

October 2008

SoRoPa Neighbors

*** Neighborhood Meeting Change *** **A Success!**

**Have a
Safe & Happy
Halloween**



For those neighbors who attended the October Neighborhood Meeting, I thank you!

It was a very productive meeting. We received valuable information from the City and BSO staff who attended and you had some great questions for them!

If you missed the meeting, the new time and date worked out well and hope we see you next month. The meetings will now be held on the **3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm** (a half hour earlier than previously scheduled.)

Mark your calendars for the next meeting – November 20 at 7:00 pm.

The following is a brief summary of what was covered:

Susan Smith from the city's Public Works Department came to discuss our water supply concerns. We've had a seemingly large number of 2" main breaks; at least 5 on NW 36th St, 4 on NW 34th St and 5 on NW 32nd St. There are no plans to do a total replacement of our 45 year old mains but that they will continue to respond promptly to calls regarding breaks or leaks. Public Works is available 24/7, as I had the opportunity to learn when we discovered a sinkhole on our front yard which we later learned was a 2" main break)

The city recently performed a water study for water pressure and water supply and the areas needing upgrades were prioritized and two priority one projects that affect us were identified. These projects are on a three year plan in the Capitol Improvement Plan (pending \$3million in funding) and are on the books for 2011.

Our water quality is tested monthly and closely monitored. Susan let us know that sometime in the first several weeks of November, we should receive notices that the city of Fort Lauderdale, who provides our drinking water, will be flushing the system and changing the chlorination. You may also see hydrants open, due to the flushing which is done annually.

If you have any concerns regarding water pressure, Public Works will send out a crew to measure it for you to make sure your water supply meets your needs. The numbers are business hours - 954.630.4414, and after hours emergency - 954.561.6275. The after hours and emergency calls are handled by a service that then transfers the calls to the staff on weekend and nighttime duty. Don't be frustrated by the fact that you have to wait for a call back. They do call right back! I witnessed it first-hand several weeks ago. They were prompt and fixed our break in short order, early on a Saturday evening!

Charlie Livio, one of the city's horticulturists, came to talk about proper watering, xeriscape and ground covers. He provided some informative handouts. I have copies if anyone would like to see what was covered.



We are still on restricted watering schedule – Wednesday & Saturday for odd-numbered addresses and Thursday and Sunday for even numbers. All addresses are prohibited from watering during the heat of the day (10 am – 4 pm.) He also shared some tips for proper watering. Don't set your sprinkler timers to water 10 minutes a zone. Doing that just teases your lawn and encourages weak shallow root growth. Water properly to encourage deep healthy root growth.

THE SEVEN STEPS OF XERISCAPE

The seven simple steps of Xeriscape landscaping have been used by landscape professionals for years. Here is an overview of the seven principles; details of each principle are given in the following pages.

- 1. PLAN AND DESIGN** — Make a sketch of the landscape site. Base the plan on site conditions, existing vegetation and **topography** — the natural features of the land. Assess the area's growing conditions and think through intended uses of the landscape. Landscapes are dynamic, so include elements of growth, time and change in your plan.
- 2. OBTAIN A SOIL ANALYSIS** — Determine the soil composition, from sandy to clay, and test for the pH of the soil — its level of acidity or alkalinity. This information will help you decide which plants are best suited to the conditions of your yard.
- 3. CHOOSE PROPER PLANTS** — When choosing new plants, match each spot in your landscape with plants that thrive in the specific conditions of that spot. Look for plants known to be resistant to disease and pests. Consider each plant's mature height and width, its need for sun, shade, soil and water, and its tolerance to salt or temperature. Our Zone is 10b - 11. Preserve as many existing trees and shrubs as possible, if they're healthy and if the root systems are not significantly impacted by construction. Appropriately placed Native vegetation will remain healthy with minimal supplemental irrigation and care once established.
- 4. USE TURF WISELY** — Grass is often a yard's largest water user, but it can still play a role in a water conserving landscape. Plan **practical turf areas** where turf is most functional in the landscape plan, such as where children or pets will play, or for erosion control. In other areas, consider more water-thrifty alternatives such as groundcovers or mulched walkways.
- 5. IRRIGATE EFFICIENTLY** — Group plants based on their water needs. Put moisture-loving plants in moist areas and plants that prefer well-drained sites in drier areas. Group together plants that may need irrigation so that water is only used in limited areas. Irrigate only when plants need water or when rain is inadequate. Use the right irrigation system, proper sprinkler head and spacing for each area.
- 6. USE MULCH** — Mulch helps hold moisture in the soil, moderate temperature, slowly release nutrients, reduce weed growth and slow erosion. Spread mulch 2 to 4 inches thick, around shrubs and trees and on flower beds, but be sure to keep mulch from coming into direct contact with plant stems.
- 7. PERFORM PROPER MAINTENANCE** — Keep plants healthy. Too much water and fertilizer promote weak growth, as well as increase pruning and mowing requirements. Remove weeds by hand before they get established and crowd out the plants you want. Watch for pests and make sure they're truly a problem before waging war, then do it organically whenever possible.

