



Advocating For Our Community

PARCELS FROM *Paradise*

KEEPING VENETIAN RESIDENTS CONNECTED...

Published by the VGRCCA as a service to our members and residents of the Venetian Golf and River Club.

MARCH 2024

Parcels from Paradise is the monthly publication of the VGRC Community Association. We thank those members who provide the financial resources for the costs associated with its publication. If you are reading this edition and are not a member of the Community Association, we would hope you would consider being one of the many members who financially supports its production.

Loyal Readers....A change in Parcels. In looking at past editions, the resolution of our pictures is not the best. Therefore, we are trying something new in this edition. Based on the advice from our graphic artist, we will place all related pictures on a separate photo page(s) at the end of Parcels.

HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHTS

Annual Town Hall Meeting (“THM”) Monday, March 18, 5:00 pm, Laurel Nokomis School

When the Community Association began its Town Hall Meeting years ago, the purpose was to address the needs of many Venetian residents who desired to have more information about their community and its city. The Venetian was new at the time. Now in 2024, although the Venetian is older, the reality is our community (and Venice) is still growing and there is plenty of new information that all residents want and need to know. The THM will bring the key decision makers together plus give you an opportunity to toss them a question or two. In addition, this is the first year of the “Gratitude Award” given to residents **Mary Rau Foster, Tim Schimberg, Tony Hopfinger, Al Churilla and Gwen and Richard Mengel**. For more details including parking, go to www.vgrcca.org. See you on Monday, March 18th. The meeting will not be zoomed or videotaped.



We Are so Fortunate

Kudos to our neighbor, Sarasota Memorial Hospital (“SMH”), for the sixth consecutive year being named by Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospital list. SMH remains the only facility in southwest Florida to be honored. Speaking of SMH, are you aware that if you need to go to Urgent Care at SMH, rather than wait until your number is called, you can “save your spot” by clicking on <https://smhurgentcare.com/savemyspot/>

The Laurel Road Clean Up is Scheduled for Monday, March 18, 2024 at 8:45 am.

The Laurel Road Volunteer Clean Up team will meet on the south side of Laurel Road - across from the entry to the Venetian. Neon tee-shirts, rubber gloves, bags and pickers will be provided. You are recommended to wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, high socks and appropriate shoes. For those who choose to provide the use of their golf cart, we will use the carts to transport volunteers to their starting points. The carts will also be used to transport volunteers back to the Venetian entry after they have completed their assigned area. Please reply to mengelrg@yahoo.com if you can join the volunteer team for the March 18, 2024 cleanup.

Note....This project will only require volunteers to dedicate approximately 45 - 60 minutes for this Clean Up effort and you will be left with a good feeling about contributing to your community.

Thank you for reading Parcels. If you have a story idea click on “reply” and let us know.

VISIT: www.vgrcca.org

Who's on First?

There is certainly confusion, especially for new residents, with all the responsibilities of the three on-property organizations... the POA, the CDD and the CA. To bring some understanding and clarity of the so-called alphabet soup, a Community Association Board member recently developed a graphic way of explaining each of the organizations (see chart at the end of Parcels). If further information is needed about any of these organizations, you can find their specific link at www.vgrcca.org/.

One Stop "Shopping"

The Community Association ("CA") is continuing to step up its work on our newly revised website. Whether you are a member of the CA or not, you can have access to the website at www.vgrcca.org. Need to read a past edition of Parcels? Want to get the latest events taking place? Need to get the link to the CDD website? Want to know who to call if you see an injured bird? Go to www.vgrcca.org for all the answers.

Look at Those "Chicks"

Mama and Papa Sand Hill Crane (Paul and Paula) have given birth to their new brood who you will see tagging behind their parents. They are 100% cute! Their safety is just another reason to obey the posted speed limit of 25 mph when traveling throughout the Venetian.

Laurel Road Widening Update

No great progress to report but still moving ahead. The last few Laurel Road meetings were related to the right-of-way (title, appraisals, processes). Sarasota County has also received the Laurel Road widening state funding agreement for construction. The County official in charge of roads and transportation will be speaking at the Town Hall Meeting. Although we have heard the vocal concerns about roundabouts, don't be surprised if you hear that the only viable option is a roundabout at the intersection. It may come down to that becoming the final decision, which will cause you to consider whether that option is better than nothing at the intersection.

