



The Lakes Communicator

September 2023 Edition

President's Message – Charlene Carson

Summer is winding down and school is back in session. Please be mindful as you travel through the community, to obey the stops signs, speed limits and above all pay attention to the school buses when they are stopped to pick up and drop off the children of the community.

We are also entering the peak of hurricane season (June 1 through November 30). For those residents new to the community and the area, please take the time to make yourselves aware of the evacuation zones (what are the evacuation zones and where are they located), as well as have a family plan in the event a hurricane does occur in our area. Information and links were shared in the June Communicator.

There are several events planned for The Lakes community in the upcoming months. The 1st Annual (hopefully) Art in the Park, which will showcase the talents of our residents and area artisans, followed by one of the children's favorites – the Halloween parade and party that shares the day with the Annual Chili Cook Off. The events are made possible through the efforts of a dedicated group of community volunteers. Thanks in advance to all of you that give your time so generously.

More information on all of these activities is included later in this issue.

Fall is also the time for The Lakes Annual meeting and election of the Board of Directors. This has been a particularly challenging year with efforts being made to change the direction and operation of the association. Sadly, the challenges have been compounded by the efforts of a group that have a separate agenda. This agenda has more recently included quite vicious personal attacks on a select few Board members on social media sites – primarily on private sites where access is strictly controlled and limited to only those that agree with the postings and has now risen to the level of posting on open social media sites for the surrounding communities to view and comment. If the quality of landscaping raises your concerns about how our community is viewed and the effect on our property values, what must potential buyers think when they see these posts on social media??

While repeatedly and continually vilified and maligned with statements that are often exaggerated and false, those targeted Board members choose to silently continue working to care for our community and move it forward. They have chosen to take the proverbial "high road"

Table of Contents

President's Message	Pg. 1
Finance Update	Pg. 2
Community News	Pg. 4
Volunteer Needs	Pg. 6
Committee Updates	Pg. 8
Neighborly reminders	Pg. 11
Funny side of the Lake	Pg. 11
Events Calendar	Pg. 12
Community Contacts	Pg. 13

and not engage on social media in innuendos, generalizations, and private vendettas.

The Board application nomination packets should have already been received (or should arrive shortly) at the postal mailing address provided to LITUS. Once nominations are received, the candidate biographies will be sent back to each homeowner for your consideration.

Think for yourself, make an “informed” decision, just take the time to get ALL the information.

Stay safe in your travels and your Labor Day celebrations!

