

West Deerfield Alliance seeks foreclosure ordinance compliance

By David Volz

Difficult economic conditions have increased the number of homes entering foreclosure. It is estimated that about 950 homes in Deerfield Beach are now in some state of foreclosure.

Recently, the Deerfield Beach City Commission passed an ordinance requiring that lending institutions involved with foreclosed properties be responsible for maintaining those properties. This was passed in response to concerns of homeowners associations that foreclosed and abandoned homes have become a liability for neighborhoods.

The matter was discussed during a recent meeting the West Deerfield Community Alliance. There are 14 homeowners associations active in this organization.

"We are asking all the homeowners associations that are part of our organization to compile a list of abandoned properties in their associations," Bill Ganz, a leader in the Alliance said. "We will forward that list to the city."

Ganz and other residents

who attended the meeting want to ensure that these properties are in compliance with the ordinance. Some residents voiced complaints that people whose homes are in foreclosure continue to live in their homes without paying mortgages and homeowner association fees. Others have reported problems with squatters and people breaking into the homes to have parties.

"This is the least we can do to assist the city and make sure this ordinance is properly enforced," Ganz said. "The sheer number of homes in foreclosure makes it very hard for city officials to keep track of [them]. That is why we are requesting our homeowners associations to submit a list of abandoned properties in their associations."

Many association leaders expect to see more homes in foreclosure. "The economy has yet to turn around and we still have not hit the bottom in the number of foreclosures we will see in Deerfield Beach," Ganz said. "I am concerned with helping the city maintain the quality we have

come to expect in Deerfield Beach."

Shirley Mitchell, a representative of the Deer Pointe Homeowners Association, said there have been some foreclosures in her 192-unit development. She expressed concern that there are squatters living in these homes.

"These homes are not maintained," Mitchell said. "The biggest thing is squatters. People are living in these units and not paying for them. The places are falling apart. The banks are not paying to maintain these properties."

Need for more athletic programs in west Deerfield Beach

Mitchell also expressed concern about the lack of athletic opportunities for young people in west Deerfield Beach. This has been a growing concern for many of the city's residents.

"The big concern is that the west side has been forgotten," Mitchell said. "I want to see the city have more athletic opportunities here. Deerfield Beach is losing a lot of money because young people are playing sports in Coconut Creek."

Commission meeting wrap-up *Deerfield Beach*

Two Deerfield Beach property owners have come to a resolution with the city following a lawsuit that was filed in 2003.

Robert Kinssies and his wife Angela of 381 SE 18th Ave. and James Stanger of 217 SE 18th Ave. filed a lawsuit saying that the property next to their homes was their property because the land was platted as a thoroughfare and was not paved.

"Both property owners claimed the ownership should revert to them," Deerfield Beach City Attorney Andy Maurodis said. "The city litigated this lawsuit for four years. The city filed a motion for summary judgment, asking the court to rule in our favor on the basis of the law. Experts provided affidavits."

According to Maurodis, both plaintiffs decided to reach a settlement. Robert Kinssies has since died.

"We were able to maintain that the property is public and stays in the public," Maurodis said. "They received certain assurances we would not tear down the buffering there."

In other discussion
The Deerfield Beach City Commission also agreed to allow a site plan modification to construct four finger pier docks with four boat lifts at 447 -461 NE 19th Avenue. The docks will extend 44.5 feet into the Intracoastal Waterway, rather than the 20 feet usually allowed.

Dennis Mele, the attorney representing Deerfield Beach Townhome Development, said the docks needed to be extended to avoid destroying seagrass. He said the docks will be used by the owners of

the four towns in the development and are proper for the area.

Robert Dziadzio opposed lengthening the docks because he believed it might interfere with boat traffic and harm the environment.

The Commission approved an agreement with Gabriel Roeder Smith and Company for professional and actuarial consulting services for up to \$18,000.

It approved the purchase

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