

WOODMERE LAKES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

May 18th, 2021

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President, Cari McDowell at 6:30 pm.

NOTICE: The meeting was posted in accordance with the By-laws of the Association and Florida statute 720.

QUORUM: A quorum was established with the following board members present: President - Cari McDowell, Vice President - Deborah Kiefer, Treasurer - Randall Wood, Secretary - Dimond Santos & Director Donna Chianese. Brian Rivenbark was present to represent Sunstate Management.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

A **Motion** by Dimond and seconded by Randall to approve the April 20th Board meeting minutes. **Motion passed unanimously.**

PRESIDENTS REPORT: No Report

TREASURERS REPORT: As Attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the April 2021 financials.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Fence pressure washing: Brian stated that the pressure washing of the fence should have been completed on May 17th

Mailbox Painting/ missing number quote: Brian stated that the work was completed and paid for in the beginning of May

Tree Removal 4233/4235 Tennyson Area: Brian stated that the proposal was sent in on April 21st. Cari stated that two of the trees were removed but there was one tree that was not completely cut down. Brian will contact Paradise

Discuss Annual Flowers Update: Brian will need to contact the irrigation company to have the irrigation uncapped so the flowers can be installed

Quote from Greenscapes for the Center islands: Deb stated that the rocks from the original Greenscapes quote were removed which brought down the total cost to \$11,200. There are other quotes that were submitted. Deb also stated that the landscaping on the boulevard is looking dated and will need to be updated soon. Deb does have quotes for the Boulevard as well. Brief discussion followed regarding getting quotes for the median landscaping. Brian stated that he will contact MRT and get another couple quotes.

NEW BUSINESS

Compliance Report: Brian gave a report on active violations in the community. Brian stated that 4132 Hemingway for debris in entryway and lot maintenance dirty driveway. 4224 Tennyson has violation on a dirty sidewalk and a dirty sidewalk. Discussion was had on having an executive meeting with the Attorney and the clean slate letter. 4314 Manfield with the unapproved bronze front entryway was discussed as part of the fining stage.

A **Motion** was made by Deb and seconded by Donna to impose fines of \$100 per day not to exceed \$1000 per violation.

April Financials & Overdue Owners: As attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the April financials. Brian reported on the current AR and the past due owners.

Waiving of late fees: Cari suggested waiving the late fees for the three owners on the AR report

A **Motion** was made by Donna and seconded by Dimond to waive the late fees and interest for the three homeowners on the current AR report. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ARC APPLICATIONS:

4304 Wordsworth – New roof
4326 Wordsworth – New roof
4297 Wordsworth – Driveway extension
4223 Tennyson – New roof
4257 Tennyson – New roof
4287 Manfield – Install brown motorized roll down screen
4004 Landor – New roof
4008 Landor – Exterior paint
4001 Landor – New windows

A **MOTION** was made by Dimond and seconded by Deb to approve the ARC requests listed above with the stipulation that the roll down screen at 4287 Manfield encasing or brackets that hold the screening if visible be painted the same color of the body of the home. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Homeowner Comments –

Owner asked why a certain owner can fly a socialism flag. Brian stated that the Association does not have any flag restrictions in the documents

Owner asked if she is not in compliance because she was never received a copy of the HOA declarations. Discussion followed regarding who transfers the declarations. Brian stated that the seller is responsible for transferring the declarations to the buyer.

Deb read from an owner comment who asked if the Association can install a library box at the entrances. This will be included on the next agenda

Cari stated she will be putting a sunset gathering together at Manasota Beach for the people on the facebook page. The lake company was on property trimming the primrose on the litoral shelf.

Next Meeting Date – June 15th , 2021 at 6:30

Adjourned meeting at 7:51PM

WOODMERE LAKES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

June 22nd , 2021

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President, Cari McDowell at 6:30 pm.

NOTICE: The meeting was posted in accordance with the By-laws of the Association and Florida statute 720.