One-liners (or nearly one liners to be truthful)

- Have you been down to the Venice Farmer Market on the island? It is open from 8 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. Local vendors, fresh goods and lots of people, many with their dogs. An upbeat event.
- There have been some changes in the Flood Zone Map for Sarasota County. To see your flood zone and determine if there are any changes, go to www.vgrcca.org where the new map is posted.
- If you drive into the new Visterra complex off of Laurel Rd, you will see the enormity of this property. More on this and other housing developments at the upcoming Town Hall Meeting on Monday, March 18th.
- Venice Blues Festival at the Airport will be held March 22nd from 4 pm to 10 pm, and on Saturday, March 23rd, from 11 am to 10 pm. Guest artists include Average White Band, Robert "Lefty Preacher" Sampson and Vince Johnson as well as the Plantation Allstars...for Blues Fans these are just household words.
- Car lovers, get to the free 34th Annual Car Show at Centennial Park (downtown Venice) from 8 am to 3 pm on Sunday, March 24th.
- The Northeast Venice Park design on Laurel is underway and moving through the permitting and approval processes. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall of 2024. This topic may be addressed at the Town Hall Meeting.
- Sarasota County voters will determine this November whether to again extend an optional local property tax for the School District after the School Board unanimously approved a recent resolution to continue a referendum on the issue.

SENSATIONAL SEMINARS

Packed!

Ok, so the audience wasn't as big as a Taylor Swift concert and for those who are older than 60, it wasn't as big as a Tom Jones Concert (ed note...not the same person as current VGRC resident Tom Jones). But they certainly were packed in (attendance was 135) at the River Club for the seminar, "Alligators, Snakes and Other Creatures." The speaker, Dr. Katherine Clements, again did a marvelous job. This year she brought a live snake. Two years ago, when she spoke, she brought a live alligator but since then, Jerome aka Big J, has grown and couldn't accompany her to the lecture. The speaker also mentioned some valuable resources which have been posted on the Community Association's website at www.vgrcca.org. Take a look.

New Resident Meet and Greet

The Community Association held its first New Resident Informational / Meet and Greet on February 13 at the River Club. Invitees were "new" residents who moved to the Venetian in 2022 through January 2024. We had 35 attendees who learned about each of our organizations at the Venetian and how to access more information. We had so much going on in that one hour that we forgot to take pictures!! So here are some of the comments from attendees:

- *The meeting was very informative. Plus, I saw clearly how Board members present. All are well-spoken, dedicated and caring for the interests of the Venetian community. Thank you! Loved Mark's sense of humor. And the folder you put together is awesome. The chart of the alphabet soup names was most helpful with the list of who is responsible for what. Happy to now be a member!*
- *I wanted to thank you and the other members of the Board for an informational and welcoming meeting! Hope to see you soon.*
- *Your "Meet and Greet" had the perfect amount of important community information, plenty of time for questions and the beverages and refreshments were wonderful! The informational take home folders will be extremely helpful for future reading.*

The Community Association plans to provide another Meet and Greet for new residents in early May.

Shredfest

To show you how successful the 2024 Shredfest/Junkfest was, the Community Association has already booked the Shredding company for 2025. This year's event saw an estimated 140 cars drive through in a two-hour period. In terms of shredding, the company took in 26 bins which equates to 6,000-6,500 pounds. As to the junk part of the fest, the City Public Works team collected 6 yards of cardboard, a 20-yard roll-off full of metal and a total weight slip of 1.91 tons. A team of approximately 12 resident volunteers helped throughout the event. This year there were not as many interesting junked items as last year although one of the volunteers noticed that hubby junked his wife's golf clubs. Whether the Mrs. knew was not determined but certainly will when she is ready to head to the golf course for a 9:35 am tee time. The Community Association thanks all those who participated in this year's super event and we hope to see you next year.

CURTAIN CALL

The Community Association has two final events which you might get on your calendar. Our team tracked down a speaker who is an expert in the area of Amish and Mennonite culture. For those who are new to this area, there is a sizeable community in Sarasota. The event is scheduled for **April 2nd at 5 pm** at the River Club. We're sure it will be an interesting new learning for many.

Our final event is a field trip...no parent permission required. We are fortunate to have on property an expert photographer who specializes in wildlife. He will escort interested residents to the Rookery on **April 16th at 6 pm** (note time). As there is limited space, a sign-up sheet will be provided on the Community Association website, one week before the event. CA members receive priority registration. Guaranteed that you will learn a great deal from our resident expert.

OUTSIDE THE GATES

Perhaps an Opportunity for You

If you have ever been interested in learning more about becoming a wildlife rescuer for this center, there is an Introduction to Rescue classes in March sponsored by the Wildlife Center located on nearby Jackson Rd. Both are on Saturdays. For more information about the training, go to www.vgrcca.org. This a great opportunity to help our abundant wildlife community.