Charlene

~~~~~

### **FINANCIAL REPORT, By Debbie Wolcott, Treasurer**

Upon accepting the position of Treasurer, I had numerous concerns (as a homeowner and short-term board member) about our financial well-being. As a result, I did a deep dive into our financial history. There were multiple ways I could have done that, but I needed to cover a VAST amount of information from my findings in the most expedient way possible . . . based on actual data available! The review resulted in the Power Point Presentation shared at the April 17th Membership Meeting. To date, only a small percentage of homeowners have viewed this SIGNIFICANT and VITAL presentation regarding the Lakes’ Financial Status.

A few of my personal concerns from the onset were:

- Understanding and clarity of the entire financial process and its interconnection to the Management Company.
- Current and future reserve planning (when the money from Impact fees ended).
- FDIC Account Protection.
- Investment Sources (to ensure our money is working for us).
- Basic math calculations and enormity of our property reflected annual dues were insufficient.

After two (2) months of research, I felt I had a relatively strong grasp and understanding.

1. As a result of the controversy in the previous two (2) years, I wanted to establish a Finance Committee. It was important to me that this Committee be comprised of primarily homeowners (and their input) rather than board members. I felt homeowners needed to be involved in seeing and understanding the actual income and expenses we are obligated to on an ongoing basis. Jackie DiVincent was the first candidate for the Financial Committee. I admired the time, effort, and diligence she put in (as a volunteer) bulldogging her way through our new and existing common areas and insuring we had the lowest tax structure, and that they were properly recorded in the POA’s name. Over several months we developed a working relationship building spreadsheets that recorded all our income / expenses and developing slides for our April PowerPoint presentations. Since then, we added two (2) additional homeowners, Michael North and Dave Macho to help us incorporate this information into a realistic and working budget for 2024. Currently, the 4-person finance committee includes: one (1) BOD, and three (3) homeowners.
2. I was concerned that our existing income was insufficient to fund our reserves adequately; nor did I see anything being considered to supplement that income to our reserves when building stopped (e.g., a Capital Contribution Fee).

3. ALL our money was being held in one bank. Funds over \$250,000 were not FDIC insured.
4. On August 4, we invested \$275,000 of our reserve funds into Brokered CDs through Edward Jones to start working for us. One is \$200,000 for seven (7) months at 5.30%. The other is \$75,000 at 5.15% for three (3) months. Putting them on a rotational basis allows for increased fluidity in our cash flow, should an unexpected need arise.
5. My personal basic math calculations indicated it was impossible to run such a large, growing community on \$422 per household. There were simply too many expenses.

## **THINGS EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW**

### **2024 Annual Dues:**

On Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, in an Executive Session prior to the Workshop, the BOD's voted unanimously to approve a 5% increase to The Lakes Annual dues for 2024 (per our governing documents). **Our Annual Dues for 2024 will be \$443.** This increase will still leave us significantly underfunded for Reserves, Contingency, Projects, and Maintenance.

This vote was necessary to allow time to prepare a relevant draft budget for 2024.

### **Obtaining Historical Records (from the Management Company):**

Among other things, our management company is contracted to maintain all documents. During the current year, documents are readily available. Once the fiscal year ends, records are boxed and sent to the auditor. Once the audit is complete, the documents are sent to storage. If any member (**Board or resident**) wants to retrieve past documents, they must pay LITUS to retrieve the boxes (from and to) storage, have someone sit with them while they review the documents, and pay for every copy requested (photos & personal printers are not permitted). These fees can add up quickly. Unless there is a specific date of an item, many boxes will need to be pulled from storage creating an even larger amount of time required and additional expense. All of which we would be paying for. ***The information revealed in the April Power Point was so profound, we didn't feel the expenses would serve any benefit to the membership.***

Note: Our 2022 documents are with the auditor.

### **Cash Reserve Funding Study**

The board unanimously approved a "Cash Reserve Study" to be completed by Reserve Advisors, a multi-faceted engineering firm with a depth of experience in this area. The vote occurred during the August 14th, 2023, Executive Session.

The study covers everything the POA owns in the community including streets and curbs, access drives, parking areas, sidewalks, water management systems, ponds, fountains, irrigation systems, landscaping, fences, monuments, signage, gazebo, etc.

This study is essential to accurately determine, among many things, what percentage (%) we SHOULD consider when funding all our reserve needs (estimated for 30 years). The study cost is \$7,000, to be paid from the Operating Account; 1/2 now and half upon completion. Based on Reserve Advisors' current schedule, they expect to begin the project before the end of this year (2023). The results of this study will give us significant data for our future financial planning.

Thank you for your patience; the virtue of brevity escapes me.

# Community News & Updates

## August Yard of the Month Winner

The houses are viewed by volunteers on the Beautification Committee. The winner is selected based upon how well kept and how pleasing they are to the eye. The winner gets bragging rights!

**The Winner is 4819 Guliford Loop**



**Runner up is... 1009 Lynches Court**



## Neighborhood Spotlight!

This month's Neighborhood Spotlight shines a light on the goodwill of some of our neighbors. New resident Shawn Horigan recently replaced one of his trees and offered the tree to our Beautification Committee. Chair, Bill Vesley along with fellow neighbors Brian Harrington, Paul Vinberg and Mike Corsi helped plant the new tree. Thank you to Neighbors!!!!



## THE ANNUAL LAKES POA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS ARE AROUND THE CORNER!

The Lakes Homeowners will be asked to elect 4 Board Members at the annual meeting in October! There are several dates to keep in mind over the coming weeks. Please remember the date for the outgoing mailings is approximate and receipt of the documents are dependent on the postal service.

- On August 21, 2023, the Board of Director Nomination Application packets were mailed to all Lakes Property Owners to the postal address on file with LITUS at the time of the mailing.
- On September 7, 2023, by 12pm - Completed Nomination Applications need to be mailed and received at the address provided on the Nomination Application form to be considered for the proxy/ballot. Please use only the form provided for your information.
- On or about September 18, 2023 - Residents will be mailed Proxy forms listing the candidates for the Board. A copy of each candidate's application will be transcribed for readability and included with the proxy form. Additionally, the applications will be available for viewing on The Lakes website.
- September 25, 2023, 6pm, South Strand Rec Center - Meet the Candidate Night- This event will be hosted by the Communication Committee. None of the Communication Committee members are running for office, are or were current Board Members. Property Owners will have an opportunity to meet the candidates running for the Board. This is a moderated event where several standard questions will be asked of each candidate and additional time for community questions for each candidate.
- October 20, 2023, by 12pm – Proxy forms need to be mailed and received at the address on the proxy. Residents who wish to change their previously mailed proxy can do so at the Lakes POA Annual Meeting, Saturday, October 28, 2022, at 10:30 am, St Michael's Church, the Duffy Center (gymnasium).

PLEASE consider volunteering for a board role or one of the MANY open volunteer roles needed in the community. A list of opportunities can be found below.

