

GHCA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

An issue that has been part of life at Grand Harbor for over 30 years has recently become quite divisive and needs to be addressed. I am referring to the reality that pedestrian and golf cart traffic encounter each other on the main sidewalks between the Grand Harbor Clubhouse and the Harbor Course and practice areas.

For reasons that I will leave to psychologists to explain, but which certainly include the invisible effects of long term Covid isolation, in the past few months multiple incidents have occurred between pedestrians and golf cart drivers, sometimes leading to anger and hot exchanges of words. Let's all try to take the emotion out of these encounters by focusing on the facts and on the behavior that used to be standard and which needs to return.

First fact: In general, pedestrians have the right of way on sidewalks, but in Grand Harbor we have sidewalks that double as cart paths so pedestrians and golf cart drivers must share these paths in a way that assures safety to all. As a reminder all bicycles should be ridden on the street except for small children.

Second fact: Golf carts are required to stay on cart paths and sidewalks and are not permitted to be on streets in Grand Harbor. Driving golf carts back and forth between the Clubhouse and the Harbor Course has always required pedestrians and golf carts to pass each other on sidewalks safely and amicably.

Third fact: Our GHCA sidewalk repair work these past couple of months required golf carts to veer into the street to get around the sidewalk repair areas on an exceptional basis. That was temporary and necessary, but should not be done now that the sidewalk work has been concluded. In addition to the standing policy that golf carts cannot be driven on Grand Harbor streets, GH Club golf carts are not equipped for road use and are not insured for whatever might happen on roads.

Fourth fact: Given those first three facts, courtesy, respect and carefulness have always been required when walkers and carts meet on these sidewalks. That is still true today and perhaps needs emphasizing now more than ever before.

The first obligation is for golf cart drivers to slow way down when approaching pedestrians on the sidewalk, whether coming up behind them or face to face. Please keep in mind that many walkers have music or books playing in their ears, or have natural hearing loss and do not know the cart is approaching, especially from behind.

The second obligation is for walkers to move to the side and let golf carts pass by slowly when they become aware of the cart approaching.

The third and most important obligation is to remember that the pedestrians or golf cart riders that you are encountering are very likely your neighbors, or relatives/friends of your neighbors. Be nice. Pass each other the right way...with a smile, a wave, a nod. Just be nice.

Last point on this subject: please pass the above message along to your visiting family and friends and to renters if you rent your home. We have a big reprieve from these encounters due to the renovations that will keep the Harbor Course closed until October, thus dramatically reducing golf cart traffic on the sidewalks. Nevertheless, every one cart and one walker encounter on the sidewalk needs to be treated the same way, with mutual patience and courtesy.

On a decidedly more upbeat note, the transition of the GHCA Board of Directors from developer control to resident control will come to its pre-determined conclusion this Fall when the remaining two Developer-appointed Directors are required to step down, and two new Resident Directors will be elected and will join the GHCA Board. At that time the Board will be comprised of 5 Resident Directors.

In order to prepare for this transition step a Nominating Committee is in the process of being formed. This committee will prepare for the election by: soliciting a list of candidates from the HOA Boards; by screening the candidates; by developing the final slate of nominees, and by conducting the election itself. More details on both the nomination and election process will be forthcoming once the Nominating Committee is fully in place.

FINANCE/TREASURER'S REPORT:

During this past month, the Finance Committee has worked diligently to finish a detailed financing request package and to solicit term sheets from local/regional banks for financing short term working capital needs plus loans to finance long term capital projects, such as the bridge.

To date, we have received two competitive proposals from two active bank lenders in our local market. A third bank is currently reviewing our financing request package and we expect a response shortly. Each of these three banks has extensive experience lending to Property Owners Associations. Our goal is to select a lender, receive a commitment letter and close the financing by the middle of July.

AR CHOICE MANAGEMENT/FACILITIES REPORT:

#2 Bridge: We have met with the principal contractor, Cobalt Construction, on site to plan both the phasing of the project and the parking and staging needs for the project. All utility providers have been advised and we have updated the relocation proposals. In addition, the proposed contracts for engineering support and construction have been received and have been sent to our legal counsel for review and revision. The two critical path items to be completed before the project starts are the legal review and the closing of financing arrangements to fund the project (see the Finance Committee Report on the status of the loan we are seeking).

Sidewalks: The last stretch of sidewalk to replace the asphalt cart path on Via Marbella was poured on June 24th. We will now double back and replace the section of new sidewalk that cracked and this will complete the sidewalk project for this year.

