



VINTAGE GRAND CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER #15

The Vintage Grand Condominium Association Newsletter

The newsletter is a team effort of the Vintage Grand Board of Directors and reflects the input and review of each of us. Our goal is to provide key information through this newsletter on a biweekly basis. More time sensitive information will be communicated by President's Letters or owner update e-blasts between newsletters.

Key Goals and Priorities for 2018

1. Continuous progress on the remediation of buildings
2. Renewed focus on the care and maintenance of grounds and common elements.
3. Proficient and professional management of the day-to-day operations of our association
4. Open two-way communication with owners

1. Building Remediation Update

Work Completion Status – First Five Buildings

- Project Close-out: Elias Brothers' project close-out paperwork and warranty documents were submitted and approved in early October. The association has made its final payment on the Elias contract, including release of the retainage balance. Elias has left the property.
- Grading and Landscape Restoration Work: Westcoast Landscaping will begin grading and landscaping restoration work around building 4 during the week of October 29. They will then proceed to perform similar work around buildings 19, 22 and 28. 250 -300 flowering shrubs and shrubs with colorful leaves selected by the Westcoast designer/horticulturalist will be planted at each building.
- Leaf Guards on Rain Gutters: Glenn Aitelli will be meeting with representatives of Supreme Seamless Gutters on October 22 to work out the schedule for installing rain gutter leaf guards on the five remediated buildings.

Next Phases of Remediation (remainder of 2018 through end of 2020)

- Project Schedule: Work progress continues to track two to three weeks behind the 9-11-2018 bar chart schedule that is currently posted in the owners' section of the Vintage Grand website. R. L. James will be furnishing updated schedules next week showing detailed milestones for both of the buildings that are currently in the process of being remediated. Those schedule documents will be e-blasted to owners and posted to the Vintage Grand website as soon as they are available.
- Building 14 Status:
 - Elevations D and E (lakeside walls of units 1414, 1424, 1412 and 1422): Plywood sheathing and Tyvex installation work has been completed and all of the new windows have been installed. The installation of black felt and stucco accessories (screen lathe, weep screeds, control joints., etc.,) is now in progress. Application of the first coat of stucco cement should take place during the week of October 29.
 - Elevation F (west gabled end, side walls of units 1411, 1412, 1421 and 1422): Wood framing repairs, installation of hurricane straps/bracing and the application of wood preservative and

termite repellent have been completed. Installation of plywood sheathing and Tyvek building wrap is in progress. During the week of October 22, the new windows will be installed and work will begin to prepare this end of the building for stucco application.

- Elevations A and B (parking lot side, front windows of units 1411, 1421, 1413 and 1423): Stucco demolition and damage discovery work is in progress across the front of the building.
- Building 25 Status:
 - Elevation H (east gabled end, side walls of units 2511, 2512, 2521 and 2522): Stucco demolition and damage discovery work have been completed. Extensive damage was found on this end of the building. Wood framing repairs and the installation of hurricane straps/bracing are now in progress.
 - Elevations A and B (parking lot side, front windows of units 2511, 2521, 2513, 2523, 2515 and 2525): Stucco demolition and damage discovery work is complete on Elevation A and is in progress on Elevation B.
- Other 2018 Work Components: A construction permit for interior attic truss repairs in buildings 4, 17, 19, 22 and 28 has been approved by Sarasota County. That work will begin in December. Access to units will be required for this work. A permit application for planned repairs to the balconies of units 727, 1324 and 1824 (living room balcony) is still under review by Sarasota County.

2. Grounds and Common Elements Update

Reminder – Pool Rules

- Regrettably, unacceptable behaviour continues to be an issue at the two pools. This is a reminder that dogs are not allowed in the pool area and no food, drink, alcoholic beverages or glass containers are permitted. The pool rules are posted in the pool enclosures for all to see.
- Please do not hesitate to call Signal 88 security at 941-217-7300 if you witness any unruly behaviour. We suggest you enter this number into your phone so it's always at hand.

New – Security Cameras

- In our last newsletter we mentioned frequent repairs due to vandalism. And unacceptable behaviour at the pools persists. At the October 12 Board meeting the Directors reviewed proposals from two companies (a third company did not respond) and a motion was passed to purchase a security camera system from Digital Age Technologies at a cost of \$7,400.
- Cameras will be installed at the front and rear pools, garbage and recycling area, laundry and playground. The system features strong facial recording capability and a monitoring system which will be installed in the office.
- The presence of surveillance cameras has reduced unacceptable behaviour at other communities. It is cost prohibitive to have the cameras monitored 24 hours a day, but staff will have the ability to monitor the locations while in the office, and review footage of incidents after the fact. Charges for damages and fines would be levied to the unit owner, as Vintage Grand's contractual relationship is with the unit owner. Our staff is able to identify virtually all residents as a copy of photo id is taken at the time of rental or purchase.

Landscaping Contract Change

- Our Association pays landscaping company Oakley Landscaping \$105,300 annually to mow the grass, maintain the grounds and continuously inspect the irrigation system. This is one of our largest vendor relationships, and has been in place since January 2017. Oakley's performance has been disappointing -- weeds are overlooked and the Association must point out weeds and request removal, rather than Oakley proactively doing this. In response to one recent request Oakley sprayed the flower/shrub beds in such a way that the bottoms of many of the shrubs were killed.

