

MINUTES
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER
Friday, January 22, 2016
Big Cypress Recreation Center, Periwinkle Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Steve Turnipseed at 1:30.

Present: 42 members and guests.

Old Business:

- Steve welcomed guests and new members, and announced that this was our 1 year anniversary; we are now ninth in the State in number of members. (There are about 3000 members statewide.) Those who signed up last January will have to renew this January; membership renewal is due one year from the month one becomes a member. One third of the membership fee comes back to our chapter.
- All of our goals from last year have been met.

New Business:

- The chapter bylaws were unanimously approved.
- Each of the officers were unanimously elected: Steve Turnipseed as President, Kathy Porter as Vice President of Programs, Georgette Gerry as Vice President of Field Trips, MJ Walsh as Treasurer, Jeanie Powell as Secretary, Myrna Farquhar as Membership Officer, Carol Spears as Chapter Representative and Barbara Wertz as Web Master.
- The next field trip will be Jan. 26 to the Croom tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest.
- There is a Florida Wildlife and Invasive class from Feb. 17-19 at the Sumter County Fairgrounds building. Cost is \$35 which includes a field trip. Sign up is on Eventbrite—see email from Jan. 12.

Speakers:

Our guest speaker was Candice Dennis from The Villages Community Standards department which is made up of two divisions: Architectural Review and Deed Compliance. Any request for exterior modification needs approval. The Architectural Application Form must be accompanied with proof of ownership such as current tax bill, deed or property record card. It also needs a site plan which indicates easements and setback areas. An overlay on the site plan is permitted. To get help with the requests, residents can come to the office at 984 Old Mill Run in Lake Sumter Landing or call 352-751-3912.

A committee of 10 members has been appointed by the District Board of Supervisors, and it approves or denies requests depending on the various policies from Districts 1-10 and VCCDD for Lady Lake/Lake County portions of The Villages. To find individual deed restrictions, a resident can check on line at www.districtgov.org, look at “Departments”, then “Community Standards”, then “Quick Links” then “County”, then put in their unit number.

The committee reviews approximately 100 requests a week, and meets weekly in Lake Sumter Landing at 8:00 on Wednesday mornings. Any Villager including those who have requests can come to the meetings (and requesters can make any explanations when necessary). If a Villager makes a request by noon on a Thursday, the request will go before the committee on the next Wednesday.

Florida Law 373.185 supercedes any laws made by home owner associations prohibiting the property owner from implementing Florida-friendly landscaping on his or her land. (Effective 7/1/09.) Florida-friendly refers to drought tolerant plants. (Sod can be replaced with these plants and different types of mulch can be used as accent.)

There were many questions and comments. The other division in Community Standards is Deed Compliance--Public Safety including Community Watch does not look for deed violations. If a landscaper says you don't need a request, they are incorrect; get approval anyway.

Some examples of when a request is needed:

- removal of a tree especially a canopy tree over 4 inches in diameter
- replanting a tree which has died and been removed
- a compost bin or a rain barrel.

Hal Fisher from the Deed Compliance was also present. For more information on this subject, see the power point on our web site.

Amanda Martin, a native landscape designer also spoke. She makes her designs a bit more formal for those who live in areas with home owners associations. She defined Florida Friendly plants as drought tolerant, and Florida natives as needing little or no irrigation, and are tolerant to both our heat and cold. They are also food for our pollinators. For paths, she recommends FloriMulch (from the invasive melaleuca trees), pine straw, flagstone, small gravel or crushed shell. Paths do compact the soil and inhibits root growth, but the previous allows water to seep into the ground. She charges by the hour, but her plan includes a plant list that can be used for competitive bids.

Donations: Donated native plants were awarded to members and friends.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be February 26 at 1:30 at the Big Cypress Recreation Center.

Jeanie Powell, Secretary