



HIGHLAND PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

A Non-Profit Organization

Aka Highland Park Lakeview West Estates Community Association

January 3, 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year from Highland Park Community Association Inc., a non-profit organization (aka Highland Park Lakeview West Estates Community Association). November/December 2019 brought many new discoveries and challenges to Highland Park in West Mobile, Alabama since the unauthorized drainings of Lake Optimist in October of 2019. Arlene Davis and others again drained Lake Optimist in November. Then in December after lowering the water level dumped 80,000 pounds of concrete into and onto the spillway and dam with the help of the neighbors in the LVWE subdivision. Reported cost to residents was \$2600.00.

So, in November as the lake was slowly draining out Highland Park residents confronted LVWE about the slow drain. LVWE (Arlene Davis) denied they were draining the lake; the Mobile Police Department were called to restrain trespass. MPD advised Sherry Lynn Gros this was a civil matter.

Astonishingly, once again LVWE ignored our many admonitions and pleas to "stop" trespassing, Lake View West Estates residents drained the lake slowly over a period of about one week. Without a meeting or consultation of any kind, Arlene Davis, self-proclaimed interim President decided to apologize to her community for going forward without consulting them or anyone she said, "We were just so afraid we were going to LOSE THE LAKE!" (her capitalization not mine). This is a frenetic outcry that is often used by LVWE to fear those far less knowing into compliance. LVWE uses this cry to collect monies too. Arlene's post has since been removed from social media.

At that point a decision was made to go forward with an injunction and the case has currently been filed in the Circuit Court of Mobile AL. Sadly, LVWE et. al. continues to ignore our pleas to stop trespass upon Highland Park lands with callous disregard, hostility, and without the slightest consideration of land ownership, property devaluation, and damage.

FOLLOW UP AND WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

- In October 2019 HPCA active members began informal discussions regarding their bylaws, responsibilities, and authorities per their Articles of Incorporation. Residents gathered, volunteered and were appointed as Board Members to take

immediate action regarding disturbing developments and revelations concerning Highland Park.

- FOLLOW UP: Board Meetings were held: 11/29, 12/12, and 12/20. (See October newsletter for previous meeting dates.)
- HPCA has developed and maintains an official website at <https://www.highlandparkcommunityassociation.com>
- HPCA social media presence is seen on Facebook at Highland Park Community Association Inc. Group
- On 10/15/2019 purchased proper signs (2) for East Park fence that reads “Highland Park Residents Only” per Authority of HPCA Inc.
 - FOLLOW UP: As of January 1, 2020, signs have NOT been posted out of respect for the legal process.
- The 10/15/19 Cease and desist letters from Sherry Lynn Gros were balked at by LVWE and some Hp residents.
 - FOLLOW UP: 11/12/19 Attorney Amanda Barton of Fairhope, Al sent cease and desist letters to Williams, Davis, Helms, Miller, and McCusker, three out of the five are LVWE residents. Unproductive response resulted in filing in Circuit Court – Civil on Dec 20, 2019.
- 10/2019 Filed COMPLAINT # 8V-006NC1G06 with Alabama Department of Environmental Management for siltation flowing into Lake Optimist. You can see the complaint at this link → <http://app.adem.alabama.gov/complaints/8V-006NC1G06>
 - FOLLOW UP: It has come to light that the most complained about “mud lump”, “ditch”, “low water level” is actually NOT Lake Optimist and therefore is not the responsibility of this Corporation unless it harms or threatens our lake which is yet to be determined through scientific observation and recording by our Conservation Corps and Friends of the Lake.
 - The seven properties on Lakeview West Drive from the bridge to Lake Optimist are individually and privately owned by residents of Lakeview West Dr and are part of Milkhouse Creek not 7201 Lakeview Dr E or any part of Lake Optimist. Although Milkhouse Creek flows into Lake Optimist and one water affects the other, this Corporation does not have the authority to petition anyone BUT the OWNERS to dredge or maintain those lands. Therefore, we will not be knocking our brains out to sue anyone for siltation

unless it is determined that it directly affects Lake Optimist. At that time our attorneys can decide who the appropriate party is for us to sue. We won't be guessing about this but rather we will seek professional counsel if our property is threatened in any way.

