

**SECURITY COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 1, 2007  
MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Edd Siler  
Erasmus Reyes  
Antonio Maldonado  
Luis López  
Daniel Vasse  
Mary Jo Espasas  
Victor Nieto

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by Erasmo Reyes, Chairman of the PHA Security Committee. Mr. Reyes welcomed the new members of the committee recently appointed by the PHA President.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the August 6, 2007 meeting were approved upon a motion by Daniel Vasse seconded by Victor Nieto.

**III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS**

**A. Appointment of Committee Members**

In accordance with Article 53 of the Palmas del Mar Homeowners Association (PHA) the following members of the Association were reappointed by Mr. Julio Bagué, PHA President to the PHA Security Committee:

- *Edd Siler*
- *Erasmus Reyes*
- *Agapito Cosme*
- *Michael Shulevitz*
- *Agustín Cabrer, Jr.*
- *Daniel Vasse*

- *Mary Jo Espasas*

Additionally, Mr. Bagué appointed Mr. Erasmo Reyes as Chairman of the Committee and the following homeowners as new members of the Committee:

- *David Frazier*
- *Victor Nieto*
- *José Colón*
- *Norberto Rodríguez*

Thank you letters were sent to the former members of the Security Committee.

### **B. Letter to the Community**

A letter to the community was mailed on September 13, 2007 informing the members of the Association about the change in security services and introducing the new security services company St. James Security. The letter also explains in detail actions taken to counteract the rise in criminal activity observed during the month of August. It was necessary for PHA to send this letter as misinformation was being circulated in the community attempting to create panic and to discredit St. James and PHA management for having changed the security services.

### **C. Golf Cart Driving Age**

The Security Committee addressed a homeowner and the Academy request to review the age limit for students driving golf carts to the Palmas Academy during school hours. The Committee took in consideration the Puerto Rico Transit Law, the Municipal Code, the Laws in other States such as Florida and the practice being followed at other communities in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico Transit Law does not address driving of golf carts or age limits for driving this type of vehicle. The law does prohibit the driving of unlicensed vehicles on public roads. The Humacao Municipal Code specifically prohibits driving golf carts on public roads but does not establish age limits either. In the State of Florida the law established 14 years as the minimum age for driving golf carts on public roads or streets. Also, communities such as Dorado Beach allow 14-year olds to drive golf carts.

In general terms the Security Committee felt the change offers the opportunity for youngsters to assume higher responsibilities and to demonstrate maturity. Although favorably inclined to formalize the practice of allowing 14 year old and older to drive golf carts to and from the Academy during the school hours, before implementing such a change the following steps must be taken or be included in the process of such an authorization:

1. Obtain a legal opinion to determine the extent, legality and liability for such an authorization or program.

2. Consult insurance brokers to determine insurance coverage requirements.
3. Develop a golf-cart drivers education program and test in coordination with the Palmas Academy. Education program should include all golf-cart restrictions, rules and regulations.
4. Establish clear guidelines on the extent of driving authorization . This guidance should be part of the education program. For example, driving will be authorized only during school hours when school is in session.
5. Parents must request that students be placed in this program and the Palmas Academy must endorse such a request.
6. PHA Security will develop a special I.D. permit with a picture of the student, birthdate, home address and emergency contact number and person.
7. Parents will be responsible for obtaining appropriate insurance coverage specifying the student driving the golf-cart. Evidence of such an insurance must be submitted to PHA and to the Academy.
8. Parents will be required to sign a document releasing and holding PHA and the Palmas Academy harmless from any responsibility, accidents or incidents involving students driving golf carts.
9. In addition to the appropriate fines, permits will be cancelled for violations of golf cart rules or upon the recommendation of the Academy.
10. Upon recommendation by the Security Committee, approval of the final program will be required from the PHA Board of Directors and by the Palmas Academy Board of Directors.

#### **D. South District Access Control Rules**

At the request of representatives from the South District, a set of Access Control Rules were implemented to control traffic and access to that residential sector. Such rules call for limiting access to residents only from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am. Non-residents gaining access to this area during these hours must be guests of residents. Also, residents of that area without the sticker letter “A” affixed to the windshield accrediting them as residents of the South District must identify and register themselves at the South District Control Gate.

There have been some problems in implementing the access control rules of the South District. Problems include residents not having the “A” sticker or no PHA registration stickers at all. Also, the long lines at the South District guardhouse will be created since

the new guardhouse and extra lanes have not been built. Some residents have requested that these rules be set aside until they can be fully implemented.

Mary Jo Espasas recommended that until the new guardhouse with appropriate telephone and the required number of lanes is built, the access rules should take in consideration the current limitations and the potential problems that may be created. Also, until all South District residents acquire their credentials such as the "A" letter these rules should be relaxed. The Security Committee recommended to Mr. Maldonado these suggestions be passed to the Presidents of the South District for their consideration since this is an internal matter that must worked out by the homeowners of that residential area.