Asphalt Repairs: Asphalt repairs are now near completion. However, on Via Marbella we had just completed a large asphalt repair to the roadway, and a water main break that night washed out the road and ruined the fresh asphalt. We were actually making asphalt repairs to the road right where a water main break had previously caused damage to the road. It pushed water and sand under the asphalt causing the road to heave and ripple. The cost of all repairs to this area will be paid by Indian River County Utilities. That road was closed for two days for the repair to the water line, but is now back open to traffic. There is still more asphalt to be removed, and then the road base will be repaired. Once completed, our paving contractor will put down fresh asphalt at the County's expense.

Lakes and Lake Levels: Our lake levels have been improving with the seasonal afternoon storms we are finally getting. However, we are still well below our average rainfall for the year. As a result, we are keeping our watering restrictions in place for now. Fortunately, with the afternoon storms there is less need to water as often. All of our communities and individual homes need to keep their rain switches working and active. The lakes are not full yet, and we need to conserve water for future dry periods.

53rd Street Gate: As many of you already know, the old yellow bar 53rd Street gate broke down again and a decision was taken to remove it entirely, and to rely upon the other North Gate (just outside The Reserve entrance) which has now been on permanent 24/7 active barcode mode for several months. Removing the old gate required us to make significant improvements to the 360 degree visibility, and therefore to the safety, of all the golf carts and vehicles that are active at that intersection. So far we have accomplished the following:

- The old guardhouse shed has been removed.

- The gate arms and barcode reader have been removed
- Some of the fencing and plant material has been removed to improve line of sight for the intersection of cars and golf carts.
- Sod has been laid where shrubs and fencing were removed.
- New posts and appropriate signs have been ordered and will be placed as soon as they arrive.
- The old worn-out asphalt rumble strips (mini speed bumps) will be removed and new full speed bumps will be installed in both directions (entering and exiting the community).
- The entire area will be repainted with new reflective traffic paint.

Please note that once the work in this area is complete, vehicular traffic will no longer have to come to a complete stop. All vehicle drivers will need to be aware to slow way down at this golf cart crossing. Hence the installation of full speed bumps. Golf cart traffic will continue to be required to stop at the crossing for their own safety.

LEGAL REPORT:

We have just received anticipated notices to dismiss from the Developer and Developer-Appointed Directors. Counsel is preparing to respond.

CABLE COMMITTEE:

The Cable Committee is wrapping up its search for a new cable contract to replace the current one with Comcast that is expiring. The committee's findings and recommendation will be forwarded to the Board in the next few weeks.

SECURITY REPORT:

Security is working on an internet program through which residents will be able to enter their guests' information for the guardhouse. The system would avoid phone delays and would provide confirmation that the information was received. Once available, residents who wish to use this program will need to provide their email address and approval.

The current Securitas Post Orders for officer interactions at the gatehouses are being reviewed. We are still operating under the Temporary Post Orders that were instituted at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and we are preparing to return soon to the Permanent Post Orders.

We have had discussions with both the Marina management and with the Freedom Boat Club regarding the number of outstanding barcodes. The Marina has been very cooperative in providing updated tenant lists, and we are in the process of evaluating future guidelines for barcode use by Marina tenants, vendors and guests.

The removal of the former 53rd Street Guardhouse “Shack” necessitated reconfiguring some of the video equipment. You may notice some additional equipment repositioning for optimal coverage. We are also in the process of analyzing potential new video equipment with additional features.

We would like to remind residents that ALL vendors and contractors need a barcode before they can enter the community. We have had some excellent suggestions on how to update our procedures, which we are currently reviewing, but this policy has been in place for many years. Please notify all your vendors and contractors IN ADVANCE OF THEIR FIRST ARRIVAL that they will be required to obtain a barcode for the vehicle in which they are entering the community, if they do not already have one. They will be redirected across the street to the Barcode office, and the cost of the barcode is \$15 per year per vehicle. Thank you.

FINAL NOTE:

In last month’s newsletter I closed with an open invitation for any of our 1,200+ residents who had connections in high places to help us get some big rain quickly. I don’t know who had the right connection, or whether it was the result of prayer, magic, conjuring or dancing, but a big thank you is in order. The “rainy season” started a month later than usual, but the past ten days have seen some heavy rainfall and lots of spotty rain. Now it just needs to keep going a while longer to fill our ponds completely. Thanks for your help.

Jeff Caso, President