QUORUM: A quorum was established with the following board members present President - Cari McDowell, Vice President - Deborah Kiefer, Treasurer - Randall Wood, Secretary - Dimond Santos & Director Donna Chianese. Brian Rivenbark was present to represent Sunstate Management.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The approval of the May 18th Board meeting and the June 3rd closed Board meeting were tabled by Deb. They will be approved at the July meeting.

Presentation from Cathy Duff from the Sarasota County Sheriff's Department followed regarding crime in Woodmere Lakes and how to prevent it

PRESIDENTS REPORT: No Report

TREASURERS REPORT: As Attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the May 2021 financials.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discuss Annual Flowers Update: Brian stated that the flowers will be installed by the end of the first week of July The location of the plants were marked with blue flags. Brian also stated he has contacted Dave Arend to make sure the irrigation is working to water in the plants. Cari suggested the Board members take a look at the location of the flags.

Center island replanting quotes: Brian presented a quote from Twin Palms for the landscape replacement on the center islands at the entrances The quote from Twin Palms is in the amount of \$4,201.00.

A **MOTION** was made by Dimond and seconded by Donna to approve the Twin Palms quote at \$4,201. **Motion passed 4-1 with Deb voting no.**

Monument Sign Entrance Light Posts quotes: Cari Presented two quotes for front entrance lighting posts There was a quote from Best Electric and Sergeants electric. Sergeants electric quote had three different options. Donna and Randall agreed that option B looks like the best option. Deb stated that the Association should purchase two more light posts. The Board agreed.

A **MOTION** was made by Randall and seconded by Cari to approve sergeants Electric option B in the amount of \$14,177.00 and to include the purchase of two additional light post to keep in storage. **Motion passed unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

Compliance Report: Brian gave a report on active violations in the community. Brian stated that 4232 Tennyson is up for fining for the dirty sidewalk and the dirty driveway. Brian also recommended sending a self-help letter to have the sidewalk and the driveway pressure washed and then billed back to the owner just as what is being done regarding the landscaping.

A **Motion** was made by Deb and seconded by Randall to approve a self help to pressure wash the sidewalk and the driveway at 4232 Tennyson. **Motion passed unanimously.**

May Financials report: As attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the May financials.

ARC APPLICATIONS:

1. 4252 Wordsworth Roehr – New Roof Shake wood
2. 4291 Manfield Rutherford – New White Fence backyard
3. 4254 Tennyson Okinczyc - Paint Casa Blanca & Trim Townhall Tan (no accent) **There must be an accent color or white**
4. 4327 Manfield Herbig - Pool Install & White Cage
5. 4297 Wordsworth Moore - Pavers and Widen driveway
6. 4260 Wordsworth Graf - Windows
7. 4239 Tennyson - Roof Estate Grey/Weather wood – **The color must be drift wood or Weather wood.**
8. 4136 Hemingway - Pavers
9. 4287 Wordsworth Way - Beige Hurricane shutters – Base of the shutters must be same color of the house.
10. 4287 Wordsworth Way New Roof – Driftwood equivalent
11. 4287 Wordsworth Way - Generator and Propane Tank – **will need to know location and size of propane tank and if it is going to be buried.**
12. 4143 Hemingway Peters - Repaint Exterior

A **MOTION** was made by Donna and seconded by to approve the ARC requests listed above with notes at 4254 Tennyson, 4239 Tennyson and tabling the propane tank at 4287 Wordsworth **Motion passed unanimously.**

Homeowner Comments –

Owner stated that he has bats in his attic, he knows they are protected but asked if anyone has experience on handling the bats. The Board suggested contacting a pest control company.

Randall stated that the streetlights are looking moldy. Brian will contact the county to see about getting them cleaned up.

Next Meeting Date – July 20th , 2021 at 6:30

Adjourned meeting at 7:59PM

WOODMERE LAKES HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

July 20th, 2021

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President, Cari McDowell at 6:30 pm.

NOTICE: The meeting was posted in accordance with the By-laws of the Association and Florida statute 720.

QUORUM: A quorum was established with the following board members present: President - Cari McDowell, Vice President - Deborah Kiefer, Treasurer - Randall Wood, & Secretary - Dimond Santos. Brian Rivenbark was present to represent Sunstate Management.

