

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
UNIVERSITY PLACE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

The regular meeting held Wednesday August 23, 2017 was recessed and reconvened Wednesday August 30, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Trust Bank, located at 6320 Venture Drive, Lakewood Ranch, Florida 34202.

Present and constituting a quorum were:

Richard Romanoff, Jr.	Chairman
Frank Ingrassia	Vice Chairman
Jane Lange ( <i>via phone</i> )	Assistant Secretary
Victoria Kahle	Assistant Secretary
Armand Houze	Assistant Secretary

Also present were:

Robert Nanni	District Manager
Lynn Jackson	Operations Manager
Numerous Residents	

*The following is a summary of the discussions and actions taken at the August 30, 2017 University Place Community Development District's Board of Supervisors Reconvened Meeting.*

**FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mr. Nanni called the meeting to order. Supervisors introduced themselves.

On MOTION by Ms. Kahle seconded by Mr. Ingrassia with all in favor, Ms. Lange was authorized to participate and vote in this meeting via telephone.
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**SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

- Resident, Mina Ajrab provided his comments regarding missing submissions for expensive gate motors in the June minutes, which states residents requested a CDD survey for options

at their gate. After two years, two options were presented which resulted in an increase. At today's meeting, he is submitting a survey taken for those who want manned gates from the Next Door website.

- 42 residents were surveyed. 31 residents preferred that the manned gate be brought back, 11 are happy with the current system. However, of the group, only 17 wanted an increase in fees. He would like to submit this survey tonight for the record as promised for those who took the survey.
- Even at a generous margin of error of 15 points which is use, it means 66% to 81% of all residents surveyed would prefer the manned gate be brought back, per Mr. Ajrab.
- Finally, Mr. Ajrab questioned for the CDD budget today whether Mr. Romanoff is planning to recuse himself during tonight's vote since his company is a recipient of general funds being voted on tonight.

The Board reiterates: The budget vote is for funding, not specific to any vendor. Also, the Ajrab survey taken was from Next Door users only, and a small subset of the 403 resident representatives, whose opinions on the same topic were solicited TWICE by the CDD Board, using the HOA's broadcast email system.

**THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Continued Public Hearing to Adopt the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018**

**A. Fiscal Year 2018 Budget**

- The 2018 budget was re-presented to the Board and audience by Mr. Houze.
- The objective of the Board is to keep operating costs as reasonable as possible. They did account for increases in insurance, some anticipated expenses and a slight increase (2%) from some of their existing vendors.
- Discussion ensued regarding maintenance of the Reserves.
- The budget is presented as a highwater mark budget. It needed to be set this way so that if the board with manned gates, they would have to have the budget to support that cost.
- They cannot increase the budget any further than the highwater mark amount, so any expenses discovered after the initial budget was submitted cannot be added.

- The expenses were reviewed and the bottom line is \$748,446, which is just a few thousand less than the actual highwater mark budget which was submitted to the County earlier. The difference was lowered Reserves for Gates (it had been doubled).
- The budget was reviewed and the major categories for 2018 were compared to those of the 2017 budget. Each category was discussed and reviewed.
- There is a \$62,000 increase from last year, which is due to the increased cost for a manned gate. If we keep the current gate system with Envera it would reduce the budget to \$709,313. The only practical way to reduce the budget this year is to keep the gate management with Envera, and not have manned gates.
- Discussion ensued regarding the surveys presented to the community regarding having a manned gate by the CDD, including the responses and the perceived lack of information (the entire budget).
- Discussion ensued regarding the Reserves and the pending reserve study.
- Discussion ensued regarding road issues and how it relates to the budget, how we saved money by negotiating with original contractors in arbitration, thus reducing our Reserve requirements for Roads.
- Further discussion provided detail on how the budget would be impacted by having manned gates, vs keeping the same Envera system in place.
- Mr. Ingrassia quoted annual CDD Fees and increases in the cost per year for each neighborhood within University Place: Charleston, Magnolia, Hampton, Ashley, Carriage Run and Indigo for both manned and unmanned gates, so residents could get a feel for the bottom line to them in this decision.