~~~~~



Board of Directors Role Overview

The Lakes Property Owners Association Board has seven (7) elected Board members. The 7 Board Members include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and 3 Directors at Large. The Board members each serve for a term of 2 years. Terms alternate to provide continuity within the Board. The individuals who volunteer are ...volunteers. The Board Members are not compensated in any way, do not receive any perks, or special privileges. They serve the community because they want to help the community.

The general roles and responsibilities of all board members include regular attendance and participation in scheduled and special board meetings, chairing and participating in standing committees, facilitating communications within the community, addressing grievances, requests for variances, determining the assessment of fines for violations of community standards, reviewing contracts for services and other activities

related to the operation of the community and ensuring a budget is established each year with ongoing fiscal monitoring.

The Board of Directors are not elected to specific positions when they run for a Board seat. Each year the new Board of Directors (newly elected and current term officers) elect the Officer positions. The election of specific positions occurs at the first meeting of the new board. Specific duties and responsibilities by position include (briefly) but not limited to:

President – Plan, manage and respond to the day-to-day operations of the community; respond to emergency situations within the community; authorize/sign contracts for community services; plan and direct association meetings; be the main liaison with the management company.

Vice President – In conjunction with the President, participate in the day-to-day operations of the community and respond to emergency situations; develop and maintain operating procedures to insure consistency; attend and/or plan and direct all community meetings; serve as a facilitator/coordinator of committees; chair committees as needed; author and coordinate the distribution of communications to the community; manage community safety and security operations; plan/expand/execute services for the community; owner meetings; reviews the annual budget in accordance with our CC&Rs; proposes changes to dues/fines/assessments as dictated by changes in the economy.

Treasurer – Under the direction of the Board in all matters, directs the relationship with the management company to establish, monitor and manage the financial operation of the community; assists with preparing the annual budgets; assists in the regular preparation and distribution of financial reports/audits; provides financial updates to the community at property owner meetings; maintains annual budget in accordance with our CC&Rs; proposes changes to dues/fines/assessments as dictated by changes in the economy, participates in the Finance Committee.

Secretary – Establish annual meeting schedules; participate in the development and communication of meeting agendas; coordinate meeting sites/availability with the management company; take meeting minutes in the absence of the management company; serve on/chair community committees.