Bookies

12th Annual Book Fair & Writers Festival is set for **March 22-23**. The Venice Book Fair & Writers Festival Authors Committee has planned a full day on **Friday, March 22nd** of writing and publishing panels packed with writers and editors sharing their hard-won knowledge. The Writers Festival panels will appeal to fiction and nonfiction readers interested in understanding more about the genres they love, as well as for rising authors wishing to hone their craft. All programs will be held in the Gulf Coast Community Foundation Community Room at the William H. Jervey Jr. Venice Public Library, 300 Nokomis Ave. S.



Move Over

Just giving drivers a heads up about a proposed bill that would take effect in January 2025, assuming that the Governor signs it. Under the law, if two or more lanes of traffic are moving in the same direction and the posted speed is at least 65 mph, motorists can only use the left lane to overtake and pass another vehicle or when preparing to exit the road, street or highway when otherwise directed by an official traffic control device. Violation fine up to \$158.00.

Unsightly?

In the February edition of Parcels, there was a news story about the new Mosquito Management Facility on Honore. On February 1st, the Community Association alerted our County Commissioner regarding the outside look of corrugated metal. This structure is visibly seen by those coming off the expressway and sure doesn't give a positive look for the gateway to North Venice.

PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

The majority of our residents moved to the VGRC probably not knowing anyone and took the social route to make new friends. With this as a background, there has been one thing that Parcels has noticed that has resulted from this social interaction. Unfortunately, residents suffer losses, debilitating conditions or severe injuries. What has been noticed is that friends and neighbors provide great support to those who face these unfortunate circumstances....they bring food, they assist for a welfare check, they include them in social events and do what is necessary to assist the individual or family. We can as a community focus on all the headline issues about the shopping center, the Laurel Road widening or pickleball, but Parcels believes the real headline in this great community which we have chosen to live is the compassion residents continually provide to other residents in time of need.

A VERY INFORMATIVE PRESENTATION

Three members of the Venetian Community Association joined close to 100 residents who attended the subject talk at the Venice Community Center on Land Development in Venice conducted by City Planning Director Roger Clark. Here is their report...

The talk was open to all and designed to educate the public about the process for evaluating and approving land and building development projects. Other members of the Planning Commission and some members of the City Council were present and were acknowledged, but only Mr. Clark spoke. He proved to be an engaging speaker with vast knowledge and experience on this topic, borne of his 20+ years' service with the city.

Mr. Clark first provided some basic statistics on how rapid growth has been in Florida and in Venice over the past 50 years, with particular emphasis on the last 10 years. The population of Venice has already surpassed projections for 2030 made several years ago. He spent the bulk of the hour outlining the steps the city follows before approving any application. The interested reader will find a clear summary on the Venice web site at: <https://www.venicegov.com/residents/development-growth-fact-sheet>