Mr. Nanni declared the continued public hearing open to adopt the Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

- Residents presented their comments to the Board regarding the budget.
- Questions were asked regarding the irrigation. The resident was informed there are a number of line items for irrigation within the budget. One is to pay the contractors who manage and repair the irrigation, another is for routine repair and maintenance, and then there is another line for the Reserve, which the Board is putting aside for next year.

- A Resident asked what is covered by each line item. She was informed that R&M cover the daily repairs and the Reserves covers when they have to completely replace items such as the control boxes.
- The question arose whether those who run into the gates are assessed a damage fee. There is a fee of \$190 if they can be found or if their license plate recognized.
- The question arose whether they will paint the fence around Pond #2. It was indicated this item was not in the budget. However, it will be investigated.
- Ms. Kerwin was informed the survey sent out from the CDD on August 24, 2018 was designed by the Board.
- Mr. Zemil stated at the last meeting the pumps were discussed and it was stated to replace the pumps would be \$50,000 each. He questioned what steps are they taking to replace these pumps as they will eventually go bad, and questioned why is there not a program in place to replace them. He was informed, currently, there is a rolling maintenance program which makes them like new and preventative maintenance is part of the program. This process is much less expensive than replacing the entire system.
- A resident questioned who on the Board was responsible for reading the Envera metrics to know what is going on at all times. Discussion ensued regarding the manned gates and the quality of individuals that would be hired to man the gates. Further, discussion ensued regarding the financial costs regarding the manned and unmanned gates.
- A resident inquired about the official survey which was sent out. The resident questioned about the two choices wherein both choices had an increase. He questioned whether there was a choice where fees were not increased. Discussion ensued regarding increase or no increase as it relates to the choices.
- Further, discussion ensued regarding the manned and unmanned gates.
- Resident, Ms. Bishop expressed her frustration and believes her CDD fee is high as a percentage of her monthly cost at 15% and wondered if they cannot find a way to keep it leveled or to lower it.

- She is aware a survey was done for the cost of manned gates and inquired if the Board was looking at ways to ensure Envera is competitive for them. She mirrored the question on how the Board is monitoring Envera.
- Currently, she is not happy with Envera and has not been overly impressed with their performance and their consistency. She feels a lot of money has been spent on Envera and a lot of recommendations are taken from them, and she wants to ensure the CDD is spending the money wisely as it seems Envera is a big part of the budget.
- Her third concern was the letter she sent to the Board last week. She expressed her letter to the Board stated they need to find a way of listening to the community better. She thinks it would be wonderful at the beginning of the budget year to send out a survey asking residents “what items are important to them”, maybe some questions, and to rank these items. She would like to challenge the Board to listen to the community by broadening how they do surveys and doing them sooner instead of reactive to the meeting last week.
- Lastly, she stated her disappointment on how the meetings go. She feels as though the meetings are political with taking sides. For example, “I’m for manned gates, I’m for this”. She would like the Board to take a step back and know the residents have similar thoughts and concerns as they live in the neighborhood and all want their property values to remain good. She thinks if you are against manned gates, or if you dislike Envera to think about other ways to improve things. She dislikes coming to these meetings as she wishes they were more civil.
- Mr. Williams has lived in the community since day one and he served on various Boards and stated they have tried everything from manned gates to unmanned gates to buttons to PIN codes. He thinks that both Boards (HOA and CDD) have exhausted all the options and he firmly believes what we have now is the best. He stated, we have to go forward as we are with Envera and forget all the paraphernalia about letting people in and out and just leave it as it is.
- Ms. Wilson is not familiar with the Sunshine Law. She questioned the notices of the increase that goes out to the residents. She stated the HOA was able to send the entire budget with their packets for the annual meeting. Is it possible to do the same

for the CDD? Mr. Romanoff informed her the CDD is a governmental agency and bound to the same rules and regulations, their budget is published, but a written copy can be requested, but it is also posted and has been for many months on the website, so it is accessible.

