

Woodmere Lakes Neighbors



hoa@woodmerelakes.com

www.woodmerelakes.com

*Owners Password WML *fl*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING**

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

6:30 PM

**Via Zoom Video
Conference**

2021 ANNUAL MEETING

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Deb reported that the hedge replacements have been completed and the irrigation has been set. Experienced has been contacted and they will schedule next week. The pressure washing has been completed. There were two quotes for the pressure washing of the exterior fencing that was obtained. Discussion was had on the past quotes for the exterior fence cleaning. Deb stated to get a quote from Snowbird Services. Dimond Santos stated that Snowbird Services uses bleach.

Deb stated that the environmental report will be due to the county in 2021. The mailbox posts repair and painting will need to be done in 2021. The Board should consider updating the landscaping medians and monument signs. Cari has been working on the lighting for the entrances and should continue in 2021. The future Board should continue the ARC standards, there was a lot of money spent on updating these standards. The maintenance company that maintains the ponds is doing a fantastic job and this company should continue to service the ponds.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Deborah Kiefer-Bowman 52 votes– Term expires 2023

Donna Chianese – 49 votes

Dimond Santos – 34 votes

We would to thank everyone who took the time to mail in a vote for their candidate.

NEW BUSINESS:

Carryover: Surplus Rollover for year ending December 31, 2021 PASSED with 51 yes and 2 no owner votes.

OWNER COMMENTS: Owner asked about repaving the roads. Cari stated that the community will need to sign a petition and present it to the county.

President

Cari McDowell

cari@woodmerelakes.com

Term Expires 2022

Vice President

Deborah Bowman-Kiefer

bobbyanddeb@comcast.com

Term Expires 2023

Director

Donna Chianese

donna120457@gmail.com

Term Expires 2023

Treasurer

Randall Wood

randall@woodmerelakes.com

Term Expires 2022

Secretary

Dimond Santos

dimond@woodmerelakes.com

Term Expires 2023

Rules Committee

**Neighbors
Please Join**

Fining Committee

Mark Linewebber

Jon McCaffery

Jim Springer

**Pond/Landscaping
Committee**

Liaison

Deborah Bowman-Kiefer

Cindy Tomasiak

Sasan Woodward

Anne Jensen

Ronald Mutz

**Architectural Review
Committee**

Michael Kitt

Ronald Mutz

Liaison Dimond Santos

Neighbors

Please Join

Management

**Sunstate Association Management
Group**

Brian Rivenbark CAM

(941) 870 – 4920

Brian@sunstatemanagement.com

Teri Lennon, Assistant

(941) 870 – 4920 ext. 217

Teri@sunstatemanagement.com

Mailing Address

PO Box 18809

Sarasota, Florida 34276

Welcome Committee

Liaison Donna Chianese

Anne Jensen

Neighbors

Please Join

Social Committee

**Neighbors
Please Join**

Déjà vu for some of you.

WOODMERE: A LOCAL TOWN FORGOTTEN

Few people realize there once was a thriving community between Venice and Englewood which, at its peak in the 1920s, had a larger population than either Venice or Englewood achieved until the 1950s.

Let's rediscover the town that significantly contributed to the growth of Venice. This self-contained community was first called Manasota, then Woodmere, and it played an important part in local history. The names have been reused in Venice, but few people realize their origin. Many of us drive past the location where the huge lumber mill once proudly stood, without realizing that it ever existed.



The site itself holds nothing to remind us of its predominant past. Built in 1918 on 10 acres, the town and its 4-story mill were quite a sight. Located just over a mile south of US 41 on Englewood Road (Route 776), the town was situated roughly where the Former Dome Flea Market and Englewood Disposal Company are today.

Our story begins in 1917, when Herman C. Kluge, a lumber cruiser for a New York company, was sent to search for suitable pine forests to be harvested for use in Europe during WWI. Lumber was desperately needed for a variety of uses including shipbuilding and railroad ties. At that time, as much as 50% of the area between Venice and Charlotte Harbor was longleaf pine forests. This general area was referred to as "Pine Flats." Based on Kluge's favorable findings, the Manasota Lumber Corporation broke ground for the new mill town on October 19, 1918, and originally called it Manasota.

