal is not contained within an enclosure sufficient to baffle loud noises.

Sec. 462.303. Animals at-large prohibited. (a) No owner of any dog or cat shall permit the dog or cat to be at-large.

Sec. 462.304. Habitual nuisance. (a) It shall be unlawful for the owner, or any person having



temporary custody, of an animal or animals to permit the animal(s), either willfully or through failure to exercise due care or control, to commit a nuisance by running at-large habitually; by chasing or running after vehicles or persons habitually; by trespassing upon public or private school grounds habitually; by trespassing upon private property habitually and interfering with the reasonable use and enjoyment of the property; by barking habitually, or by making other objectionable animal noises habitually; or by doing any other thing habitually which is so offensive as to create a nuisance. (b) For the purpose of this Section, "habitually" means at least two separate occurrences within a time period of no more than one month; except that barking habitually, or making other objectionable animal noises habitually, means making the sound persistently or continuously for at least 30 minutes occurring at least three separate times within a period of no more than eight hours.



Sec. 462.305. Destruction of property and biting. (a) No owner of an animal shall permit the animal, either willfully or through failure to exercise due care or control, to destroy or damage the property of another including, but not limited to, the unprovoked biting, attacking or wounding of another person's animal. (b) No owner of an animal shall permit the animal to bite, attack or wound a human.

Sec. 462.307. Requirement to confine female dog or cat in heat. (a) It shall be unlawful and punishable by a fine of \$250 for the owner of a female dog or cat in heat to permit or allow it to be upon the public street or in a public place unless restrained by leash, tether or chain and under the physical control of the owner. The owner of a female dog or cat in heat shall, at all times, keep it securely confined on private property and inside a secure building or secure enclosure having a secure top and bottom attached to all sides so as to prevent conception.

Sec. 518.451. Responsibilities of owners and occupants. **Cleanliness.** No owner or other person shall occupy or let to another person for occupancy a property unless it and the premises are clean, sanitary, fit for occu-

pancy and comply with all applicable requirements of the city and the state.

(h) **Care of premises.**- No owner or occupant of a property shall utilize the premises of the property for the open storage of junk, non-drivable motorized vehicles or derelict property, building rubbish or debris or similar items. It shall be the duty and responsibility of every owner or occupant to keep the premises of property clean and to remove from the premises all junk, non-drivable motorized vehicles, derelict property, building rubbish, debris or similar items.



A b a n - doned or junk vehicle means a vehicle that does not bear a license plate, or if the displayed license plate is invalid, unless said vehicle is stored within a completely enclosed building or as defined in Section 656.1601, Ordinance Code, which: (a) Threatens or endangers public safety or welfare; (b) **Creates a blighting influence upon the neighborhood where the vehicle rests**; or (c) Is, or may reasonably become, infested or inhabited by rodents, vermin or animals, or may furnish a breeding place for rodents, vermin or animals. **Inoperable** when referring to a vehicle means incapable of being immediately driven, moved or pulled in the manner for which it was intended or designed.

(k) **Weeds, grass and other flora.** Occupants of property shall be responsible for keeping the premises free from the excessive growth of weeds, grass and other flora.

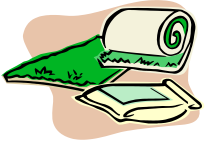


Deterioration shall mean the condition or appearance of a building or structure, characterized by holes, breaks, rot, crumbling, cracking, spalling, peeling, rusting, or other evidence of physical decay or neglect, excessive use, or lack of maintenance. **Good state of repair** shall mean and be a standard of maintenance that renders a building safe, serviceable, habitable, and possessed of a neat and orderly appearance.

Good working condition shall mean the item is fully operable for the use for which it was intended.

Infestation means the presence, within or around a dwelling, of insects, rodents or other pests.

Proper management practices that encourage a dense, thriving turf are the best method of weed control. Healthy turf shades the soil so sunlight can't reach weed seeds ready to germinate. A thick turf also minimizes the physical space available for weeds to become established. There are several management practices that will promote a healthy, dense grass.



Proper Turf grass Selection

Proper management begins with selection of the best turf species or variety for a particular area. For example, heavily shaded areas will support only a few turf grass species. This results in thin, weak turf that is very susceptible to weed invasion. Good grass choices for shady conditions would be certain cultivars of St. Augustine grass, zoysia grass, and to a lesser degree, centipede grass.