- Mr. Nanni stated, the language of the statutes that relate to the letter that go out are specific and your question would have us ask the District's attorney if when a trim notice is sent out is it appropriate to attach a copy of the budget. The budget is sent to the County, the CDD does not send out the trim notice.
- Ms. Bishop questioned whether it would be possible to send the information to Stephanie of the HOA that would include the budget prior to the trim notice being received by the community.
- Ms. Kahle felt Ms. Bishop had a great idea about surveying earlier in the year before we do the budget. She felt that was a wonderful suggestion.
- A resident indicated she listened to her fellow residents and has heard both sides of the issue, and both sides have compelling responses. However, she has lived through manned and unmanned, there is no value added for a manned gate and the service is not better with a manned gate. Therefore, the same issues you have with Envera you have with a person there.
- Another resident agreed with Ms. Bishop regarding better communication from the Board, he thinks it goes both ways. He commends the Board for the survey which was sent out, but it felt that it should have been sent sooner.
- Mr. Romanoff addressed the survey concerns. He would like to find some ways to do it, any suggestions or Shelly would work with the Board and have some ideas to help they are open to that.
- Ms. Kahle stated they should continue trying even though they have not had good results. She was delighted with the 114 responses they received from the most recent manned gate survey undertaken by the CDD. It was a pleasure to read them and have that kind of response. To do it earlier is a great idea.
- A resident questioned if there is a difference between manned and unmanned gates. Are there statistics which have been collected to determine whether or not a manned gated or the current set up is best? Have the number of vandalizations/robberies

which occurred within our community increased or decreased? Mr. Romanoff stated it is a perception. There have been meetings with the Sheriff's office and discussion of some of the crime within our community. They have been told by the District Commander that our community has one of the lowest crime rates of anyone in the County.

- The other thing about the crime statistics we seem to have a spurt of activity once in a while and it doesn't happen for a long time and then there is another number of robberies. Most of it is vandalism, some of it is theft.

Mr. Nanni declared the continued public hearing closed.

**B. Consideration of Resolution 2017-03 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget**

- Ms. Lange stated she can see the need and desire for a manned gate, but once they polled the community and the responses were received, they as an elected Board member have to go with the wishes of the community.
- Ms. Kahle went through all the emails received and she was pleased to read them. She contacted one resident who is a realtor within the community to get his permission to read his email because he has made some excellent points in the email he sent. He is a working realtor who lives and sells in the neighborhood. Ms. Kahle read his email to the Board and residents present.

*As a realtor, I entered numerous gated communities. All gated CDD communities that have greeters are too laxed in their gate entry standards. The greeters quickly get used to lawn teams, and other service providers, so they quit checking credentials and comparing them to guest lists. Going back to greeters is going back to a less secure environment like we had prior to Envera. I do not care how well-intentioned the greeters may be, but it is human nature to waive regular vendors in without checking, thus increasing the opportunity for misuse or misrepresentation. I would also note that many communities with greeters such as University Park Country Club also has significant backups and peak times. UPCC is known to getting strict on*

*entry requirements than relaxing them due to backups. When residents complain, they go back to stricter entrance checks. What is the priority? Faster entry or more secure? Last but not least, is there increased cost of having manned gates? CDDs are not in favor of today's market. Pat Neal and other developers have learned this so all the new developments that are starting now either have no CDD or a minimal CDD compared to ours. Increasing the CDD fee will have a negative impact on demand for University Place and in turn values in University Place. Buyers today compare CDD costs more stringently than they did in past years.*

- Ms. Kahle stated the majority of residents voted to keep Envera and not hire greeters (manned gates). Ms. Kahle thinks his points are well taken as a working relator in this area, and also the point that was made she felt was important that having a greeter will not increase security. If we want security, then we get more manned police cars we pay to have that done, or we do some other things, but having a greeter is not going to guarantee having a more secure neighborhood.

There being no further discussion,

On MOTION by Ms. Kahle seconded by Mr. Ingrassia with all in favor, Resolution 2017-03, Annual Appropriations of the District and Adopting the Budget for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2017; and ending September 30, 2018; and referencing the Maintenance and Benefit Special Assessments to be levied by the District, without the manned gates which would be the \$709,313, was adopted.

- Mr. Romanoff has to echo Ms. Bishop's comments because she made some valid points about the acrimony that goes on and surrounds these meetings particularly around budget time.