Directors at Large – Same responsibility as officer including actively participating in all meetings, chairing and running projects and committees and vote but act in the capacity as a generalist in lieu of a specific officer role.

~~~~~



### Volunteer Opportunities

The community is looking for Volunteers to help with the committees and needs of the community. As you read through this month's Communicator or review previous month's communications you may start to notice the same 10-15 people continue to appear as committee chairs or volunteers throughout multiple Board and

Committee articles. This is because there is a need in the community for volunteers and when there are no new volunteers the current volunteers step up and fill the need. We don't have enough volunteers to fill the void. This often leads to the burn out of current volunteers and only makes the need for volunteers more severe.

Please consider volunteering for one of the following committees or opportunities. If you are unsure about where you want to volunteer or have previously volunteered and did not find a place to volunteer, please share your interest again. We have open needs. We can use all the energy being expended on social media platforms for board seats AND as hands and feet in the community. The more we can do to help each other the more we become united and the less money we must spend to pay vendors to meet the community needs.

**ACC Chairperson-** We announced the open chair role in the February 2023 Newsletter and have not received any volunteers. Bob White has done an EXCELLENT job but will be stepping down at the end of this year.

**Pond Volunteer-** We have been asking for volunteers to help with each pond since February 2023. We have been fortunate that there have been several volunteers, but we still need a few more to cover the other lakes.

**Beautification Committee-** There was an open call for volunteers in March 2023 to help with storm debris removal and trash pickup. As we head into the heart of hurricane season, we will likely need to call on our community to help with storm debris.

**Additional General Open Volunteer Opportunities:** Drainage, Security, General Maintenance, Engineering, Proposal Writing, Drainage, Policy/Procedure Writer, Road Committee.

If you have time and are not sure how you can help, but want to help, please contact Karen at LITUS via email at [ktucker@litustolet.com](mailto:ktucker@litustolet.com) .

~~~~~



1st Annual Art in the Park

The Lakes is pleased to announce the 1st Annual Art in the Park Event to be held from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on September 16 in our park at the Hwy 17S Bypass entrance. (Rain date September 17). Come on out and strut your stuff! This is a great opportunity to show the community what you can do, sell your art and handcrafted items, and meet new customers and neighbors. We know we have some very talented professionals and hobbyists living in The Lakes! We will have the Lobster Dogs food truck available with delicious, fresh Maine lobster rolls, as well as their other great menu items to feed hungry mouths. It should be a great day to socialize with friends and neighbors and do a little holiday shopping, find that special something for your home or a unique gift!

~~~~~

## October 28<sup>th</sup> POA Annual Meeting Location Instructions

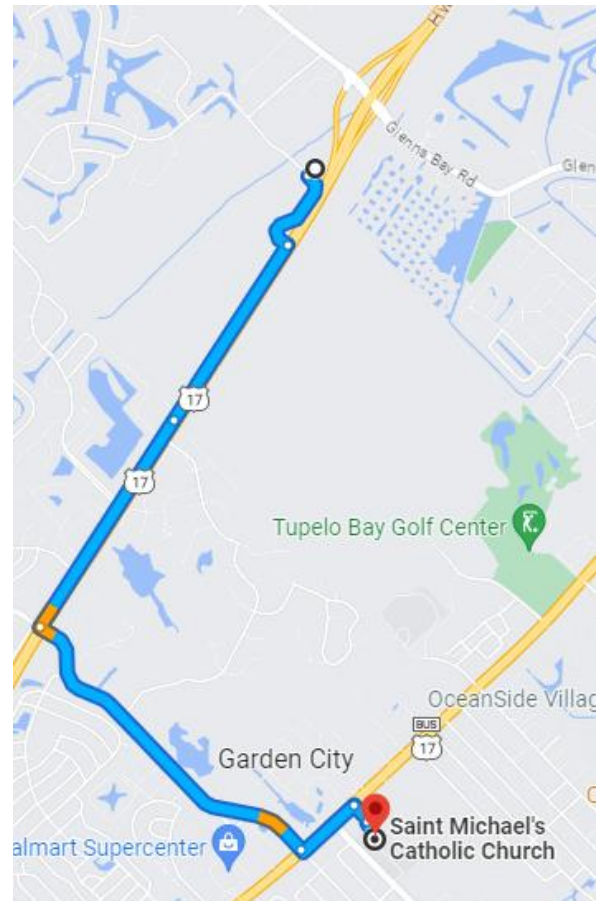
The 2023 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am at St Michael's Church, the Duffy Center (gymnasium). Directions and a map are below to help Property Owners navigate to the new location.

**8 min (3.1 miles)**  
via US Highway 17 Bypass S/Hwy 17 S and Garden City Con  
Fastest route now due to traffic conditions

**400 Waccamaw River Rd**  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29588

- ↑ Head southeast on Waccamaw River Rd toward US Highway 17 Bypass S/Hwy 17 S  
0.3 mi
- ➔ Turn right onto US Highway 17 Bypass S/Hwy 17 S  
0.6 mi
- ↑ Continue straight to stay on US Highway 17 Bypass S/Hwy 17 S  
0.7 mi
- ↶ Turn left onto Garden City Con  
1.1 mi
- ↶ Turn left onto US-17 BUS N  
0.2 mi
- ➔ Turn right  
371 ft
- ↶ Turn left  
Destination will be on the left  
292 ft

**Saint Michael's Catholic Church**  
542 Cypress Ave, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576



## Committee Updates

### Communication Committee, by Co-Chairs: Barbara Cardinal and Jeri Mathur

The Communications Committee has volunteered to assist the community during the 2023 Board Election Processes. The Communication Committee is an independent committee without any sitting board members and without any member running for current board seats. The Communication Committee will host the Meet the Candidate Night on 9/25/23 at 6pm at the South Strand Rec Center. Details about the event can be found in the Election update above.

### Road Committee – By Jack Price

The Lakes Road projects were reviewed in order of importance. The first 6 projects were sent out for bid and so far, there has been one respondent. Trying to get qualified people to bid on small road projects, in this season, is next to impossible due to all the construction going on in the state. I have a couple of meetings this week with two other contractors that are interested in bidding on the work. WE shall see.

The first several projects need to be addressed asap. When I get the bids, I will bring my report to the Board for review, discussion, and approval.

Any road issues please contact Litus and I will be notified.

