Review of VG&RC Dues and Assessment Increases

There is an often-repeated general idea shared by many Venetian residents our CDD assessments have increased at a rapid and irresponsible rate over the past several years. To have a full picture, one must look at all historical dues, fees and assessments paid by VG&RC homeowners, be they to WCI, the POA or the CDD. Over the past eight years, the CDD has taken over many responsibilities along with their respective costs, which were previously paid to WCI, as owner of the River Club, and the POA. Some of the costs transferred to the CDD included:

* Responsibility for “common area” maintenance, (including but not limited to roads, storm water lakes, wetlands, sidewalks, lighting and mailboxes) from the POA.
* Responsibility for Privacy Services (front gate and roving officer) from the POA.
* Responsibility for “common area” and residential irrigation from the POA.
* The CDD purchase of the River Club from WCI resulted in fees previously paid to WCI to now be included in CDD assessments.

To make a fair comparison, the total of all fees and assessments paid by homeowners, not just those paid to the CDD must be considered. Below is a chart that does just that for the past eight-year period. Note the 4% discount applies to only CDD assessments, not to previous WCI River Club dues and past or present POA fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total &quot;VG&amp;RC&quot; Fees - Last Eight Years</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDD &amp; River Club O&amp;M</td>
<td>$1,685</td>
<td>$2,338</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDD &amp; River Club Debt (1)</td>
<td>$1,179</td>
<td>$1,389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POA O&amp;M (2)</td>
<td>$1,476</td>
<td>$815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal O&amp;M</td>
<td>$4,340</td>
<td>$4,542</td>
<td>0.29% per yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With 4% CDD Discount</td>
<td>$4,291</td>
<td>$4,393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O&amp;M &amp; Reserves with Discount</td>
<td>$4,291</td>
<td>$4,743</td>
<td>1.25% per yr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Based on an Estate Home Debt Assessment.

(2) Based on the VCD 3 Oct 1 2018 thru Sep 30 2019 assessments increase of 1.07%, and the 2019 POA fee increase of 4.0%.

The above chart shows:
* Total fees/assessments, including reserves, which were non-existent until the CDD took over the above-mentioned POA responsibilities and ownership of the River Club, increased, on average, 1.25% per year over this eight year period. The annual rate of inflation over the same time frame as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 2.70%. This means our annual costs have risen at less than HALF the rate of inflation since 2010! Thus our annual costs have actually gone DOWN over the past 8 years in inflation adjusted terms.
* Not counting the reserve accounts, which accumulate until needed and may be considered as "advance payments" of dues and assessments, the average increase was 0.29% per year.

In reality, the CDD and its counterpart, the POA have been excellent stewards of our community funds, and contrary to a common perception, our overall dues and assessment increases have been extremely low for many years.
Proposed Pickleball and Dog Park Update

Your VCDD Board Supervisors are receiving dozens of emails regarding pickleball courts and an off-leash dog park. These proposed amenities have been discussed at many VCDD Board meetings with the results of those discussions summarized in the official board meeting minutes. A Pickleball Advisory Committee has been formed and they are scheduled to hold their first meeting in October. As publically announced, one of the tasks for that Committee is to obtain feedback from the community as to their desire to have pickleball courts at the River Club.

The last "official" statement from the Board on the pickleball courts and off-leash dog park was on August 13, 2018 at the Public Hearing for the 2019-2019 FY Proposed Budget and Assessments. At that Public Hearing, it was stated:

The Board has determined there are sufficient funds presently available in Operating Surplus and unspent Non-Reoccurring Expenses line items to fund these projects, should they go ahead.

Any unexpected expenses would take precedence over surplus funds being used for these new facilities.

Venetian homeowners will be asked for their input as to the desirability of these projects before the Board makes a final decision.

As discussions proceed on these projects, keep in mind a rough cost estimate per homeowner for each facility amounts to an approximate one-time cost of $50 for construction and $5 to $10 per year for maintenance. The Board also points out NO River Club or CDD Reserve funds would be used, should the projects proceed.

For clarification, the pickleball courts would be a River Club project and the off-leash dog park, a VCDD facility.

Please be assured the final decision on these two proposed amenities will not be made until public meetings are held so homeowners’ voices may be heard; and such meetings will not take place until our seasonal residents return.

Alphabet Soup: VCDD, POA, ACC & VGRCCA

There still is a great deal of confusion and misinformation regarding the roles and responsibilities of organizations here in The Venetian Golf and River Club. This article is a reprint of an April-May 2018 newsletter article providing a brief overview of the major entities and their functions here in The Venetian.

Venetian Community Development District (VCDD) – (the “District”), is a local unit of special purpose government created under Florida law. The District has constructed and is responsible for the maintenance of certain improvements, infrastructure and facilities within the District. The District financed this construction through the sale of tax-exempt bonds, a form of public financing. These facilities and infrastructure includes approximately 16 miles of roads, curbs, and common areas including community ponds, the River Club, community pools and tennis courts. In addition, the VCDD is responsible for the guard gate and staffing of privacy officers and the privacy patrol.

A five member Board of Supervisor governs the District and are elected by the residents of the Venetian Golf and River Club who are both Florida residents and registered voters in Sarasota County. Each Supervisor is elected for a four-year term. Terms are staggered with two supervisors elected every two years and three supervisors elected every two years.