Charlie recommended A & L Labs in Pompano for soil testing. He cautioned against purchasing plants without a plan and particularly the most common mistake – impulse buying, walking into Home Depot or Lowes and buying a plant just cuz ya like it... Make sure that you have a plan and know the plant's needs and characteristics.

Once you have the plants in the ground the key is to maintain them with minimal chemical use, proper trimming and weeding. The following are some of the outlets named as good places to purchase and inquire about Florida landscaping:

Jenny Sod – Homestead

Flamingo Gardens & Living Color – Davie

Tropic Plants – Tamarac, University Drive

Runway Growers - Fort Lauderdale south of SR 84.

Dr. Kern from University of Florida will be coming to Oakland Park in January (tentatively) to speak on planting non-attractive landscaping for iguana control. The monthly lecture series continues in November with a talk on Rain Barrels; recycling roof run-off and air conditioner condensation into water for your landscaping. (I'll send out announcements as I receive them)

Chief Bukata, Oakland Park BSO came to field any questions and report on our crime statistics. We are doing a great job of keeping an eye open in our neighborhood. There were a few car break-ins and some petty theft of items in front yards. The key to avoiding some of these events is to keep your property out of sight. Lock your cars and don't leave change or more valuable items in plain view – these crimes of opportunity are entirely preventable.

We were also informed that as of October 1, scrap and recycling yards are now required to take the same reportable information as pawn shops. With the present state of the economy, municipal property such as storm grates, manhole covers and metal wiring is a target for thieves.

One of our neighbors reported that the theft of a large metal shackle, stolen from her front yard for scrap, was solved. The perpetrator was caught and confessed, thanks to an observant neighbor who wrote down the license plate number. **Remember most of these events happen in broad daylight. If you see something that just doesn't look right, call!!!** If you are concerned, don't soft-sell it to the person who answers the phone. If you think a crime is happening, say so!!! It is better to have the police show up for a false alarm than to not call and regret it later! **Call 911.** Save the following numbers where you can find them:

BSO non-emergency (954) 765-4321
Oakland Park BSO non-emergency (954) 561-6161

The city has also been able to add 2 tactical officers for the new budget year, to allow for special details to monitor and target areas of concern related to criminal activity or trends that indicate illegal activity. This new approach has been very effective in getting the word out that Oakland Park is tough on crime. With the winter snowbird season rolling in fast, remember that the criminal element heads south for the winter too! Be smart and report any suspicious activity.

Community Appearance Standards

What do you think is the worst offender with regard to the appearance of our city?

Is it pole signs, unkempt properties, FPL poles and lines, industrial areas, open dumpsters? What do you think is the number one change that would improve the image and the pride in our city?

City Hall has retained consultants to help develop a code of Community Appearance Standards to address the look of Oakland Park. Some of these standards were just not appropriate for Oakland Park. The city needs your input! The results of the initial city survey can be found on the city website, www.oaklandparkfl.org.

There is an important Meeting Thursday, October 23rd

Community Appearance Neighborhood Conference
Thursday, October 23, 2008 at 7 p.m.
Collins Community Center/ 3900 NE Third Avenue



Don't let this
happen to you!

