August-September, 2025 Edition

The Lakes

Lake of the Woods of Jacaranda Newsletter

News and Events

The LOWOJ Road Resurfacing Project Status

The Board of Directors met at a special Board of Directors meeting Wednesday, July 16th to review the bids provided by four established paving contractors that were identified as being companies that could quickly complete our unfinished road paving project.

At the July 11th Board Meeting, the Board explained that they are taking every step at their disposal to get the project completed in a timely manner. The community was notified that the LOWOJ HOA had terminated the contract with Anderson Paving. As soon as that was accomplished, five potential qualified paving companies were identified that would be able to complete the work, and a request for proposal was created, which was subsequently sent to all five bidding companies. One company decided to no-bid the project due to the proposed timing. Four of the companies participated in on-site walk-through meetings with LOWOJ Board members and had an opportunity to assess the current road conditions on Silk Oak Dr. and Lakescene Dr. They also performed their own

UPCOMING EVENTS

LOJ Clubhouse Events (LOJ only)

7/25 and 8/22: Sip n' Dip Event (5pm-7pm)
8/8 and 9/12: Community Mixer (7pm-9pm)
8/15 and 9/19: Morning Coffee (10:00-12:00)
Yoga/Pilates (every Tuesday/Thursday 8:30 – 9:30 am)
Tai Chi (every Tuesday/Thursday 9:45-10:45 am)
Water Aerobics (every Monday & Thursday 10-10:45 am)

General Community Events

8/1 and 9/5: LOJ Board Meeting (9 am)
8/1 and 9/5: LOWOJ Board Meeting (10 am)
8/11 and 9/8: ARC Committee Meeting (10:00-11:00) at the LOJ Clubhouse
8/11 and 9/8: Wetlands Committee Meeting (11:30-12) at the LOJ Clubhouse

measurements at that time.

We have received four proposals to review in response to our RFP. The Board developed a bid-leveling criteria which allows us to give a score to each bidder on each of multiple metrics that the Board believes are important to successful project completion.

At the special July Board meeting on July 16th, which was announced to the community and posted on the Keys-Caldwell website, the Board voted on contractor selection, discussed financing of the project, and assessed the viability of a potential change order that would modify the scope of work to include re-milling the partially paved lane on Silk Oak and then re-paving in order to ensure a durable road surface.

A homeowner eblast is being distributed regarding the details and rationale behind the Board's decisions at the special Board of Director's meeting on July 16th. A special Board meeting is planned for mid-August to vote on the final financing package.

Our goal, depending on contractor scheduling availability, will be to complete the project before the end of September. Work will commence following Labor Day. More information will be made available to our homeowners as soon as details are finalized.

Preparing for our Storm Season

Sarasota County has announced that free, self-service sandbag stations will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. August 10th, at the following locations:

- South County Fleet, 4571 S.R. 776/ Englewood Road, Venice.
- Ed Smith Stadium, 2700 12th St., Sarasota.
- Twin Lakes Park, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota.

Residents should bring their own shovels. They can fill and load their own sandbags into their vehicles.

For people who do not have shovels at home, there will be some shovels available on-site. Each vehicle will be provided 10 empty sandbags to fill.

The New Homeowner Information Packet is Here!

The New Owner Information Packet has been completed and is ready for distribution. We intend this to be a living document, which will be kept current with active updates. The Board reviewed and approved the packet at the May Board of Directors meeting, and all of the documents links to outside documents/information have been verified.

You can download your own copy of the new Homeowner Information Packet by clicking on this link.

In the future, when changes are made, we will add a new timestamp to the document to avoid confusion regarding which version is the latest information.

Fun Things to do in Venice

Are you looking for something fun to do in Venice this month? Here's a clickable link to a great source of information on fun things to do in the Venice area! → Fun Things to do in Venice

Venue Change for the Venice Farmers Market

As of Saturday, June 21, the Venice Farmers Market has adopted a newly adjusted layout designed to enhance pedestrian safety and vendor accessibility, while still offering the same beloved Saturday morning experience from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. year-round.

This change is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Venice, the Venice Police Department, and Venice Farmers Market management to improve public safety by gradually transitioning special events off major thoroughfares.

In addition to this layout shift, the Venice Farmers Market managers are also implementing heat-related safety protocols to protect both visitors and vendors during the summer season which may include early closures if the wet bulb temperature reaches a designated safety threshold.