- 10/27/2019 Active member and President of HPCA Inc Sherry Lynn Gros, contacted Mobile Police Department regarding threats on social media explaining the reason for rising tensions in the communities and to schedule a meeting with local beat officer to discuss HPCA neighborhood crime and safety.
 - FOLLOW UP: Officer Austin Collier did not attend the scheduled meeting and we have not followed up with him at this time.
 - Although, community tensions are still palpable, the heated rhetoric over the past three months and hyperbolic comments toward this President has died down to a low grumble. Action was taken by Ed Williams to exclude and mute Sherry Lynn Gros from conversations and social media groups regarding her own property. False accusations against her further flamed the community fires. Ed Williams and the LVWE leadership could have quelled the hate but instead chose to instigate it. During all the social media attacks to date not once did they publicly denounce the hateful rhetoric or offer to meet this President on neutral ground.

- In November 2019 Sherry Lynn Gros called MPD again to report trespass on the dam of LVWE residents with the fear LVWE was draining the lake again , which they were doing.
 - FOLLOW UP: MPD referred it to a civil matter.

- On 10/29/2019 Purchased outdoor locking Kiosk for the purpose of posting public bulletins at East Park. Kiosk has not been set up yet. Tentative date is March 2020 to save money for the hardware to install it and to turn on park light owned by Alabama Power. The light is to provide security from vandalism or theft of assets.

- We are currently working on a proposed budget for the 2020 FY.
 - Alabama Power Light Pole Lease Agreement submitted to Board of Directors. This is for power pole that has been non-working since 2007. Alabama Power says it is their pole, they will maintain it. The lease is for 36 months to keep the light on. This will provide some safety, security, and reduce potential liability. Total cost of \$1,739.52 for 3 years.
 - We are looking at signing an agreement with Mobile Baykeeper to monitor monthly the quality of our Lake Water to make sure it is safe for swimming and fishing.
 - Lake Insurance: We are currently paying in excess of 2700.00 annually for insurance that does NOT represent our needs. We are paying for coverage for approximately 100 LVWE homes (units) that have no need for coverage as LVWE have no liability regarding the lake. We will be taking a hard look at this coverage to make sure we pay for what we need and nothing more. It

comes due again in May 2020. Total cost is unknown at this time but less than \$2700.00.

- Maintenance of common areas. East and West Park \$2,000 seasonally. It is unreasonable to rely on working or elderly families to maintain these properties.
- Maintain online web presence and website for the purpose of streamlining communications 24/7 with free access to everyone. Bylaws will be updated to reflect current technology.
- Basic operating supplies – office, meetings, and mailings as required by the bylaws.
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- 11/29/2020 Treasurer resigns citing fear of neighborhood reprisal against her family stating, “I cannot afford to be sued.” No votes were taken that day. Scheduled guest speaker did not show. President suspects it has to do with Lakeview West resident’s relationship as coworker with guest speaker (Ed William’s son in law?). One Lakeview West resident stated, “She’s a nut case and she should be locked away.” Another stated, “She’s a nut job.” Negative public sentiment has been created by the LVWE leadership and others causing them to publicly lash out at President on public media so hatefully that treasurer was having panic attacks and had to resign for her health. President sadly accepted Treasurer’s resignation. Board members, except for one, have said they preferred not to be identified so as not to take grief from the surrounding community.
- 12/12/2020 Mr. William Dixon is the first to be voted in by the Board of Directors as head of the Lake Optimist Conservation Corps. Mr. Dixon will take and record water depths, species counts, data gathering monthly throughout the year and other duties. He is responsible for submitting reports to the Board of Directors. He may make recommendations to the Board of Directors in writing.