*Have you checked out the
City website?*

www.oaklandparkfl.org

*Its chock full of valuable
information!*

City of Oakland Park
1298 NE 37th Street
Oakland Park, Florida
33334
Phone: 954-561—6181
Website:
www.oaklandparkfl.org

Other Meeting Notes of Interest:

- ★ Oak Tree Golf Course – the city is undergoing a feasibility study to determine if the city can keep the golf course green and purchase the remaining lease to run the golf course as a city facility.
- ★ Royal Palm Isles, our neighbors to the north are gravely concerned about a proposed America's Best Value Inn, proposed for the South West corner of the intersection of Powerline and 38th St/Park Lane. According to the company's website, "Americas Best Value Inns are unique with a feeling of hometown pride. Friendly staff and clean, comfortable rooms make Americas Best Value Inn a great value for the money. Convenient locations and a variety of accommodations make it ideal for families, business travelers, seniors, weekend vacationers, groups and special events." The neighbors are concerned that the extremely low rates combined with cooking facilities and minimal room services (cleaning only every two weeks for long term "visitors") will make this property attractive to undesirable activities.
- ★ Tune in to your Commission meeting Wednesday, November 5th, Comcast Channel 78 or live streaming video on the city's website, www.oaklandparkfl.org, to hear the Commission discussion on this item.
- ★ Please call me at (954) 253-0850 or email me at aesallee@yahoo.com anytime you have a concern or question related to Oakland Park. I'll do my best to set you in the right direction or direct you

Block Representatives



32nd Ct - Karen Nagy

31st St. & 32nd St – ??? Representative Needed !!!

33rd Ct. - ??? Representative Needed !!!

33rd St. - Hope Gold

34th St. - Anne & Steve Sallee

35th & 36th St. - Marshall Belmaine

21st Ave - Paul Spearing & Louis Weinberg

DON'T FORGET

Early Voting Starts October 20th – Presidential Election November 4th, 2008





Local Government Academy – **Recruiting for Class of 2009!!!**

If you are interested in how our city works and want to get a bird's eye view of your municipal tax dollars at work, consider applying for the Local Government Academy. It is free to Oakland Park Residents and runs, one evening a week (usually Thursday) from January 22nd through April .

Call Marie Eleanor, Assistant to the City Manager - Voice 954-630-4205, Mobile 954-610-1899
The class is filled on a first come basis.

Important Reminder from Oakland Park BSO

Our vigilant Neighborhood Watch has paid off in South Royal Palm Acres. The #1 deterrent to crime is you, the watchful neighbor! You know better than a cop on patrol what is normal for your neighborhood.

Have you ever seen something next door and wondered if everything was alright? Did you wonder if maybe you should call the police?

Did you hesitate? Were you afraid you might be wrong? Then what? Put the shoe on the other foot. What if you didn't call and you were right? How would you explain that to your neighbor?
Think about it.

Our Oakland Park BSO confirms that they would rather you call at the first hint of a suspicion.

There are of several services that our Oakland Park BSO offers to us as city residents;

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!!!

- 1) If you are going away, submit a vacation alert. Call (954) 561-6111. BSO will stop by and keep an eye on your home.
- 2) If you call Oakland Park BSO at (954) 561-6161, they will send an officer out to perform a security review of your home. (The Fire Department offers a similar service for fire safety.)
- 3) The Police Department is here to serve and protect us. Don't hesitate to contact them.

Call Oakland Park BSO at (954) 561-6111 or the general BSO non-emergency line at (954) 765-4321

What is SoRoPa Neighbors?

South Royal Palm Acres Neighbors United is a neighborhood group focused on improving crime prevention awareness, strengthening spirit and fostering pride in our community in order to provide a safer, organized and more beautiful place for all of us to live.

The mission of South Royal Palm Acres Neighbors United is...

- To encourage and promote community pride in our neighborhood by providing a forum for neighborhood activity.
- To be a voice for our common neighborhood interests by acting as liaison with governmental bodies and with institutions.
- To serve as a focal point for maintenance and improvement of institutions and facilities serving our neighborhood, including parks, schools, and public safety services, and to provide an avenue for neighborhood social activities.
- To encourage and facilitate vigorous citizen participation in all issues affecting our neighborhood, including land use, zoning changes, traffic patterns, and street modifications.
- To promote the welfare of the community.
- To Have Fun!



**Your Neighborhood Organization meets at the Fire Station
the 3rd Thursday of every month at 7:00.**

If you don't participate in the process, you won't have a voice.
We look forward to your comments and participation.