For more information about the location shift, heat protocols, public parking, and access, visit venicegov.com.

Together, the Market vendors and the City of Venice are working to ensure your Saturday tradition is both enjoyable and safe as the City plans for a more pedestrian-friendly future. Follow the Venice Farmers Market for real-time updates and information.

Messages from Your Board

Open Treasurer Position

The Board of Directors is still searching for someone with an accounting background to join the Board of Directors as Treasurer. This role is two-sided and critical to the Board's success. The successful candidate will oversee the accounting and financial reporting aspects of the Board of Directors. Most of the day-to-day work is conducted by Keys-Caldwell, but there is an oversight responsibility that the Treasurer must accept. Click here for an overview of a typical Treasurer's responsibilities.

The second, and equally important part of this volunteer position, is to serve as an equal Board member. This means that, while having an accounting/finance background is important, the Treasurer also participates as a full member of the Board, voting and participating in Board Meetings and able to work well collaboratively with the other Board members, while also taking on projects that

need to be “carried across the goal line” by a Board member.

If we cannot find a suitable candidate, we will need to hire someone to perform this responsibility. Hiring someone in lieu of a volunteer will increase the costs of the association. Please consider volunteering.

Please do NOT leave out food for the animals!

Recently, the Board of Directors has been advised that someone has been depositing food, apparently for wildlife, near the North entrance to LOWOJ. This is exceedingly dangerous as well as illegal.

Food deposits have been identified on Lake of the Woods Dr just before the north entrance. These included a large pile of dry dog food on June 16th, and fruit on June 28 and 29, fried chicken, fried potato wedges, fruit and cucumber slices on July 11th, among others. Resident volunteers have cleaned up food at this location on multiple occasions.

Please consider the following:

1. The animals do not need it. There is plenty of food for them in nature.

2. Food can begin to rot and contain microorganisms that could be dangerous and/or harmful to wild animals

3. Such food deposits WILL attract rats.

4. Attracting animals in the proximity of two busy roads and in an area frequently used by walkers, runners and bicyclists is never a good idea.

5. While you might think the food is making its way to hungry animals, the reality is that it is getting cleaned up by concerned neighbors.

6. If you don’t want to do it for practical reasons. Please consider that leaving food out for wild animals is illegal. Florida Administrative Code 68A-4.001 prohibits the feeding of pelicans, sandhill cranes and non-human primates, and prohibits placing food in a manner that attracts black bears, coyotes, foxes and raccoons.

Please DO NOT leave out food for wild animals. They have enough natural sources and, if they don’t they will move elsewhere where they can find adequate food sources, as nature intends.

Figure 1: Dog Food

Figure 2: Mixed Fruit

Figure 3: Watermelon

Recent examples of food left at the North LOWOJ entrance

No-Mow (Buffer) Zone Rule

The Board previously announced that the No Mow Zone rule that was approved by the Board of Directors will not be enforced until the HOA is first able to demonstrate implementation of these no-mow zones in our common areas. That process has now commenced. We are working with our landscape contractors to establish these areas. Once the Board has verified that these required buffer zones have been established in most of the common areas, the Board will announce that homeowners on wet pond platted properties must now comply with the new rule. The No Mow Zone is defined as a six-foot buffer of grass or natural vegetation between a homeowner's property and the edge of a wet pond. The rule aims to reduce nitrate runoff and erosion, which can lead to costly dredging. The full No-Mow Zone Rule can be found by clicking the link below. The document discusses the purpose, legal obligations, and examples of common issues such as erosion from clear-cutting lawns to the waterline. The full text of the LOWOJ No-Mow Zone Rule can be found by clicking this link.

The Wetlands Committee and the Board of Directors will soon distribute educational resources to our homeowners, which discuss the rationale behind our rule to establish Buffer (or No-Mow) Zones. That information packet will also provide helpful guidelines to assist homeowners and contractors with proper maintenance practices to prevent further erosion and wet pond deterioration.

Establishing no-mow zones and letting our wet pond shores "Go Wild" naturally stabilizes the shore, filters and cleans dirty runoff, maintains greater privacy, increases property value, enhances scenic beauty, prevents erosion and allows for healthy habitat for fish, birds, and other important species.

We ask our homeowners to please understand that we are required within our wetlands permit, issued by the Southwest Florida Water Management District to maintain these buffers. Compliance will be mandatory in order for the HOA to avoid potential fines, remediation costs and potential legal

issues related to non-compliance.