As a public entity created by Florida Statute, the VCDD Board of Supervisors, as well as all Board created and appointed advisory committees making recommendations to the Board, are subject to the Florida Sunshine Laws which require all communications among Board and advisory committee members be conducted in open public meetings.
The River Club is managed by ICON Management Services (formerly Vision Golf & Association Management) located in Bradenton, FL. All employees of the River Club are employees of ICON Management Services, NOT the VCDD. The VCDD pays ICON Management Services $72,000 per year for their management services which include the hiring, training and supervision of all River Club staff; operation, repairs and maintenance of club facilities; and payroll and accounting. All expenses of operating the River Club are borne by the VCDD who supervises and approves an annual operating budget, administered by ICON. The District Enterprise Fund, overseen by the Board funds the operations of the River Club.

District professional, amenity and field services are managed by Rizzetta & Company and Rizzetta Amenity Services of Tampa, FL. Rizzetta provides two on-site employees- Field Manager Kareen Richard, whose office is located in the Welcome Center at 102 Pesaro Dr., North Venice, FL 34275 and a Field Technician. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year a full-time administrative assistant will be hired to assist Kareen.

The District General Fund provides for the operations of the District professional, amenity and field services. This includes the salaries for the Field Manager and Field Technician as well as the cost of the District attorney, engineer, privacy services including the guard gate personnel and patrols, insurance, aquatic maintenance of fountains, lakes and ponds, landscaping, irrigation pump maintenance and repairs, road and street facilities, office administration as well as additional items too numerous to list in this newsletter.

**Venetian Golf & River Club Property Owner’s Association** – (the “POA”), is the master homeowner’s association of The Venetian Golf and River Club and is governed by a five member Board of Directors elected by the property owners of The Venetian. It is NOT a public entity and is not bound by the same Florida Sunshine Laws as the VCDD Board.

The POA owns and maintains the River Walk behind the River Club and negotiates and manages the association’s contract with Comcast for bulk cable and Internet services in The Venetian. It is also the entity that enforces the rules and regulations in the Architectural Control Standards and Master Declaration of The Venetian Golf and River Club.

A few of the things regulated by the POA include home maintenance, architectural changes, hurricane shutters, landscaping, residential mowing, irrigation violations, lake and pond access, exterior lighting, residential parking, and home rentals.

**Architectural Control Committee** – (the “ACC”) is the committee of the POA charged with enforcing the rules and regulations in the Architectural Control Standards. Residents who wish to make architectural changes such as home painting, home improvements, removing or planting trees or shrubs and altering landscaping must apply and receive approval from the ACC prior to undertaking such projects.

**Venetian Golf & River Club Community Association** – (the “VGRCCA”) The Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association (VGRCCA) is a voluntary organization formed in 2008 by residents. A volunteer Board consisting of 10 members governs the VGRCCA. Membership is open to all residents of The Venetian at a cost of $30 per household per year. Like the POA, the VGRCCA is NOT a public entity and is not bound by Florida Sunshine Laws.

Its original purpose was to address a land development issue at the corner of Laurel and Knight’s Trail Roads. Today, the Community Association still remains vigilant on issues “outside the gates” such as land development and local government affairs. In addition, the Community Association sponsors activities and events, “within the gates” that impact the general welfare of residents. Examples include one-hour seminars on a myriad of topics, Bike-O-Rama, an Annual Town Hall Meeting and the placing of American flags at the front entrance of the Venetian on three national holidays to honor those who have served. Since 2010, the Association has published a monthly electronic newsletter *Parcels From Paradise* on topics of general interest to residents.

For more information on the VGRCCA please visit their website at: [http://www.vgrcca.us/](http://www.vgrcca.us/)
On Friday, September 7, 2018, the Venetian CDD Board was notified by our River Club management company, Vision Golf & Association Management, they had merged with ICON Management Services. It is our understanding eventually Icon will be the surviving company. ICON presently manages the Venetian Golf Club. The information below is provided to allow Venetian residents to be fully informed about the merger.

*The River Club and Golf Club have no financial or other arrangements or agreements between them that will mandate any interaction between the local management and staff of the respective clubs or for that matter, senior Vision and ICON off-site management and staff.

*The previous Vision team members that have supported the River Club operation will continue to do so.

*Senior management, accounting and other off-site support will continue to be from the former Vision Ft. Myers office. It is our understanding all similar ICON support originates from their Bradenton office.

*Our bank accounts will remain separate and distinct from any other accounts managed by ICON and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) procedures will be strictly followed, as they are now. In that regard, these accounts are reviewed annually be an outside auditor.

*There will be no changes to the River Club staff’s terms of employment, including benefits.

*There are no River Club staff changes contemplated as a result of this merger. No employees will be laid off or let go.

Our current River Club Manager, Denise Payton, was previously employed by ICON as a staff member at the Venetian Golf Club. Sometime after she separated from ICON, Vision was in the process of interviewing candidates for the River Club Manager position. At that time, the VCDD board received numerous requests, particularly from Venetian Golf Club members, asking Denise be considered for the open River Club Manager position. As a result, the CDD board passed on Denise’s contact information to Vision senior management and suggested they might wish to interview her for the River Club Manager position.

The VCDD Board was not aware of the ICON-Vision merger until after it happened. This is not an unusual situation when such a transition takes place between two privately owned companies. Our Agreement with Vision did not require they obtain our approval before entering into such a transaction. What is included in our agreement is a 60-day termination clause, which can be exercised “without cause” by the VCDD Board, should they decide such an action would be to the benefit of the District.

The Board is open to any comments or concerns River Club members would like to express regarding the effect of this transaction upon the well-being of the River Club.