Note: On October 4, 2007 Mr. Maldonado contacted Mr. Eric Grafals, Mr. Ben Bravo and Mr. Gabriel Espasas, presidents of the South District, to review this matter. All of them agreed on the relaxation of the rules until a full implementation is possible. Instructions were issued to St. James Security along these lines.

#### **E. Security Operations**

As a result of incidents in the South District, there are now six bicycle patrols and an additional PHA Security vehicle patrol covering this sector. Access Control Guard House is now being manned from 2:00 pm to 6:00 am. The Police CIC has assigned to agents to work exclusively on Palmas cases. Weekly meetings are being held between PHA Security and the CIC to follow up Palmas cases. According to CIC investigators they have evidence and witnesses that could lead to the arrest of the perpetrators of several burglaries that have recently taken place in Palmas.

Additional security measures have been implemented by PHA in the South District. These include the illumination of perimeter fence areas, the placing of concertina wire in trails suspected being used to access Palmas and the clearing of trees and brush near perimeter zones. Also, a program has been implemented to force lot owners adjacent to these sensitive areas to clean up these properties within the next 30 days. The same program is being extended throughout Palmas del Mar.

#### **F. Monthly Incidents Review**

Five (5) burglaries were reported in September (two in Harborlights, one in Port Road, one in Sunrise and one in Shell Castle). Three (3) illegal appropriations were also reported in September (one in Maralago, one in Port Road and one at the Four Points Sheraton. There were zero homicides, sexual aggressions, robberies or aggressions reported. Four individuals were detained.

The Puerto Rico Police is conducting operatives on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays intervening with construction and service workers leaving Palmas del Mar. A police patrol cruiser has been assigned to Palmas on a daily basis.

Several houses have been found with open doors/open windows. Several of these houses are not occupied full-time and often, when the owners are notified about the situation, he/she do not respond immediately but in some cases several days later. Three houses in Sunrise (empty) were subject to vandalism during the month of September. Windows in the back of these houses were broken with rocks thrown from the outside. It is possible this is the result of vandalism by youth from that residential area. A special watch has been implemented in this zone.

Mr. Erasmo Reyes warned that when responding to alarms, broken windows or open doors where there is suspicion of criminal activity in progress, security should not enter the premises but keep vigilance until the Police or the owner arrives.

#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **A. Monitoring Systems**

Mr. Maldonado reported that PHA has requested proposals from two separate companies to come up with surveillance systems to monitor activity in the perimeter zones such as Harborlights, Port Road and Roble Valley. Also, mobile system options are being considered.

##### **B. Access Control Passes**

Mr. Daniel Vasse recommended that procedures for issuing passes be further tightened. Although considerable improvement has been achieved in the procedures and control of passes, there is a need to be more strict with service employees.

The Committee recommended that homeowners be notified that they must issue letters of authorization to service employees and workers they will have coming to their homes before a pass is issued to them. If there is no letter of authorization passes should not be issued. PHA should create a form to be used by homeowners to give such authorizations.

Mrs. Espasas also suggested that homeowners and employers require good conduct certificates from employees. Mr. Maldonado indicated that this is always recommended to contractors and employers; however, according to PHA's legal counsel, PHA can enforce it among its employees but cannot force this requirement on others.

##### **C. Preferred Vendors (Contractors Program)**

Mr. Daniel Vasse suggested that PHA should consider developing a good vendor program. This program should be oriented toward making it a privilege to work in Palmas del Mar. Through this program vendors will be required to have all their employees registered at PHA and that such employees be required to have good conduct certification, drug testing, licenses and other documents up to date. Those vendors willing to be recognized as preferred vendors most accept these conditions. A list of

preferred vendors could then be published and disseminated to the community to recognize those service providers recommended by PHA for use by the community. From a security program will help in ensuring certain people who enter Palms are reliable and dependable individuals.

It was further recommended that PHA works with the Business Association and the Penny Saver to develop the "Preferred Vendor/Contractor Program". Mr. Vasse and Mr. Maldonado will get together to further refine this idea.

**D. Long lines at Main Gate**

Mr. Victor Nieto pointed out that the visitors line at the Main Gate seems to get very long particularly on week-ends. It was explained that when this line gets too long the Security Supervisor is called to open the center lane to all vehicles and expedite the traffic. Lines got longer after PHA began to strictly enforce the AVI requirements and not allowing vehicles without AVI to enter through the center lane. Also, AVI cards on homeowners with accounts in arrears are being deactivated.

**V. ADJOURN**

The Security Committee adjourned at 8:40 p.m.