- Mr. Ingrassia has been on the CDD Board for nine years, and prior spent time on the Finance Committee of the HOA, and lately it is getting more and more contentious. This is just a job they are trying to do to serve the community and are trying to do the best job they can; save them as much money as they can and make the best decisions they can, based on everything they know. They talk to all the vendors and evaluate all the vendors and we go through other options and see who else is around that could do this type of maintenance or service, and they are constantly evaluating everything for the entire area.
- When they voted to bring Envera in, he did not want this as he wished to keep the manned gate for the sake of convenience of the appearance of a friendly community. However, in time, he was won over and thinks better security, and better service, is provided by having people go through this process.
- Mr. Ingrassia appreciates Mr. Ajrab trying to do the right thing for the community by bringing a fresh perspective. However, there are other sources of CDD information which are not official sources.
- - *Mr. Ingrassia stated for the record, let me, once again, address **Next Door**. We do not monitor or respond on this Social Media site -- it is intended for people in this and other nearby neighborhoods to share recommendations on vendors, or recipes, or good babysitters, etc. It is **not** an alternative platform from which to launch opinion polls, or misinformation programs, or campaigns for "invented" options, as some have attempted to do. Look, it is fine to discuss CDD or HOA issues with your neighbors – if you want to do it on Next Door, be our guest, but when that discussion is tainted with incomplete or inaccurate information, this becomes a problem. For example -- I am told that on Next Door it costs \$70,000 to replace the eight gate arms with magnetic breakaway arms - totally false! It actually costs only \$19,824 to replace all eight gate arms, and that is because we are getting them installed "at cost" by Envera, who also does the maintenance. We do not have an "option" of replacing just two at a time – this is someone's fantasy. Many people who voted in the second email opinion poll for manned or unmanned gates chose this "made up" option*

*– manned gates and no replacement of barrier arms --- that option was not on the table, and will not be considered. The CDD Board already had decided to replace the aging and failing gate arms as a matter of routine facilities management – and from our Reserves, **not** from the Budget.*

- *Several residents complained that they have not had a chance to review the Budget in detail. Well, the entire 2018 budget has been on the agenda, and in the Minutes, and on the CDD website in its entirety -- since April 26, 2017. Ample time for concerned residents to familiarize themselves with every line item and cost feature, during the reiterative discussions that took place at every meeting since April. Once again, our CDD website is [www.universityplacecdd.org](http://www.universityplacecdd.org)*
- *Lastly, articles occasionally appear in the East County Observer, regarding our CDD. We have no control over what is put in print, no editorial power, no review process and, frankly, we do not even get a copy of articles after the fact. Again, this is **not** an official source of what goes on in the University Place CDD.*
- *We hope the residents will find the time to attend a meeting or two during the course of the year, but at the very least take a look at the Minutes that are published after each meeting, and kept on the CDD website. Note that the CDD Board members are collectively and individually accessible by email at any time, using [Seat1|2|3|4|5@universityplacecdd.org](mailto:Seat1|2|3|4|5@universityplacecdd.org).*
- Mr. Ingrassia was asked for a copy of his power point presentation presented at the last meeting. He informed the resident it had been upgraded to the presentation done today and if he would like a copy of that one that he would be happy to provide it to him.
- Ms. Lange stated she appreciates everything everyone has said, but states it is difficult when you are on the Board and the majority of people who attend are complaining. She wanted them to know there is going to be one and/or two seats available to run for office for the CDD Board next year. This will be published and all the residents will know what happens, and it would be nice to have some of the more active and concerned residents run for office.

**C. Consideration of Resolution 2017-04 Levying Assessment for the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget**

There being no comments or questions,

On MOTION by Ms. Kahle seconded by Mr. Houze with all in favor, Resolution 2017-04 Levying and Imposing a Non-Ad Valorem Maintenance and Special Assessment for Fiscal Year 2018 was adopted.

**FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Supervisor Requests & Comments**

- Mr. Nanni was asked about Ms. Bishop’s letter. Ms. Bishop indicated the content of the letter was what she discussed previously during the public hearing.
- Mr. Romanoff indicated the letter will be published with the minutes.

**FIFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Public Comment Period**

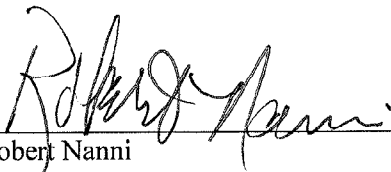
- Ms. Bishop had an additional comment. She wanted them to look at a back up to locking the pedestrian gates. She would like to this to be discussed again.

**SIXTH ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business,

On MOTION by Mr. Romanoff seconded by Mr. Ingrassia with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Robert Nanni  
 Secretary

  
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 Richard Romanoff, Jr.  
 Chairman



Search Neighbour



Home



University Place



Map

Categories



Recommendations



Classifieds



Free Items



Events



Crime & Safety



Lost & Found



Documents



General



Pet Directory

People



Neighbors



Public Agencies

## Post in General



Mina Ajrab, University Place



### Poll: Manned or Unmanned Gate Survey

After 2 years in the making the CDD sent out an email with numbers and only TWO options which result in an increase regarding our budget and gate. They left out an option to not spend \$70K from our reserves to replace working gate motors with new magneto/laser gate motors...so I added it as an option 1 to be presented and sent in 8/30.

Choose one:



I want a 12 hour manned Gate hybrid with our existing gate motors and Envera: NO INCREASE 60%



I want Envera only with new magneto/laser gate motors: INCREASE \$5/month/home 26%



I want a 12 hour manned Gate hybrid with new magneto/laser gate motors: INCREASE \$13/month/home

Voted

42 votes

5d ago · University Place



Reply

1 Thank · 12 Replies

*Include in 8-30-17 minutes.  
D. Nassiri*

Letter from homeowners (Bishops - 7708 Heyward Circle) to be read at 8/23 CDD meeting:

A bit of background, we've lived in the neighborhood for about 5 years, and feel our CDD costs are pretty high (they are 15% of our monthly payment).

### **Budget**

We have reviewed the tentative budget on the CDD website. We would like to ask that the CDD budget be as fiscally responsible as possible with our spending, while maintaining the safety and quality of our community. We are proponents of a live guard at the gate, but not at the cost of higher CDD monthly costs to the owners. However, as a casual observer of the CDD and community interaction, we feel people have simply taken a side and will defend that position based on politics and the way things are said. **I'd like to challenge us to get out of that mindset. At the end of the day, we all have the same desires - to protect our property values, maintain our quality of life, and spend our money wisely.**

I would like the board to sincerely look into a budget that would not raise already high costs and serve the wishes of the community. Determining whether to man the gates again or stick with a non-guard option will have opinions on both sides. However, if it's presented as only an option where the price will be increased, you will get votes against it for cost only. Where else could we cut costs and allow for this, assuming the majority of our community wishes to have a manned gate?

### **CDD Bond Payoff**

In an effort to find a way to reduce our monthly expenses, we've recently contacted Trent Severn to request information on a quote to pay down our CDD fees. I was told on the phone that the only option to pay down would be to pay off the bond portion and to get a quote the cost would be \$75 (for the administrative costs associated with processing a written request). This seems excessive to charge a fee for this information. If Trent Severn supports our CDD, residents should not have to pay to gather information.

### **Pedestrian Gates**

I have mentioned this at a previous CDD meeting, but will repeat it. It does our community no good to have a secured gate and then keep our pedestrian gate unlocked. I have suggested using FOBs like we do at the pool, and was told in a meeting that "our kids would lose them". I disagree, and find that a simple dismissal of the request. I have also heard that we used to have a keypad and those were continually destroyed.

**In closing, I'd like to suggest the CDD find a way to survey the residents with objective questions and answers to hear what the community's needs are, and meet the needs of the people living here. With a focus on priority items, we can maintain an acceptable budget and spend the money accordingly. Our goal should always be to keep our CDD costs as low as possible to maintain our property values (higher CDDs = less interest in buying homes in UP as the monthly expense is higher than equivalent priced homes in lower CDD communities).**

Thank you again for allowing us to send this in "virtually".

Shelly & Jason Bishop

*ATTACH to 8/30/17 Minutes*