

## **HISTORY and BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Bay Lakes Estates was developed by Dr. Van Dyke, his mother and aunt (both ladies have passed). At the time of development, they built the park with the tennis court as a perk for the residents of Bay Lake Estates. They have paid the property taxes and insurance on the property all these years.

Dr. Van Dyke was getting on in years and wanted to transfer the property out of his estate. Over the years, he has tried to transfer the park to the residents without success. We are a group of homeowners that absolutely do not want a homeowner's association.

In 2011 Dr. Van Dyke tried to transfer the park property to Osceola County, to become part of the nature preserve. A number of BLE residents attended those county meetings and eventually the county declined the offer. It did not change the fact that Dr. Van Dyke no longer wanted the property & frankly was going to find someone to sell it to one way or another.

At this point the park area had fallen into disrepair and become overgrown. It had become a magnet for crime. A stolen car was hidden in the overgrowth; there was illegal drug activity (use and suspected selling), and other unseemly activities. Those not living on the East end of Bay Shore Drive were most likely not aware of these happenings.

Fearing significant negative impact on the neighborhood (even if it was merely a loss of control), three residents set up a new non-profit association and convinced Dr. Van Dyke to **GIVE** the park to the new association.

The Bay Lake Estates Park Association, also known as BLEPA, was set up with 3 directors. These individuals put up their own money to cover the legal fees to begin the non-profit association, and pay for a title search of the property deed. The current directors are: Mickey Campbell - President; Todd Hilliard - Vice President, Fonda Black – Treasurer, Greg DuBois - Vice President and Jason Hickson - Director of Security and Maintenance.

The first meeting of the association was held on 7/18/12, at the home of Fonda Black - Treasurer. 17 families were in attendance. After a presentation by President Mickey, followed by open discussions, they decided to contribute \$150 per household to cover the expenses already incurred, and to cover the upcoming Liability Insurance premium and property taxes. Two more informational meetings were held and another was scheduled that year. Only three times since then has the Board been forced to ask for more donations to cover maintenance and insurance expenses.

According to those in the real estate industry, “private lake access” increases your property value by \$10,000 to \$15,000. This is especially an important fact for those not living directly on the lake or canal. We must maintain control of this park. A run-down park and/or unusable boat ramp does not increase property value nearly as much.

Periodic Work Days by volunteers have enabled us to both clean and maintain this valuable asset for our neighborhood. We hope you will join in on the next Work Day and consider a Donation to the improvement, maintenance and insurance for Our Neighborhood Park.