IN THE PIPELINE

As stakeholders of Highland Park Subdivision, we are responsible to ground our Board of Directors in proper use and execution of our bylaws, covenants, and articles of Incorporation, and establish the proper authority with state, local, and public entities. We are responsible to maintain our properties in good working order for the families and future generations of Highland Park Subdivision.

- We continue to work on grant funding for dam and spillway repair. We have added a 100-year plan to satisfy portions of some of the grant requirements. This includes the development of a small hydroelectric station to generate enough electricity throughout the years to offset our Corporation’s costs.
- Restock Lake Optimist with Fish to control mosquito population and for fishing. Contingent upon budget, donations, and the ability to secure the land, lake, dam, and spillway from trespass.

- Restore Lake Optimist to its highest ecological balance to increase a haven for its living assets.
- Erect and maintain proper signage within the subdivision to minimize confusion.
- Discuss with insurance company about nonresident usage of lake, land, dam, and spillway.
- Traffic Concerns to be addressed with County DOT and Maintenance (that curve by the park)
 - FOLLOW UP: We see that the County put rumble strips with engineering reflective white paint at the end of Old Government St in October or November. We would like to see that at our dangerous curve on Lakeview Dr E where Ms Ryals dog was killed recently and where children and others cross the road to enter East Park.
- Gating the Community
- Discuss the assessment of resident fees to meet the budget and membership dues.
- Work with the city regarding fire and ambulance agreements.
 - FOLLOW UP – We will all be facing this by 2022 according to City Hall, Mayor Stimpson. A committee will be appointed to explore all viable options.
- Work on rules of decorum for park usage and public meetings.
- Setting up annual lake fees residents can pay online and discuss the very minimum amount of money needed to keep the grass cut etc. Dam repairs are expected to come from grants not the residents.

FOLLOW UP: This is ready to go live. Contingent upon budget review and Board approval.

THE FIRST ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD APRIL 21, 2020

Per our Bylaws,

ARTICLE III

MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 1. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting of the members shall be held in the County of Mobile, State of Alabama, on the third Tuesday in the month of April of each year, beginning with the year 1968, at the hour of 8:00 P.M. for the purpose of electing Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may come before the meeting. If the day fixed for the annual meeting shall be a legal holiday in the State of Alabama, such meeting shall be held on the next succeeding business day. If the election of Directors shall not be held on the day designated herein for any annual meeting, or at any adjournment thereof, the Board of Directors shall cause the election to be held at a special meeting of the members as soon thereafter as convenient.

We will send out invitations and criteria for attendance as this date draws near.

I know each and everyone of you, as an active member of Highland Park Community Association, has concerns regarding property values or everyday lakeside community living. Please feel free to contact this Board of Directors with your concerns at administration@highlandparkcommunityassociation.com And visit us at our website www.highlandparkcommunityassociation.com We look forward to hearing from you.

Nonresidents may ask about joining Friends of the Lake, Volunteers are eligible to be voted into Friends of the Lake status upon receipt of application, review, and approval of the Board of Directors. If you would like to apply for "Friends of the Lake" membership please contact: administration@highlandparkcommunityassociation.com

Kind Regards,

Sherry Lynn Gros, President

HPCA Inc.

2019 END OF YEAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

GARDEN COMMITTEE : I completely weeded the bed, put down weed preventer and fertilized the roses back in late October/early November. I have mowed the grass twice since October. I will weed the bed again on the Nov. 27th or 28th (this Thurs or Fri) and mow the grass/clean up leaves. In January, landscape fabric will go down, the lirioppe will be cut back and the roses will be pruned back in February. I did not plant any flowers so we could give the dirt in the bed a chance to be re-nourished. I will look into planting some late April/early May. Additionally, I have some ideas for the tip of the triangle where the kids wait for their bus. I would like to discuss those ideas face to face with you guys at the next meeting. After the first of the year.

P.W. Garden Committee Head for HPCA

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS:

CRIME AND SAFETY: