

# OAK TREE REMOVAL PLAN

## Presentation at CDD Workshop on March 16, 2013

**T**he CDD Board is holding a workshop on March 16, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. for residents to provide feedback on the implementation of a plan submitted to Pasco County for approval to remove 1,875 oak trees. The workshop will be held in the Gathering Room at the Seven Oaks Clubhouse. If you would like background information, you can read the CDD articles on pages 6 and 7 in the February 2012 and December 2012 issues of the Seven Oaks News. Both of these articles can be viewed on the Seven Oaks Website (go to the website, click on "CDD" and then click on "Newsletter Archives"). Now, I will explain what the CDD Board has done since the December 2012 article.

As mentioned in the December 2012 article, the CDD Board hired Ron Litts, a certified arborist, in November 2012 to prepare a plan to submit to Pasco County to gain approval to remove the oak trees that are causing damage to the sidewalks and streets in Seven Oaks neighborhoods. During November and December, Mr. Litts looked at each oak tree in Seven Oaks and came to the same conclusion as the three previous professionals mentioned in the December 2012 newsletter article. In the plan submitted to Pasco County for approval, he had the following findings:

"Live oak is a large maturing tree that will outgrow the area allowed and cause substantial damage to landscape and infrastructure located near them. These damages are being seen now and will continue to present issues for the lifetime of these trees. At this point 18 sidewalks have been removed and replaced, 60 lifted sidewalks have been ground, and a further 300 need to be ground. Live oaks must have an area much larger than what is available for them where they are located now. A Minimum of 100 feet by 100 feet is recommended for this species to thrive. Furthermore these trees are now in a 4 to 6 feet wide area and were not grown to grades and standards nor were they planted correctly. (80% of which are planted much too deeply, as much as 8 inches) The quality of the trees existing is low with few

exceptions. The damage is most prevalent in the early developments. I recommend these be the first addressed.

The health and safety of the residents is at risk as the issues related to lifted sidewalks and possible utilities interactions are a real concern. To mitigate the HAZARD these trees pose they should be removed."

The plan submitted to Pasco County identifies 1,875 oak trees by neighborhood that should be removed (see chart below). This is fewer trees to be removed than the chart in the De-

cember 2012 newsletter with the 2,037 trees that PHC Professional, Inc identified. There were four reasons why there were 162 less trees.

- 1:** 31 trees in Lakeside and the 60 trees in Siverleaf were not included because these trees were not on CDD property.
- 2:** 108 trees in Villas of Willow Creek were not included because unlike other neighborhoods in Seven Oaks, this neighborhood's HOA owns the land between sidewalks and roads where the trees are located.
- 3:** 2 trees in Sabal Point were added that had not been planted when PHC did their survey.
- 4:** 35 trees were added that are not in the neighborhoods. These trees are in areas where they will also cause damage to the sidewalks or streets in Seven Oaks.

Examples of the hazard that Mr. Litts refers to in his findings can be found in both the February and December 2012 issues of the Seven Oaks News. In the CDD articles in these two issues are pictures of where the sidewalks had been pushed up by oak trees causing a hazard. Mr. Litts findings included that the oak trees were in areas too small, were not grown correctly, and about 80 percent of them were planted too deep-as much as 8 inches (see oak tree below).

OAK TREES THAT NEED TO BE REMOVED	
Neighborhood	Trees
Amberside	95
Brookforest	87
Copperleaf	109
Coventry	67
Crosswinds	62
Edenfield	144
Fairgate	98
Grassglen	64
Knollpoint	105
Palmetto Bend	74
Pinecrest/Forest Edge	199
Sabal Point	5
Shoregrass	121
Springwood	91
Stillbrook	105
Stonecreek	27
The Laurels	50
Villas at Edenfield	42
Villas of Deer Run	51
Watermark	110
Willowstone	134
Common Area	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,875</b>



Some homeowners at Seven Oaks suggested that the CDD Board deal with each tree as it becomes a problem. Looking at other communities, we could expect each healthy oak tree to push up the sidewalk sooner or later. When only a few sidewalks are replaced at a time after the trees have pushed them up, the cost is about \$1,000 per sidewalk. If the tree is removed, it is about \$400 for a total of \$1,400. If the 1,875 oak trees are all removed at the same time before the sidewalk is pushed up by the tree, it will only cost about \$90.00 per tree. Based on the interest from tree removal contractors, we may be able to even get the trees removed for less than \$90.00. This is about \$1,300 less than if we wait until the side-

walk is raised by the tree causing us to remove the tree and replace the sidewalk. If the tree is not removed, the sidewalk would have to be replaced multiple times. In addition, there would be higher permit costs. As explained in the February 2012 newsletter, Pasco County is trying to help communities with this issue by only charging a \$300 permit fee to approve a plan that addresses all the trees. If done separately, there would be \$30 fee each time the application is submitted. Therefore, the CDD Board decided to submit a plan to remove 1,875 oak trees.

Mr. Litts has the expertise to advise the CDD Board on which trees need to be replaced as

well as which trees should be selected to replace them, but he does not have landscaping expertise. To insure that the 13 species of replacement trees he identified (see pictures below) provide the best aesthetic appeal, the CDD Board will be hiring an experienced landscaping company to work with Mr. Litts.

Once the plan is approved to remove 1,875 oak trees during the next five years and replant 1,875 "small maturing" trees using the 13 species of trees below, there are lots of options on where, when, and the type of trees are planted. The CDD Board looks forward to hearing Seven Oaks residents' views on these options at the CDD Workshop on March 16, 2013. ❖

### Species of Trees that May Be Planted to Replace Oak Trees



1. Yaupon Holly



2. Walter Viburnum



3. Crape Myrtle



4. Bottlebrush



5. Florida Privet



6. Chinese Fringe



7. Bulnesia



8. Indian Hawthorn



9. Nellie Stevens Holly



10. Texas Sophora



11. Cypress



12. Sweetbay Magnolia



13. Red Maple