Mr. Kluge was an interesting individual.

He owned a PierceArrow touring car, specially fitted with flanged wheels that could travel on the rail lines. He used it for trips between the lumber town and Venice, and also for social excursions to Sarasota with his wife Anna and friends. Mr. Kluge stayed for about a year, helping to develop the rail lines and install logging machines. Since he was a lumber cruiser by trade, he was subsequently sent to Argentina to scout out new timber fields.

By the time the mill was built, lumber was no longer needed for the war effort, but remained in widespread demand. Back in 1884, a State of Florida Land Grant deeded to any railroad company an astonishing 10,000 acres of land for every mile of track laid.

The Manasota Lumber Corporation leased timber rights on thousands of acres and ran narrow gauge rail lines throughout the area. Property holdings of the lumber company were part of a total 753,000-acre land grant given to the Tampa, Peace Creek and Saint John's River Railroad; later changing names to the Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railroad Company. The huge mill, roughly the size of a full city block, was constructed so that wood could be roughcut or finely finished and detailed onsite. Average production figures were reported to have been between 30,000 and 42,000 board feet of lumber per day. The thriving town included a 1200person capacity dining hall, primarily for the single men. It was also put to use as a recreation center and movie theater. Housing for up to 1500 workers was constructed on various size and quality levels. Executives and their families were provided with wellbuilt, twostory homes. Foremen resided in onestory homes, and laborers lived in very plain, smaller dormitories.

The town also had a post office, railroad yard with two locomotives, a large machine shop, a Catholic and a Protestant Church, a mule corral, several ponds and a commissary. The commissary was accessible to everyone and sold ice, beef and poultry to people living in the surrounding area.

Early on, distribution of bootleg whiskey led to knife and gun fights. To combat the problem and to discourage crime in general, the entire compound was surrounded by a high, electrified wire fence with a gated entrance. Drinking was no longer allowed on the property, and entering or leaving was not permitted after 9 p.m. except for Saturdays.

These strict and effective rules were put in force to protect the workers and their families. Saturday was reserved for the weekly trip by rail to Sarasota. The townspeople shopped for items that could not be obtained from the commissary, and also went to enjoy a night out in the city.

Two company train cars were modified to accommodate passengers by being fitted with wooden seats. These cars left at 6:30 p.m. and returned around 11 p.m.

Plant Manager Peter Warwick, concerned with safeguarding the welfare of the workers and their families, established a policy of withholding a portion of all earnings each payday. This way, all employees had some money saved for them in case of layoff. In addition, he hired a tutor named Jefferson Stone to teach the children since the town did not have a school.

In 1921, the entire mill town was purchased by the NocateeManatee Freight Company, and the name was changed from Manasota to Woodmere. During that era, the mill was one of the largest in the state. Nearly all of the lumber used by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in the building of Venice came from this mill. A great deal of the finished wood was hauled to Tampa for broad distribution to other destinations.

The Woodmere mill continued heavy operation until 1923. In a five-year period of time, most of the useable timber had been stripped from the countryside and thousands of acres had been cleared. Logging and milling continued for a while on a smaller scale. Perhaps the supply of natural resources seemed unlimited, and there was no consideration for reclamation of the land. Since no replanting was done, the company in essence ran itself out of business. Woodmere was eventually abandoned and became a ghost town.

On January 19, 1929, the Sarasota Herald reported, "The rain came as a blessed relief to Englewood, lessening as it did the constant danger from wood and grass fires around the district. Fortunately, we have escaped material damage but Woodmere, to the north came close to being wiped out entirely.

Twenty-one houses of the abandoned town were burned to the ground and the remainder of the houses barely saved. Most of those burned were in the old laborers quarters of the old lumber town."

The mill itself was destroyed in a great fire in 1930, and during those lean years of the Great Depression, most of the remaining buildings were salvaged for materials. However, a few of the original two-story buildings survive to this day, having been relocated to Siesta Key, Casey Key and Englewood. One of the homes saved, which has been remodeled and moved to the upper end of Casey Key, had once been the Kluge residence.

As in nature, things don't really cease to exist; they become something else. Some of the foundation stones from Woodmere were used to help build the future by being incorporated into the construction of the Venice jetty.