Director Donna Chianese was absent

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

A **MOTION** was made by Dimond and seconded by Deb to table the minutes from May 18th, June 3rd, And June 22nd 2021, Board meeting.

Dimond stated his motion is based on the BOD receiving 8 or 9 copies of the meeting minutes from the manager Brian. Brian stated he emailed the 3 sets of meeting minutes to the board on 6/22/21 immediately following the June meeting and again in the board packets on 7/16/21 for review. Cari states the board had a month to review them and make corrections. In the past, the board made the necessary missed corrections at the meetings and approved them as corrected.

Motion passed 2-2 with Cari and Randall voting no.

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Cari read from a presented letter as attached to these minutes.

TREASURERS REPORT: As Attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the June 2021 financials.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discuss Annual Flowers Update: Cari stated that the flowers were installed but were not installed as per the placement of the flags. There was added cost for mulch which was not on the initial estimate. Brian went on to report that Larry stated he put the mulch down so the flowers could have moisture. Cari stated that additional cost was not approved in the initial estimate and the displaced rocks should have been moved back around the flowers for a uniform look.

A **Motion** was made by Dimond to approve the added cost for mulch there was not a second so the motion failed

Center island replanting quotes: Brian stated that the center island planting project is scheduled to begin on July 22nd.

Monument Sign Entrance Light Posts quotes: Cari met with Sergeants Electric today and a plan was made for the placement of the lights. She asked the other board members to take a look at the drawn placement and give any feedback if they disapprove before install.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on getting a second opinion from Attorney: Cari stated that some Board members have reached out to the Partner in the Kevin Wells Law firm. Cari asked for a Motion but there was no Motion.

Compliance Report: Brian gave a report on active violations in the community. Brian reported that the home at 4326 Manfield was sent multiple letters regarding a dead tree in the yard. Brian stated that the owner replied in April that the tree was not dead as per advice from Home Depot. Brian put the violation on monitor.

A **MOTION** was made by Dimond and seconded by Randall to not fine the owner at 4326 Manfield and to give them the opportunity to present the evidence that the tree will survive. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Move Board meetings to in Person Meetings: Deb stated that she would like to start in person meetings. Brian stated that he could also use his camera to allow for Zoom meetings.

A **MOTION** was made by Deb and seconded by Randall to allow in person meetings along with Zoom meetings as long as it was held at the Jacaranda library. **Motion passed unanimously**

ARC APPLICATIONS:

1. 4236 Tennyson – McPartlan Pavers - Approved
2. 4273 Tennyson – Lamb – Generator – Approved with screening of the generator.
3. 4217 Tennyson – Werela, Pavers - Approved
4. 4347 Manfield Dr – Swain – Paint – Approved as long as the trim and accent is white
5. 4015 Landor – Chiodo- Roof - Approved

A **MOTION** was made by Randall and seconded by Deb to approve the ARC requests with the recommendations on 4273 Tennyson and 4347 Manfield. **Motion passed unanimously**

Homeowner Comments –

Ron Mutz asked Brian to send the ARC list with each ARC request as they come in.

Ron also asked what the status is on 4232 Tennyson, the power is not on in the home and there is evidence of mold growing in the lanai area. Brian will email the owner this information. Brian stated that the yard is being mowed but there were a large number of weeds in the beds. Brian will contact the landscaper to weed the beds. Brian also stated that the driveway and the sidewalks were pressure washed and this cost was billed back to the owner as per the self-help letter that was mailed 14 days in advance of the work being done.

Next Meeting Date – August 17th , 2021 at 6:30

Adjourned meeting at 7:24PM

Dear Board Members,

No individual board members should be making decisions, expenditures, or contacting the attorney without the collective board's knowledge or vote.

This is not proper procedure according to our By Laws, Declaration, Non-Profit Corporate law chapter 617 and HOA chapter 720. A board is a collective body and does not give authority to individual members to act on their corporations' behalf without a collective vote or procedures already set forth by the BOD and Governing Documents. If any board members act on their own and not as a collective board, they may become personally liable for their actions and may not be covered by the board legal counsel or insurance. If the fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, or to act within scope are breached, the individual breaching the duty is potentially liable to the association for any damages caused to the association as a result of the breach.