Proper Cultural Practices Proper fertilization, watering, mowing, and control of other pests are required to produce a dense turf that will prevent weed infestation. If turf is over-or under-watered, over-or under-fertilized, or mowed too low or too infre-

quently, the turf is weakened and cannot compete with weeds. Damaged areas resulting from using unsharpened mowers increase time needed for turf recovery, allowing for weed invasion. It is very important to understand that weeds don't create a void, they fill a void.

Sanitation It is extremely important to prevent the introduction of weeds into lawn areas. A good practice is to wash off mowers and trimmers used in weed-infested areas before mowing or trimming in weed-free areas. Similarly, rototillers should be thoroughly cleaned prior to and after using to minimize dispersal of weed seeds found in the soil. Yard clippings that contain weeds should be properly disposed of or composted to reduce the possibility of unwanted contamination.

Watering Your objective when irrigating is to get the maximum amount of water to the root zone without over-irrigating. In most Florida soils, this is somewhere between 1/2 to 1 inch of water. Sandy soils will generally wet to a depth of 12 inches for each inch of water applied. This will target the majority of the root system and encourage more rooting at lower depths. In heavier soils, as are often found in north Florida, less water may be adequate

and you might only apply 1/2 to 3/4 inch. In parts of southeast Florida, or wherever there may be hard limestone less than 12 inches below ground, you may also need less water. With less soil, there is no point in trying to encourage deeper rooting.



Watering under Drought Conditions

When watering restrictions limit the frequency with which we can irrigate, some people are tempted to irrigate to the point of run-off. This should never be done, as we are wasting water, encouraging disease and weed problems, and creating potential pollution problems. This is not only wasteful but may also damage or kill your lawn. Rain sensors, which are mandatory on all new irrigation systems, should always be functional and in place.

If you haven't been to the University of Florida's Turfgrass site for Homeowners, we highly recommend a visit. The web address is: <http://yourfloridalawn.ifas.ufl.edu/index.html>

They have a variety of helpful resources for homeowners and have a service for a fee of \$75.00 which provides a diagnosis of turf problems. Applications are available online.

Top 10 Issues in Our Neighborhood...

The following list identifies the Top Ten issues that have been identified in our neighborhood:

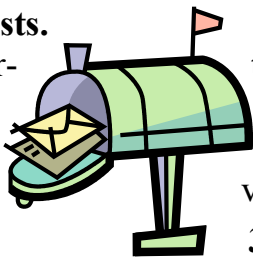
1. Lawns in need of maintenance.
2. Trash Cans and recycle bins not properly stowed behind a fence or in the garage.
3. House exterior in need of repainting.
4. House exterior in need of cleaning.
5. Lack of ARC approval for exterior painting (Even if painting your house the same color).
6. Lack of ARC approval for Construction Projects.
7. Fences in need of repair.
8. Disabled vehicles.
9. Vehicle maintenance being done in excess of the 4 hours that are authorized.
10. Fences not installed as per the governing documents.

Please take the time to read the covenants and restrictions concerning the above items. They are available for review online at www.gentlewoods.org.

How to Get Off Junk Mail...

1. Get off the lists.

Go to the Mail Preferences Service registry of the Direct marketing Association (dmachoice.org) and click "remove my name from those lists" Online registration is free and good for 3 years.



2. Don't fill out registration forms. (unless you want recall alerts). These lists are used for direct mail advertising.

3. Squash preapproved credit offers. Register at optoutprescreen.com or call toll free 888-567-8688, both methods cover you for 5 years.

4. Remain anonymous. Super loyalty cards can generate unsolicited mail, so sign up for cards using a pseudonym like Jane or Jim Shopper, with no address, to preserve anonymity.

5. Stay vigilant. Buying online is the main culprit for catalog overload. Go online to catalogchoice.org and opt out.

Architectural Changes & the Need for Building Permits...

From time to time we get inquiries pertaining to the requirement for building permits to make improvements on a property. Every homeowner association we know of requires association approval through an architectural review process.

In some associations the Board of Directors performs this service because they do not have an independent architectural review committee (ARC). In others they have a formalized process an owner wishing to make an improvement must follow before they can begin work.

While most of the time either of these processes works well, the problem comes about if an owner forgets to obtain the necessary approvals before starting work or they have a contractor scheduled and need the approval expedited.

Most, if not all, associations have 30 to 45 days to review the application and take action to either approve or disapprove the planned modification. While inconvenient to the owner who forgot to obtain the required approvals, the process is in place so the association has the necessary time to render a decision after reviewing the submitted plans.

The other area that often causes confusion is the requirement by an owner to obtain a building permit and provide a copy with the ARC application. The Association is not responsible for determining if a modification requires a permit and in fact the ARC form states that an approval by the Association does not negate the owner's responsibility to

comply with local, state or federal requirements.