Similarly, irrigation system inspections are haphazard. Despite several meetings with management and promises to improve, the results have not been evident.

- When the Association sought proposals for the landscaping restoration work for the first 5 remediated buildings we selected Westcoast Landscape & Lawns for this project. The written proposal and discussions with this company were very good, and their professionalism and finished product at building 17 met our expectations. One example: on the day that 300 flowering plants and shrubs were planted around building 17 the Westcoast designer and horticulturalist personally placed every pot in its intended spot, and then the landscape crew dug and planted. As we all have seen, the results are beautiful.
- The Board, as part of its ongoing review of vendors, decided not to automatically renew the Oakley contract into 2019 but rather in September requested landscaping proposals from three companies, two of which were Oakley and Westcoast. At the October 12 Board meeting the Board, having reviewed all proposals, made the decision to contract with Westcoast as our new landscape company for 2019, at a cost of \$110,700 annually.
- Services will include mowing, weeding, fertilization, plus irrigation and drainage inspections. We'll receive written reports and recommendations on the condition of the landscape at regular intervals. Westcoast employs 250 staff and has the range of skills to ably maintain our large and lush property. We have tested their abilities and service level with the small contract for building 17 planting. You may read more about this company at <http://westcoastlawns.com>

3. Proficient & Professional Management of the Association

Financial Update

- Our financial position continued to strengthen through August. In terms of the operating budget, in the month of August we had a \$16,000 budget surplus, and on a year-to-date basis our budget deficit has reduced to \$32,500. We have made significant progress in digging the Association out of the budget hole we are in, which peaked at a \$106,000 deficit on April 30.
- Looking at the major categories in August – income was \$6,000 over budget due to higher than planned fees, fines, and interest income. On a year-to-date basis our revenues are tracking \$16,000 over budget. This has been a significant contribution to our stronger financial health.
- Moving to the major expense categories, in August Building Maintenance was \$3,500 over budget, but this was off-set by Grounds Maintenance being \$3,100 under budget. The major budget surplus continues to be in Administrative expenses. This is our largest expense category, with a monthly budgeted amount of \$68,000. In August we spent only \$58,000 --- a \$10,000 budget surplus. This is largely due to sharply reduced staff costs, which were \$6,000 under budget as we now employ fewer staff than we did at the beginning of the year, and with no deterioration in service levels.
- We have just received the September financial statements, and the positive trend continues. We again recorded a significant budget surplus for the month. Full details will be provided after the financial statements are ratified at the next Board meeting, but this is indeed good news!

Owner Application Form

- The application form for new owners has been updated and is available on our website on the Community Information page.

Water Meters – we have a problem

- The water for Vintage Grand is supplied by the County of Sarasota and the total volume is measured by a meter at the single point of entry to the property. The Association is billed one lump fee by the County on the first of each month for water. The 2018 operating budget has this expense budgeted at \$277,000 annually.

- The City of Sarasota has made the decision to not be in the business of measuring and billing water consumption of individual unit owners, and various private companies are available to provide this service. Our Association, as you know, has contracted with National Exemption Service (NES) to read unit water meters monthly, produce bills for each unit, collect for water consumed, and remit the collected funds to the Association by month end. The 2018 budget has this water recovery budgeted at \$210,000 annually. The difference (\$277,000 expense offset by \$210,000 recovery, or \$67,000) is the budgeted annual cost of water consumed by the Association, on such things as pools, rest rooms, laundry, and car wash. Note that water for the grounds irrigation system is excluded from this billing, as it is pumped from the lake.
- We have been advised by NES that there are 150 units that recorded no water consumption on their meters in the past few months. Some of these may be snowbird units, and are explainable. But there are many units, we have learned, that have faulty meters, meters that are broken and do not record water consumed. These residents are not fully reimbursing the Association for their share of the monthly water bill, resulting in their usage being an expense that all of us cover through our monthly HOA fees. Clearly this inequity must end.
- The monthly bills for the units with faulty meters show only a minimum monthly fee of approx \$20 for water and sewage, and a meter reading of 00. These owners have, according to NES, been alerted to replace their meters via a note on the monthly bill. However it appears that few have done so. Note that each water meter is owned by each unit owner, not by the county or as a common element of the Association. The cost of replacing a water meter is approx \$500. Under our Condominium documents we have no way to force an owner to replace their meter nor to enter their unit, replace it, and add the charge to their account with Vintage Grand. We can though appeal to their sense of fairness.
- This situation was brought to the attention of the previous management and Board by NES this time last year, but was never acted on nor was the correspondence regarding this provided to the incoming Board for follow-up action. We have now requested reports of historical water usage by unit from NES and will work to develop a solution, which would be presented at an upcoming Board meeting and shared with owners in a future newsletter.

4. Two-Way Communication with Owners

- A Board of Directors meeting was held on October 12. The minutes of the Sept 3 meeting and the August financial statements were approved, and both are posted to the Association website.
- A Board of Directors meeting will be scheduled for November, date and time to be advised.
- All newsletters are posted on the website in the Owners section, for handy reference.

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