

the CASA Connection

December 2016 VOL: 11

Highlights... November Owners Meeting and BOD Meeting

Proxy and Votes: Proxies and votes were opened at the meeting and counted by an owner committee.

Fire Sprinkler Retrofit Opt Out: Yes-64 No-1
Cross Utilization of Reserves: Yes-53 No-6
Partial Waiver of Reserves: Yes-53 No-6
Surplus Carryover: Yes-59 No-0

Budget: The 2017 Budget was approved by the BOD.

Late Fees/Quarterlies: Several owners have expressed concerns about Quarterly Late Fees. Lighthouse is currently following the procedure in our Condo Documents. All Quarterlies are due the first of the month and late on the 10th. The President requested Directors McMillan and David review the current procedure and make recommendations to the BOD.

Escapia Rental Program Software: Training and transition to Escapia has begun. The process will take several months. Our website will be redesigned as part of this process.

Owner Comments: Question concerning the resignation of Kathryn - Kathryn was an employee of RCM not CB and no BOD action was required on this change. RCM has retained a new bookkeeper for Casa Blanca. The President thanked Kathryn for her service.

BOD Election: You will be receiving an election packet which will be mailed 21 days prior to the election, which will include your ballot and bio/resumes of the candidates. Ballots may be mailed back to Casa Blanca or turned in at the meeting. Ballots will be opened and counted at the Owners Meeting in January. There are 3 positions open.

Candidates may contact you directly through US mail or phone, but not CB group email.

Candidates include: Bob Antonelli, Judi McKenna, Bruce Miller, Gary Stimpfl

PLEASE VOTE!



Dates to Remember

Owners Meeting: Saturday, January 14, 2017

BOD and Committees will have Annual Reports and owners can ask questions or make comments on any topic.

Owners Social: Friday, January 13

All owners are invited to the Social Friday evening.



QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE DUE JANUARY 1, 2017





CASA BLANCA NEWS

- * Nancy Hieber, Building and Grounds Chair, and her many ELVES have been hard at work. CB looks very festive for the holidays! Thanks to owners and staff Bob Shattuck, Barb Bray, Susie Geitz, Bonnie Stimpfl, Alyssa, Kathryn, Dan, Jio and John.
- * Apartment building gutters are installed.
- * Pool / B1 walkway has been completed as well as the rec room sewer line under that walkway.
- * The beach shower is being rebuilt.



SIESTA KEY NEWS

* Stephen Leatherman “Dr. Beach” spoke at the December Siesta Key Association meeting. The discussion concerned the pending dredging of Big Pass for sand to build up Lido and the potential impact on Siesta. Additional information can be accessed through the Sarasota Herald website.



- * UTC Mall and surrounding shopping areas have holiday light displays that are outstanding. Don't miss it if you are in town.
- * Intersection construction at Stickney Point and Midnight Pass is completed.



FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Fellow Owners,

2016 has been an eventful and productive year at Casa Blanca. I want to thank each of you who have taken the time to contact me or your board members with ideas, concerns, questions and information. Thanks to all who have chipped in to work on committees, upgraded your unit or assisted with projects. Your efforts have made a positive impact!

This year we have seen a new management team at CB, seen a change in that team and a period of stability and progress. We have assembled, and maintained what I believe is our best team of employees (and yes, they are CB employees.)

Changes continue in the Rental Program. Our cleaning has improved tremendously. We have instituted an inspection process to guarantee that it continues to improve. Security was increased for Spring and July. We have a new rental contract and, for the first time in memory, we have written policies and procedures for owners and renters. We will no longer have to reinvent the wheel when we have personnel or board changes.

The appearance of our grounds continues to improve. New beach chairs were added. The long list of deferred maintenance projects are being completed. The recreation room sewers have been repaired and remediated, the flooding of the walkway between B-1, C-1 and the pool has been regraded and repaired, our beach cabanas have been repaired, strengthened and repainted, several villas have been re-stuccoed and repainted, the laundry area ceiling and roof were repaired, new gutters and a roof repair is completed at the apartment building. Most importantly, our employees have demonstrated their pride in CB by being very diligent in cleaning up and sprucing up our grounds. There is a noticeable positive difference.

Less visible, but very important, we have gathered all of our contracts and are systematically reviewing and rebidding them. We have changed insurance agents and will see a \$20,000 savings in our flood coverage. We have completed a Reserve Study to insure stability of our reserves. Our bookkeeping process has been transparent and accurate.

We promised greatly increased communications with owners. This is our 11th newsletter this year.

All of this has been accomplished within our financial resources, without an increase in assessments or increasing rental commission rates.

Yet, there is still so much that needs to be done. Primarily, implementation of our new rental software program which will increase efficiency and marketing opportunities to increase our rental occupancy and income. We have the processes in place to tackle these challenges and more.

We still need to work on stemming the "rumor mill". However, we make significant progress with each call you make to me or board members to find out factual information.

Thank you to our BOD candidates for your willingness to serve Casa Blanca.

We have many additional ideas and plans for the future. Working together, we can make Casa Blanca even more successful for us all.

Thank you for your support. Together 2017 will be even better!

Tom Wiggers

*Wishing each of you a warm
and sunny holiday season...
A blessed Christmas and
prosperous New Year!*



FROM THE GM:

When I look back on 2016, it was a year in transition to a new Board of Directors, a new property management team and a new property management system that focused on documented business processes, business controls and reporting in a very transparent business model. One management company, Lighthouse, was brought on to handle the association finances and act as CAM. RCM, my company, was engaged as Broker of Record and to handle rental accounting and finances. A General Manager was hired to manage the rental operation. This model was put into place on March 12 after PCM gave notice with no transition assistance to the new team.

Our entire team worked extremely long hours to ensure the effective and efficient operations of Casa Blanca. I can honestly attest to the dedication and hard work that our office, maintenance, housekeeping staffs and management teams put forth under difficult circumstances.

In August, the board asked me to act as Interim GM. I agreed to accept that role to ensure continuity at CB and agreed to the pay structure already in place. Since August, we have made significant progress in all facets of the CB operation and management. We have initiated improvements and hired a top-notch staff that represents you and the Casa Blanca brand in a highly professional and ethical manner. I am very proud of our team and every day our guests and owners tell us what a positive difference they see and feel since our management team took the reigns in August.

However, despite our very best efforts, there are a very few owners who spread negative rumors about our wonderful people. I can honestly say this damages our staff morale and is unhealthy for our operation and our aim of putting the interests of guests and owners first. I spent over 34 years with IBM as an international executive. I brokered mergers as large as \$5 billion. I believe this experience, and knowledge and my love and dedication for Casa Blanca is evident in our progress and success in 2016. If you hear rumors, contact me and I will gladly give you the facts. Positivity brings success. Negativity brings failure. We are building success here at CB.

We have made very positive advances this year at Casa Blanca and we have exciting projects planned for 2017. Our new rental reservation and bookkeeping system, Escapia, is currently being implemented. It should greatly increase our productivity and occupancy through channel marketing with the Escapia family of partners. I couldn't be more excited about this for our owners and for the overall performance and profitability of your investments and market value. I will keep you updated on this exciting new product.

In summary, I want to thank all owners for your support and for your input and feedback so we can make Casa Blanca the best place to be on Siesta Key!

Happy Holidays,

John