If you want to catch up on how these no-mow zones work, you can learn about why no-mow zones are important in southwest Florida by clicking on this link.

New Email Service for the Board of Directors

We are still receiving emails via private email accounts. Please help us to remain compliant with Florida State statutes by only sending Board of Director related information to us at the following email addresses.

President-LOWOJ@lowofj.com (currently assigned to Jeff Carman)
VicePresident-LOWOJ@lowofj.com (currently assigned to Rob McCoy)
Secretary-LOWOJ@lowofj.com (currently assigned to Robert Last)
Treasurer-LOWOJ@lowofj.com (currently open)
Director-LOWOJ@lowofj.com (currently assigned to Mike Gnaegy)

LOWOJ Wetlands Committee

The Wetlands Committee, which reports directly to the Board of Directors, has been very active in keeping our wet pond system working properly. The committee consists of eight homeowner members who offer expertise in engineering, biology, and water management. We recently completed a project, which was conducted by SOLitude (environmental contractor) that addressed short-term goals and priorities, including addressing wet pond inlet/outlet vegetative overgrowth, debris from storms and erosion around control structures.

The next phase of the project will address the performance of two areas of drainage concern, one in the Park Estates area, where there has historically been some drainage issues in a small wet pond, and a second area in the common area swale, north of the Cedarwood parking lot. We will also ask the Board of Directors to approve funds to allow SOLitude to inspect the two outbound wiers on the west side of Lakes 2B and 3, which abut the Alligator Creek Preserve area (this is where the two main outflows from LOWOJ into Alligator Creek reside. The next phase will also involve inspection and remediation, as required, of all of the equalizer (cross-over) pipes between the wet ponds, as well as a review and remediation of catch basins.

In addition to the goals for the next phase, described above, the committee will now also begin to concentrate on intermediate goals, which were provided in the 2022 TGW Engineering study.

Landscape Committee

In the last Board Meeting, Jeff Carman noted that lighting issues at the south entrance are being investigated and will be repaired soon. Discussions will also include reviewing the existing Brightview contract. Jeff noted a concern that large landscaping companies may not be as responsive or

dedicated to the community's concerns and proposed exploring partnerships with smaller, local landscapers who can offer more direct service and accountability.

After a great deal of research into the governing documents of the master association and the sub-associations, the LOWOJ Board has developed new documentation that clarifies the ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the Master Association and Sub-Associations. Recently, several properties have been identified with issues such as dead trees or unmaintained monuments that belong to Sub-Associations. Future violations will be issued to both the homeowner and the Sub-Association and the master association will treat sub-associations in the same manner as it handles violation for individual property owners.

The Board of Directors has agreed to fund a small Landscaping Committee project that will allow the development of a digital map of our entire irrigation system. This will not only provide our committees and Board members with a tool to quickly diagnose issues, but it will also provide future committee members and Board members with a tool that offers the chance to quickly and accurately understand were all the irrigation zones are located, as well as the location of pumps, wells, valves, controllers and switches.

We have received multiple homeowner concerns about irrigation and plant health. The Board has also acknowledged ongoing issues with our shared irrigation system (The Lakes of Jacaranda (LOJ) is currently connected to the LOWOJ irrigation system) and is working on both structural and scheduling solutions that will help to solve these problems. The Board has frequently emphasized that the community relies on volunteers to keep HOA fees low and the absence of a fully functional Landscape Committee has been discussed specifically, in this regard.

The Lake of the Woods of Jacaranda has now reformulated the Landscape Committee and is actively seeking volunteers interested in serving on this important Committee. We are happy to report that the Board has recently received interest from several volunteers to join the Landscape Committee. However, a few more volunteers are still needed.

- The Committee's main purpose is to ensure the proper use, care, and upkeep of the Association Common Areas as well as to recommend improvements to the Board.
- The Committee will perform quarterly inspections to ensure the contractual obligations of our landscape contracts are fulfilled and notify the Board of areas of concern or potential matters that may require action of the Association.
- The Committee will work with the Board to employ professional landscape contractors on an as-needed basis. If a new general landscape company is required, the Committee will be responsible for obtaining bids, presenting the results and making a final recommendation to the Board.
- The Committee will evaluate the current landscaping conditions and make appropriate recommendations to the Board for review, comment, and approval.
- The Committee will be responsible for developing a short-term (one to two years) and long-term (three to five years) Landscaping Plan including projects, timing and estimated costs to the Board on an annual basis.