As a guide, here is an excerpt from the City of Jacksonville's Planning & Zoning Section's Municipal Code 320.408 on improvements which do not usually require permits: **(f)** The following work on a single-family residence may be performed **without** plan review or inspection by the Building Inspection Division, although the Building Inspection Division shall retain the right and option to perform such random inspections as may be deemed necessary to show compliance with the Florida Building Code:



- (1) Installation of water softeners.
- (2) Installation of electric or solar water heaters.
- (3) Roofing repairs or reroofing not exceeding \$5,000 in total cost.
- (4) Decks not exceeding 30 inches in height, 250 square feet in area and \$5,000 in total cost.
- (5) Installation or replacement of siding not exceeding 1,000 square feet in area or \$5,000 in total cost.
- (6) Replacement of light fixtures, switches, ceiling fans and receptacles.
- (7) Window replacement not exceeding \$5,000 in total cost.
- (8) Re-piping not exceeding \$5,000 in total cost.
- (9) Installation of electric fireplaces.
- (10) Construction or installation of sheds not exceeding 150 square feet or \$5,000 in total cost.
- (11) Replacement of existing HVAC

equipment, the installation cost of which does not exceed \$5,000. This subsection does not include liquid propane, natural gas, or oil source equipment.

(g) The following work on a single-family residence **shall require** plan review only by the Building Inspection Division; provided, however, that the Building Inspection Division shall retain the right and option to perform such random inspections as may be deemed necessary to establish compliance with the Florida Building Code:

- (1) Sheds between 151 and 250 square feet in area and not exceeding \$5,000 in total cost.
 - (2) Screen enclosures not exceeding 250 square feet in area or \$5,000 in total cost.
 - (3) Open carports not exceeding 500 square feet in area or \$5,000 in total costs.
 - (4) Decks exceeding 30 inches in height but not exceeding \$5,000 in cost.
- (h)** The exemptions granted in subsections **(f)** and **(g)** shall not relieve the owner or contractor from their duty to comply with all applicable provisions of the Florida Building Code. (Ord. 2001-1160-E, § 1; Ord. No. 2004-711-E, § 3; Ord. 2006-101-E, § 1)

Planned improvements or modifications that fall outside these specific exemptions should be an indicator to you that a permit is required, or an application made to have the city determine if one is required.

Many vendors will tell an owner that a permit is not required, however, that property owner is still responsible for determining if one is required and if required, ensuring one is obtained.

Don't get burned, always check to see if a permit is required!

Cappuccino Cake Brownies...by Betty Schofield

- 1 tablespoon instant coffee granules
 - 2 teaspoons boiling water
 - 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
 - 1/4 cup of butter softened
 - 1/2 cup of sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1/2 cup all purpose flour
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- In a small bowl, dissolve coffee in water;

set aside. In a microwave—safe bowl or sauce pan over low heat, melt chocolate chips.

In a small mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Beat in eggs, melted chocolate and coffee mixture. Combine flour and cinnamon; add to the cream mixture and mix well.

Put into a greased 8—inch square baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25—30 min-

utes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool before cutting into squares. **Yield: 16 bars.**



Board's Comments Continued from Page 1...

The Board would also like to ask everyone to respect the Board's privacy. We are all volunteers and have a professional company running the day-to-day operation of the association. Please do us a favor and contact them FIRST before you chase us down on the street or knock on our door. Everything you bring to their attention IS brought to our attention. In fact if you e-mail complaints, suggestions, etc to board@gentlewoods.org the Board and the new management company will work on getting you an answer that is accurate. We have also uploaded a "Request for Action" form on our new website page at www.gentlewoods.org. That will take you to our new management company's website where you can click on our community's link. There you will find all of our governing documents, plat maps and other information you may need, including this newsletter. This new line of communication will greatly help those with out of town family members or for those who have their property rented and want to keep your tenants up to date.

Lastly the Board will be discussing and voting on implementation of uniform enforcement procedures at the upcoming May 28th homeowners' meeting. This is necessary for the Association to comply with the new guidelines found in

Florida Statute 720.305 that mandates an owner be given a 14-day period to request a hearing in front of a fine committee before implementation of a fine for non-compliance with the covenants. The Board needs to set up these new procedures, publish them and then allow a 60-day transition period before the new procedures begin.

Please come to the next homeowners' meeting so you can hear what the Board is considering. We also still need your help on the Newsletter, Activities and Beautification committees. If you can serve, please come to the meeting or e-mail us at the e-mail address below and we will get back in touch with you.