If there is something you wish to be discussed or done, ask to have it added to the agenda or reach out to the entire board of directors via an approved legal method.

Here are some recent examples of this possible breach I have been made aware of:

Board members contacting the attorney and refusing to share those communications with entire board. Those communications were referenced and discussed at an official board meeting without board members having access to that information and are HOA records that incurred legal fees on behalf of the HOA.

Board members approving expenses (flags) without board vote or knowledge

Board members unauthorized direct contact with the partner of the HOAs law firm for a second opinion without board vote in reference to bronze cage issue only

Some board members not requesting a second opinion on other compliance issues the attorney advised on. (Could be construed as personal vendetta)

Board members trying to vote and pass items via an email vote outside of an official board meeting

These actions are similar to what happened with previous boards and are part of the reason the board was such a mess and we are still cleaning it up. This is not how I wish to see the board run. We don't have to agree on everything, but we have to follow procedure and keep to our fiduciary duty. I know we aren't all perfect and we make mistakes and have misunderstandings, so I am asking for this type of behavior to stop now before it costs the HOA more money and opens us up for effective legal action.

Thank you,
Cari

Cari McDowell
President
Woodmere Lakes Homeowners Association Inc.
(941) 234-6304
Cari@WoodmereLakes.com

WOODMERE LAKES HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2021

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President, Cari McDowell at 6:30 pm.

NOTICE: The meeting was posted in accordance with the By-laws of the Association and Florida statute 720.

QUORUM: A quorum was established with the following board members present: President - Cari McDowell, Vice President - Deborah Kiefer, Treasurer - Randall Wood, & Secretary - Dimond Santos. Brian Rivenbark was present to represent Sunstate Management.

Director Donna Chianese was absent

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

A **MOTION** was made by Cari and seconded by Deb to approve the Board meeting minutes from May 18th 2021 with corrections. **Motion passed unanimously**

A **MOTION** was made by Cari and seconded by Deb to approve the minutes from June 3rd 2021 Closed Board meeting with corrections. **Motion passed unanimously**

A **MOTION** was made by Dimond and seconded by Randall to approve the minutes from June 22nd 2021 Board Meeting with corrections **Motion passed unanimously**

A **MOTION** was made by Randall and seconded by Cari to approve the minutes from July 20th 2021 Board Meeting with corrections. Deb and Dimond stated they are voting no because they disagree with the letter attached as the President's Report. **Motion passed 2 – 2 with Dimond and Deb voting no.**

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Cari stated the lights were installed at the entrances today. The home at 4232 Tennyson is only being mowed and not trimmed. There should be more trimming, weeding, and fining them for non-compliance.

TREASURERS REPORT: As Attached to these corporate documents Brian reported on the July 2021 financials.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Clean Slate Letter Discussion: Cari presented a copy of the clean slate letter.

A **MOTION** was made by Cari and seconded by Randall to approve the clean slate letter. Discussion was had regarding the letter. The letter was mistakenly sent without red line notes from the Attorney and not the final draft.

The Motion was tabled until the September meeting once the board has the corrected final letter.

Center island replanting install update: Cari and Brian reported that the County has not currently approved the permit for the center island they are waiting on the engineer architect for final approval.

Monument Sign Entrance Light Posts Updates: This was reported in the Presidents report. Cari needs the keys for the storage unit and the billboard. Cari will place the extra light fixtures in the storage unit.

Collection deadline letters for 4019 Landor & 4279 Tennyson: Brian presented two deadline collection letters from the Association's Attorney. These letters demand the homeowner to pay past due fees, interest, late charges and Attorney fees in full by a specific deadline and cost \$175 each letter.

A MOTION was made by Dimond and seconded by Randall to approve the deadline letter to be sent to Brown and to send ask the attorney to send one more collection letter to Clayton to collect the Attorney fees. **Motion passed unanimously**

Landscape Contract discussion: Three Landscape contracts were presented to the Board. The two new contracts included irrigation, monthly landscaping and pest control. Twin Palms at \$2,042 per month without bi-yearly fence line cleaning and Greenscapes at \$2,063 per month with bi-yearly fence line cleaning included. The board compared these to the current contract from Larry's Landscape Design. Discussion was had regarding the three Landscapers.