- The Committee will organize and supervise volunteer projects to improve landscaping in common areas as it sees fit.
- The Committee will forecast existing and anticipated contracts, vendor agreements and routine landscaping requirements such as seasonal plantings, decorations, etc. to the Board to help establish a Landscaping Budget.
- The time requirement will involve a monthly Committee meeting at the LOJ Clubhouse and such extra time as the Committee decides is necessary.

If you have interest in contributing to your Association in a very meaningful way, please consider volunteering for this important Committee. **This is important – please consider being a volunteer and** contact Mike Gnaegy at Director-LOWOJ@lowofj.com

Newsletter Team

The Newsletter team is still in urgent need of a couple of volunteers who are willing to work collaboratively with the two Boards, our homeowners, and our newsletter team to create newsletter content. We have had to slow down the newsletter to bi-monthly because we simply don't have enough volunteer help from our neighbors to send it out monthly. You don't need to be an excellent writer. But you do need to have some ideas, creativity, and passion, not to mention a willingness to reach out to other members of our community to develop "straw-man" article outlines. If you are willing to volunteer a few hours each month to participate in the newsletter team, please contact Bob Last at secretary-LOWOJ@lowofj.com.

IMPORTANT: Register Your Contact Information with Keys-Caldwell!

The Board of Directors and Keys-Caldwell are continuing with an effort to obtain electronic contact information for ALL LOWOJ residents. Currently, we are down to about 90 homeowners who have not provided opt-in email information on the Keys-Caldwell website. In order to keep your annual assessments as low as possible, we request that ALL RESIDENTS have an opt-in email on-file with Keys-Caldwell. Reducing the number of USPS mailings will reduce our costs and allow us to keep your annual assessments as low as possible. If the HOA is successful in moving to all-electronic notifications, we can save both time and money, and better use the funds that our homeowners have entrusted us with. This is especially important because of the importance of the participation by as many homeowners as possible.

If you're uncomfortable with obtaining or using an email address, we can help you to set this up and provide training/coaching to make it work for you. It's really very easy to do! Keys-Caldwell has developed special training tools to help those who don't know how to approach this. You can contact Keys-Caldwell for additional information and assistance. Please consider submitting a valid opt-in email address if you have not already done so.

We previously provided details on how to add your email into the opt-in list in the June Newsletter on the first page (click the link to the left to open the June Newsletter).

Upcoming LOJ Clubhouse Activities (LOJ residents)

Every month there are several activities for LOJ residents in the Clubhouse. These include the Monthly Mixer, the Morning Coffee, and the Sip & Dip.

Also included in Clubhouse Activities are The Book Club, Mah-Jongg, Men's Poker, Water Aerobics, Pilates and Tai-Chi. If you are interested in joining in on the fun, here is some contact information:

Water Aerobics

Monday & Thursday 10-10:45 am. Bring a noodle. At the clubhouse pool. (Summer only, May-November: when water temp is greater than 78 degrees)
Contact: Helmine (helmine.junger@gmail.com)

Yoga /Pilates

Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:30 am bring mat, strap and weight, if you have them. At the clubhouse.
Contact : Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Tai-Chi

Tuesday and Thursday 9:45 - 10:30 am at the clubhouse. Contact : Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

Book Club

First Thursday of the month 1 – 2 pm (October – May)
Contact: Lisa Gold LHGold246@gmail.com
Summer Contact: Joyce (jkl770@comcast.net) schedule varies in summer

LOJ Mixer

Every month on the 2nd Friday, potluck & BYOB at the clubhouse 7 – 9pm.
Contact: Joyce (jkl770@comcast.net)

LOJ Morning Coffee

Every month on the 3rd Friday, at the clubhouse 10:00-11:30 am, bring a mug. Coffee is provided; just show up with a breakfast dish to pass and enjoy!
Contact: Patti and Gary Gardwell (mailto:mgpgardwell@gmail.com)

LOJ Sip & Dip

Every month on the 4th Friday, 5 -7 pm. Potluck and BYOB at clubhouse.
Contact: Patty (patricia2br@gmail.com)

You can also check the LOJ calendar on the Keys-Caldwell website for the dates/times for all the activities. Participating in the Clubhouse Activities is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and make new friends.