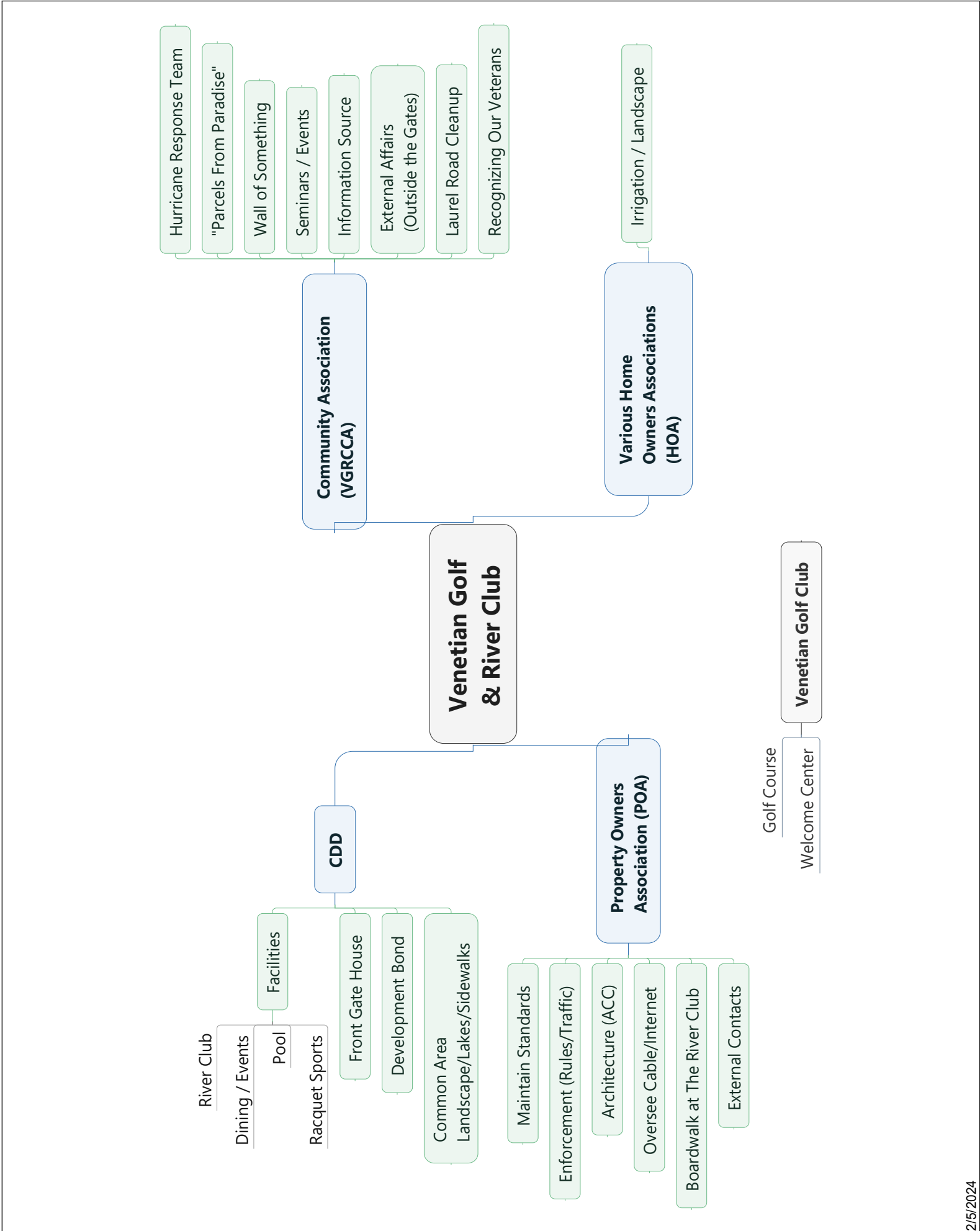
It was of interest to note that builders/developers are assessed a significant "mobility fee" (on the order of \$5,000 per typical home). The substantial revenue from these fees partially (but not fully) offsets the impact of new development on the need for improved roads. Although not a stated goal of the session, it was clear to this attendee that Mr. Clark wanted the public to understand city employees and Town Council representatives are not free to rule for or against a particular project based on their personal opinions or even according to pressure from members of the public. This is supported by the following sentence from the city's website: *"The decision [to approve or deny] must be supported by competent substantial evidence and, therefore, the personal opinions of the decision maker or the public related to the project are irrelevant"*.

We are all aware of and concerned about what many view as over-development, especially in North Venice. With time and sustained effort, comprehensive plans and zoning regulations can be changed, but must still meet state requirements, which are often favorable to development. Opposition to specific projects, however, will not likely be successful if the developer is meeting all current requirements.



PICTURE PERFECT





“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much”
~ H. Keller



Membership Enrollment Form

Your Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association membership demonstrates the value you place on living in this community. For more information, visit our informative website, www.vgrcca.org

Your membership will provide the necessary financial support providing for the:

- Publication of the monthly Parcels from Paradise distributed to all Venetian households
- Continuation of the Hurricane Response Team, activated during an approaching hurricane
- Support for the Wall of Something, an electronic messaging board for members
- Scheduling of exciting seminars and events including Shredfest, Bike-O-Rama, CPR training and a host of presentations made by local experts

Quick Facts about the VGRCCA:

- Formed in 2008, the Community Association has a long and successful record of community engagement
- Managed by a volunteer Board of up to 11 members
- A history of approximately 60-70% of the Venetian residents who join
- Board meetings once a month, open to residents and accessible on Zoom
- Strong emphasis on communications to residents

There are two ways to join:

1. On-line at <http://www.vgrcca.org/membership>
We accept credit cards and use Pay Pal as our secure server.
2. Write a check, payable to **VGRC Community Association** and mail with this form to:
Treasurer
305 Martellago Dr.
North Venice, FL 34275

Membership Dues Per Household

(Please Check Appropriate Line):

SIGN UP	TERM DUES
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Years (best deal) \$70 (\$20 discount)
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Years \$50 (\$10 discount)
<input type="checkbox"/> One Year \$30

MEMBER INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT AND PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION):

NAME: _____

PREFERRED TELEPHONE #: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

ADDITIONAL NAME: _____

PREFERRED TELEPHONE #: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

VENETIAN ADDRESS: _____

OTHER MAILING ADDRESS: _____