A Motion was made by Cari and seconded by Randall to approve the landscape contract for Greenscapes. **Motion Passed 3-1 with Dimond voting no**

NEW BUSINESS

Trimming of lake area behind 4227 Tennyson: Cari reported that the area behind 4227 Tennyson. The owner is asking the HOA to trim this area to open the lake view. Deb recommended doing two lake trimmings per year. Randall suggested to get a quote for the trimming of the bushes and trees around the lake behind 4227 Tennyson, the Board agreed to get quotes for the trimming starting with lake 4.

Compliance Report: Brian gave a report on active violations in the community. Brian reported that the home at 4326 Manfield was sent multiple letters regarding a dead tree in the yard. Brian stated that the owner replied in April that the tree was not dead as per advice from Home Depot. Brian put the violation on monitor. Brian stated that the owner has recently replied 7-21-21 that they have hired a landscaper to remove the tree.

Randall reported that the dead palm was cut down.

Cari stated that the Association will need to start sending violation letters for landscaping violations to 4232 Tennyson. Brian will send violation letter tomorrow. Brian will contact the County to file a complaint on the home at 4232 Tennyson due to the power not being on at the home.

5 -Year SWFMD inspection: Deb stated that SWFMD sent a letter to the Association to file an engineering inspection report regarding the lakes. The report will need to be filed by September 29th

A MOTION was made by Deb and seconded by Dimond to proceed with getting costs for the inspections to not exceed \$500. **Motion passed unanimously**

ARC APPLICATIONS:

1. 4282 Wordsworth – Gonzales Hurricane screens - Approved
2. 4287 Wordsworth – Jatho Generator – Approved with ~~cover~~ equipment screening for generator
3. 4015 Landor – Chiodo- Roof - Final approval for GAF Shakeswood shingle color - Approved
4. 4140 Hemingway Dr –Equipment/Trash Enclosure &Pavers pathway – Brian stated that the fence on the ARC form is solid not lattice or picket style. Cari stated that the Board cannot deny the enclosure as it would be selective enforcement. Deb stated that based on the fact that there are many other solid enclosures that the Board should look at changing the standard for the solid enclosures. Lengthy discussion followed regarding solid enclosures. - Approved

A MOTION was made by Cari and seconded by Dimond to approve the ARC requests with the recommendations on 4287 Wordsworth to require an equipment screening for the Generator. **Motion passed unanimously**

Homeowner Comments –

Owner commented on his lawn guy been sick, so lawn is good now. The equipment screening issue will hopefully be addressed soon. Commented positively on the new street lights at the entrances.

Deb stated that she would like to meet in person at the library for the next meeting and she would check into the availability and Brian can do a hybrid style meeting with the zoom as an option still.

Cari suggested Brian check with our insurance for any liability issues for in person meetings during the pandemic.

Next Meeting Date – September 21, 2021 at 6:30

Adjourned meeting at 8:23 PM

Woodmere Lakes Homeowners Association, Incorporated

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

pagenine1@verizon.net

Term Expires 2023

Rules Committee

Neighbors
Please Join

Fining Committee

Mark Lineweber

John McCaffery

Jim Springer

Pond/Landscaping Committee

Liaison

Deborah Bowman-Kiefer

Cindy Tomasiak

Susan Woodward

Annie Jansen

Ronald Mutz

Architectural Review
Committee

Michael Kitt

Ronald Mutz

Neighbors
Please Join

Management

Sunstate Association Management Group

Brian Rivenbark CAM

(941) 870 – 4920

Brian@sunstatemanagement.com

Lynn Priest, Assistant

(941) 870 – 4920

Lpriest@sunstatemanagement.com

Mailing Address

PO Box 18809

Sarasota, Florida 34276

Welcome Committee

Liaison Donna Chianese

Annie Jansen

Neighbors

Please Join

Social Committee

Neighbors
Please Join

Legend names Indians in storm-safety theory



FLORIDA WEST » STORM PROTECTION

By ANNA SCOTT

Published: Monday, June 18, 2007 at 2:37 a.m.