~~~~~

Pond Committee – By Debbie Wolcott, Pond Committee/ Facilitator

The hot and humid weather continues to impact growth throughout our ponds. Due to the depth of our ponds, the waters have been hot enough to boil shrimp! As a result of this, the entire community and select fingers received extensive granular algaecide treatments. Wateree, Hartwell and Rainbow are the top priorities right now.

The Boat was launched in multiple ponds, and trash detail was also performed. TLC utilized manual extraction for algae in both Lake Wateree and Hartwell Lake.

These are before and after images are from Wednesday, 8/17 and they look even better today!



Bank Restoration by TLC by 1004 & 1007 Saluda River Road



~~~~~

## Social Committee, by Michele Ferrante

Please plan to join (Volunteer and Attend) our upcoming Social Events!

- **The Annual Lakes Halloween Parade and Party!** Saturday, October 21, 2023 (Rain date, Sunday, October 22, 2023) from 1pm-3pm. The Lakes annual Halloween parade will start promptly at 1pm at the intersection of Waccamaw River Road and Cooper River Road and end at the park at the front of the Lakes. There will be a police escort to lead off the parade and the owner of the new commercial building has given us permission to park in his lot.

Prizes will be awarded for the children's costumes (original, scariest, funniest) as well as for the most creative transportation (cart/wagon/bicycle/golf cart). Please get your number sticker for judging at the parade start line. Treat-or-Treat candy will be provided. BYOC (Bring your own chair!!)

RSVP to Michele at [lakesparkevents@gmail.com](mailto:lakesparkevents@gmail.com) by Monday, October 16, 2023, if you plan to come to the festivities. Also, if you would like to volunteer (set up, clean up, etc.) please contact Michele!

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chili Cookoff!** Saturday, October 21, 2023 (Rain date, Sunday, October 22, 2023) from 1pm-3pm.

Tantalize your tastebuds with the flavors of chili prepared by none other than your neighbors in the Lakes. The event will be held at the park at the front of the Lakes, alongside the Annual Halloween Parade and Party. Show off your Chili skills and be part of the Cookoff. **RSVP to** [lakesparkevents@gmail.com](mailto:lakesparkevents@gmail.com), by Monday, October 16, 2023, to add your name to the list. More information will be provided when you enter the contest. BYOC (Bring your own chair!)