Remember, from this point forward, if you want to get in contact with the Board of Directors, please use the e-mail address: board@gentlewoods.org as we will be monitoring this e-mail and should be able to respond more rapidly.

Thanks as always, your Board of Directors,

Elizabeth Smith, President,

Gerry Bathe, Vice President

& Lena Williams, Secretary/Treasurer

Questions & Answers...

Q1: Is there any way we could list people in the neighborhood who provide professional services on the community website?

A1: Great Idea! If you will e-mail us at board@gentlewoods.org we will review them and have them posted on our web page and published in the next newsletter. It won't be an official endorsement of the service but may be a help for neighbors to help neighbors.

Q2: I got a letter about pressure washing the mildew off the side of my house, doesn't the Association have better things to do than to harass me for such a silly thing?

A2: Maintenance of your property is a requirement covered in the governing documents. While it may seem silly to you, we are not being selective on the areas being looked at during the monthly inspections. Mold and mildew growing on the sides of your house does create a negative image of the community and does affect property values negatively.

Q3: What can I do about an owner who lives next door to me that must be breeding dogs? The noise is overwhelming at times and the smell from their back yard is terrible.

A3: Great question. We have included the City codes with respect to animal nuisance problems on page 2. The best way to get action is to either file a notarized Affidavit form or call the city's One-Call Center at (904) 630-CITY. The City will send an animal control officer to the property to investigate. Remember, be very specific on your complaint. If the smell is that noticeable, the City

will issue a citation to the property owner and if they are running a breeding operation the City will cite them for that also. In addition, as per our governing documents an owner can only have 2 pets.

Q4: What is being done about the house down the street from me that appears to be running a repair business out of their garage? On the weekends this owner has dozens of cars parked in front of their house and I see the owner making repairs.

A4: If you see this type of activity, call the City's One-Call Center and report the matter. The City's Code Enforcement office will investigate the situation as it is illegal to run any repair-type business in a residential neighborhood, especially one that can generate hazardous materials. It is also a violation of our governing documents to run a business out of your home that generates customer traffic like daycare centers, on-site sales, equipment repairs or beauty shops to name a few.

Q5: How do I get a street light fixed in front of my house, it's been out for quite a while?

A5: This is an easy one to answer. Call JEA's hotline at (904) 665-6000 or go online to www.jea.com and click under the "Report a Service Problem Tab" and then fill out the "Report a Streetlight Problem" form.

If you have general questions that you feel may affect everyone or a specific question you want answered, e-mail them to the Board, they will try and answer them in the next issue.

Improvements Ahead...

Entry Lighting—The Association awarded a contract to have the lighting replaced at the front entrance. As many of you have noticed, the lights have been vandalized numerous times and we hope this new in-ground lighting system will be more resistant to damage and destruction. We would also like to make a plea to anyone who has knowledge of the individuals who have been vandalizing the sign. The association intends on prosecuting anyone who is caught destroying the sign. We will also seek monetary damages from those caught to repay the association for the monies expended to repair the damage. If you know of any information that will help catch these perpetrators, please call the police. You can remain anonymous.

Playground—The Association is going to make a formal written inquiry to the developer of Gentle Woods to see if they plan on installing a playground many of you have said was promised when you purchased your home. We will report back to you once we receive a reply from them.

Drainage Canals—Ahead of hurricane season, we are going to contact the City to see if they can send a crew back out to clear the drainage canals which have become clogged with weeds and cattails. The Board feels this area has to be maintained more frequently than once a year, especially if this is the main drainage for the neighborhood.



Truck Parking on Morse Avenue—The Association intends on seeking help from the City's Code Enforcement Division to see if we can stop the tractor-trailer parking across from the entrance to the neighborhood. These large trucks create an unsightly appearance, are potential blind spots for children crossing the street and they are damaging the shoulder of the road. We hope the City can help us get these trucks ticketed and towed.

Lakes— We will be contacting every owner whose lot backs to the lakes and asking them to cut their lawn down to the water line as required in the Covenants. The Board wants to ensure these areas, especially areas behind fences, are being properly maintained and to improve the view!

Accomplishments Already Made— Here are a few things many of you might not know we've been able to accomplish: (1) Installed Deed Restricted Community signs at the entrance (2) Installed Speed Limit signs (3) Hired a new lawn maintenance service (4) Ensured the City cleaned most of 118th street per our request (5) Sought and received a \$9,800.00 refund from city for the damage they did to our trees when they cleared the easement areas. We will be getting new ones installed so be watching for the restoration of the easement area as you come into the neighborhood.

Gentle Woods Homeowners' Assn, Inc.
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Return Service Requested