Last Modified: Monday, June 18, 2007 at 4:24 a.m.

SARASOTA COUNTY -- Marcus Joel heard it from a co-worker. Bonni Fox, from a neighbor. Lisa Parker draws a blank when asked where she heard it, but she knows she did.

The story goes something like this, with the emphasis on "something."

Sarasota is protected from hurricanes because the American Indians who once lived here knew it was a safe place, which is why they decided to live here.

Or, the American Indians who once lived here blessed this place and made it safe from hurricanes.

Or, the ancient American Indian burial grounds scattered throughout the county are keeping the storms at bay.

Sarasota has not been a bull's-eye for a major hurricane since reliable records began in 1871.

But it was damaged to varying degrees by hurricanes in 1926, 1944 and 1950, as well as Donna in 1960 and Charley in 2004.

A number of other explanations for the relative safety have surfaced, most of them questionable.

One gives credit to nature's fortunate placement of dunes off the coast.

Another, to the magic powers of Siesta Key's white sand beaches and underwater crystals.

The most prominent story has to do with American Indians. Evidence to support the tale does not exist, however, according to everyone who studies either county history or American Indian beliefs.

When asked about a myth spreading around town, county archaeologist Dan Hughes jumped in: "Let me guess. If it has anything to do with Indians and hurricanes, it's not true."

Hughes takes phone calls about the myth every year during hurricane season. "I've had Realtors call and ask if it's true so they can advertise it," he said. "It gets passed down from neighbor to neighbor."

In fact, historians have no idea which tribes even lived in Sarasota County. It is one of the few coastal places skipped over by Spanish explorers, the only people who wrote descriptions of early Florida.

The explorers visited the Calusa tribe just south in Charlotte Harbor, and the Tocobaga just north in Tampa Bay, but they passed over the stretch of relatively linear coast in between.

One of the nation's largest fully excavated native burial grounds, at Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, offers few additional clues, only that people lived in the area as early as 3,000 B.C.

The third strike against the myth: If the American Indians did believe Sarasota was protected, more of them might have lived here.

But the population was not unusually high. About 2,000 people lived in the county originally, historians estimate.

"Technically speaking, Native Americans lived everywhere around the state," said Anne McCudden, executive director of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. "We know they moved inland during certain seasons. It could have been because of storms or mosquito levels. We don't know."

The gap in knowledge is likely part of what keeps the myth in circulation, said Uzi Baram, associate professor of anthropology at New College in Sarasota.

"Folk tales give us comfort, so we use something we can't disprove," Baram said. "Native Americans to this particular region are a little past the shadow of history."

Baram first heard the story at a dinner party several years ago.

"It's like a lot of urban myths; there's no origin, but somehow everyone knows it," Baram said. "It really tells us two things. One, we are very worried about hurricanes. And two, we wonder why we're lucky."

Regardless of luck, hurricane mythology is popular in other places, too.

The grotto at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church in Key West is probably Florida's most famous source of hurricane lore. Built in 1922, residents are known to line up there to pray. Many believe it protects them from hurricanes, even though Hurricane Wilma blew through town just two years ago.

"There's nothing wrong with having faith, but if people believe that, one day their luck will run out and there will be serious loss of life," said Stephen Leatherman, director of Florida International University's International Hurricane Center.

Whether Sarasota residents actually believe the American Indian myth depends on whom you ask.

Fox, of Nokomis, who has lived in the area since 1959, shakes her head. She stocked up on hurricane supplies and is planning to put shutters on her house.

"I don't think we're in a blessed or protected place," Fox said while shopping at Home Depot. "I was here for Donna. I don't buy it."

Parker, who has lived in Sarasota for 14 years, rolls her eyes.

"I've heard that one," she said. "Something about this being sacred ground or something? I have no idea. I just keep counting my blessings."

Joel, however, is less skeptical. "I think the Indians would have known because they were so in tune with God and nature," he said. "I think it's kind of cool."