~~~~~

Neighborly Reminders

How to share a question or concern with The Lakes Board

We have heard through social media posts and through community questions that there are property owners and some property owner groups who feel there are open questions and concerns about the community. We have shared the methods to present those questions to the community through several month's Communicators, but we want to continue to share we are looking for open communications and we want to ensure all residents are heard and have an open forum to share ideas and concerns. There are several ways to communicate with the Board.

- Homeowners can send requests to Karen at LITUS via email at ktucker@litustolet.com.
- Homeowners can also attend the POA Quarterly Homeowner Meeting
- Homeowners can request to present a topic to the Board at Public Board Meetings by sending a request to Karen one week before the published Lakes Board Meetings.

On the Funny Side of the Lake



DID YOU KNOW?

Trees can communicate?

Trees talk. Their roots are connected through an underground network of fungi, nicknamed the "Wood Wide Web," that allows them to share resources with each other. They "talk" by transmitting nutrients to one another through the fungi. For instance, a mother tree, or oldest and strongest tree in the forest, will share some of her sugars with smaller, nearby trees.



SEPTEMBER

2023

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

02

03

04

Labor Day

05

06

Lakes Office
Hours
12pm-3pm

07

Lakes Office
Hours
9am – 12pm

12 pm- Board
Nominations Due

08

09

10

11

12

13

Lakes Office
Hours
12pm-3pm

14

Lakes Office
Hours
9am – 12pm

15

16

17

18

Lakes Board
Meeting – 7pm
Lakes Office

19

20

Lakes Office
Hours
12pm-3pm

21

Lakes Office
Hours
9am – 12pm

22

23

24

25

Meet the
Candidate Night –
6pm - South
Strand Rec Center

26

27

Lakes Office
Hours
12pm-3pm

28

Lakes Office
Hours
9am – 12pm

29

30

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Monday, October 16th, 7pm at the Lakes Office

Next Annual POA Meeting: Saturday, October 28th, 10:30 am at St Michael's Church, the Duffy Center (gymnasium).

Horry County Community Information

LOCAL HOSPITALS

Tidelands Waccamaw	4070 US 17 Bypass Murrells Inlet	(843) 652-1000
Conway Medical Ctr	Singleton Ridge Rd Conway	(843) 347-7111
South Strand Med Ctr	5050 US 17 Bypass Myrtle Beach	(843) 839-1000
Grand Strand Med Ctr	809 82nd Pkwy Myrtle Beach	(843) 692-1000

MB VA Outpatient Clinic	1800 Airport Dr	(843) 477-0177
-------------------------	-----------------	----------------

POLICE AND FIRE

Horry County Police Non-emergency	(843) 915-5350
Horry County Fire & Rescue	(843) 915-5190

REC CENTERS

Horry County Parks & Rec	2830 Oak St Conway	(843) 915-5330
Pepper Geddings Rec Ctr	3205 N Oak St Myrtle Beach	(843) 918-2280
Claire Chapin Epps Family YMCA	5000 Claire Chapin EPPS Dr Myrtle Beach	(843) 449-9622
South Strand Rec Ctr	9650 Scipio Ln Myrtle Beach	(843) 915-5333
Burgess Community Ctr	10299 SC 707 Myrtle Beach	(843) 650-2796

COUNTY OFFICES

Horry County Treasurer	9630 Scipio Ln Myrtle Beach	(843) 915-5470
Horry County Auditor	9630 Scipio Ln Myrtle Beach	(843) 915-5052
Horry County Clerk of Court	9630 Scipio Ln Myrtle Beach	(843) 915-5080
Horry County Probate Court	1301 2nd Ave Conway	(843) 915-5370
Myrtle Beach DMV	1330 Howard Pkwy Myrtle Beach	(843) 839-8003
SC DMV	1200 21st Ave N Myrtle Beach	(843) 448-9957

RECYCLE CENTERS

	9610 Scipio Ln Myrtle Beach (closed Thurs)	(843) 347-1651
	McDowell Shortcut (closed Tues)	(843) 347-1651
	4670 Jones Rd	(843) 347-1651