



DEC 2024 - JAN 2025
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www.upcai-fl.com



THE UNIVERSITY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

UP to DATE

UPCAI BOARD



2024 Review & Overview

Note: This is a partial reprint of a community email sent last quarter 2024.

It's our pleasure to welcome you to the Winter University Park 2024-2025 season. As we continue to grow and thrive, we remain steadfast in our commitment to continue to oversee and preserve the park-like environment and beauty and tranquility of our community and your lifestyle. This kind of introspection, dialogue, and action is part of our DNA at University Park. You might call it a "culture of care."

We have been busy throughout 2024 and into 2025 and thought you might be interested in the significant milestones accomplished the past nine (9) months or are still currently underway. We hope that you, like us, have the same sense of excitement for what lies ahead to make your lives even more comfortable and enjoyable.

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- Four Board Directors “re-upped” for an additional 2-year term: Janette Gatesy, Bob Grady, Lars Lundholm and Pat Thompson.
- Appointment of a Community Association Manager, Renee DeLeo.
- New Compliance/Enforcement Program plus the formation of the Hearing Committee.
- CERT and resident-updated hurricane preparedness programs.
- Final approval of CCRs and SDs, UPCA's governing documents, at the annual neighborhood meetings during the spring (March) culminating five (5) years of demanding work by many resident volunteers.
- New 2025 neighborhood budgeting process.
- Introduction of Yardi software to simplify PBM staff and resident work orders needs and significantly improve response times (University Park Owners' Portal).
- Park-wide sidewalk repair/replacement program nearing completion after two years of work.
- Promptly reviewed and responded to 584 ALC requests through December.
- Detection and then treatment of the Bryozoa organism in our ponds and an annual process for detecting and treating Bryozoa was put in place.
- Due to constant, costly, pump failures, the Infrastructure Committee researched and approved an Irrigation Pump Station Upgrade Program. The new irrigation pumping stations will reduce the number of pumps required and provide consistency across all pumps. This will also reduce the operating and reserve costs of the total irrigation system and significantly improve the online irrigation reliability of the entire system. The Board Directors approved the installation of the first three (3) standalone pumps to be installed during first quarter 2025.
- The Emergency AccessGates Camera Program has been completed. See article on page 8 of this issue.
- 2024 marked the end of the Infrastructure Committee’s major 15-year overhaul project of the seven lift stations and the completion of repairs to all Category 5 and Category 4 manholes.
- Home inspections resumed in 2024 after announcements to the entire community that the inspections were coming. The communication program explains and supports the need for enforcement and delineates the steps to achieve it.
- Richard Crouch and Peter Conway were inducted into the UPCA Volunteer Wall of Fame.
- And of course, the ravages and recovery from three major storms: Debby, Helene and then Milton. The most terrible three-some Mother Nature could have thrown at us.

As we embark on this new season together with the Country Club, we are filled with a deep sense of pride and anticipation for what we will accomplish as a community. Our shared commitment to excellence, innovation and care will continue to drive us forward and ensure that University Park remains one of the most sought after and relevant communities in our area.



2024 Chair Updates

The Chair Council stayed busy and Milton did not help!

The Chair Council held its monthly meetings per usual except for October, which was a direct result of Hurricane Milton. During the last quarter of this year, Chair Council discussions were dominated by the consequences of Hurricane Milton. Prior to that event, it was business as usual with presentations and updates by the Board Committees, the GM, the RD, CERT, PBM, Comcast etc. A significant portion of each meeting was consumed by discussions concerning our aging irrigation pumps and the Bryozoa issue. As a 30+ year old community, we are suffering from the effects of an aging infrastructure, and our infrastructure volunteers were up to the task.

On October 9th we suffered a direct hit from Hurricane Milton, which had lessened in strength from a category 5 to a category 3 storm. Despite all the warnings and preparations, there was no way we could have predicted the amount of damage, debris and havoc this storm created. From that point on, during the November and December meetings, the Infrastructure and Finance Committees dominated the CC agenda with lengthy discussions about the inventoried removal of the debris to the Powerline Road and the enormous expenses involved. The multiple exchanges between Tom Christopher, Curtis Nickerson, and Manatee County about the cost of removal of the Powerline Road debris sounded exhausting. Meanwhile, the Finance Committee and our Controller began the arduous task of deciding how the cost of the debris removal would be covered. Kudos to both the Infrastructure Committee, who finally prevailed over the county, the Finance Committee and our Controller, Beverly Latine, for establishing a fair and equitable approach to neighborhood and community assessments. We were all the recipients of their hard work. Finally, a shout out to our CERT members who did an exemplary job before, during and after the storm. Amazingly, there were no injuries nor loss of life.



**THIS AD
IS NOT
FOR YOU,
UNLESS...**

- You want to volunteer!
- You like to write and create communication documents - newsletters, website articles, special resident programs and more!
- Are anxious to join the team of the newly formed HOA PR and Communications Committee chaired by Board Member Peggy Lowndes!

INTERESTED?

Contact Jennifer Everingham,
Assistant Board Secretary at
jeveringham@upcai-fl.com

**Volunteers are the lifeline
in University Park**



Community Standards Compliance

Official Board-sanctioned Program Introduced!

Since 2021, there has been a lot of “reading” published about UPCA compliance and enforcement issues. In January 2024 an official Board-sanctioned program was introduced and has been evolving over the past (twelve) 12 months.

Without boring you with a bunch of numbers, the program is backed up with a business plan, documented categories, a Board-approved process and approved violation letter templates with a defined schedule of events in place. The program was formed in compliance with the current Florida Statute 720-- a moving target every year with changes—and our own governing documents.

Compliance execution by PBM staff has been crisp and the development of a running violations database extremely helpful. Tropical Storms Debbie and Helene and then Hurricane Milton resulted in various suspensions of execution as priorities shifted. However, in January 2025, it’s full steam ahead with our established schedule.

The most encouraging outcome of the new program is the reduction in violations (less than 100) resulting in material corrections and compliance.

Thank you!



STOP! No Trespassing!

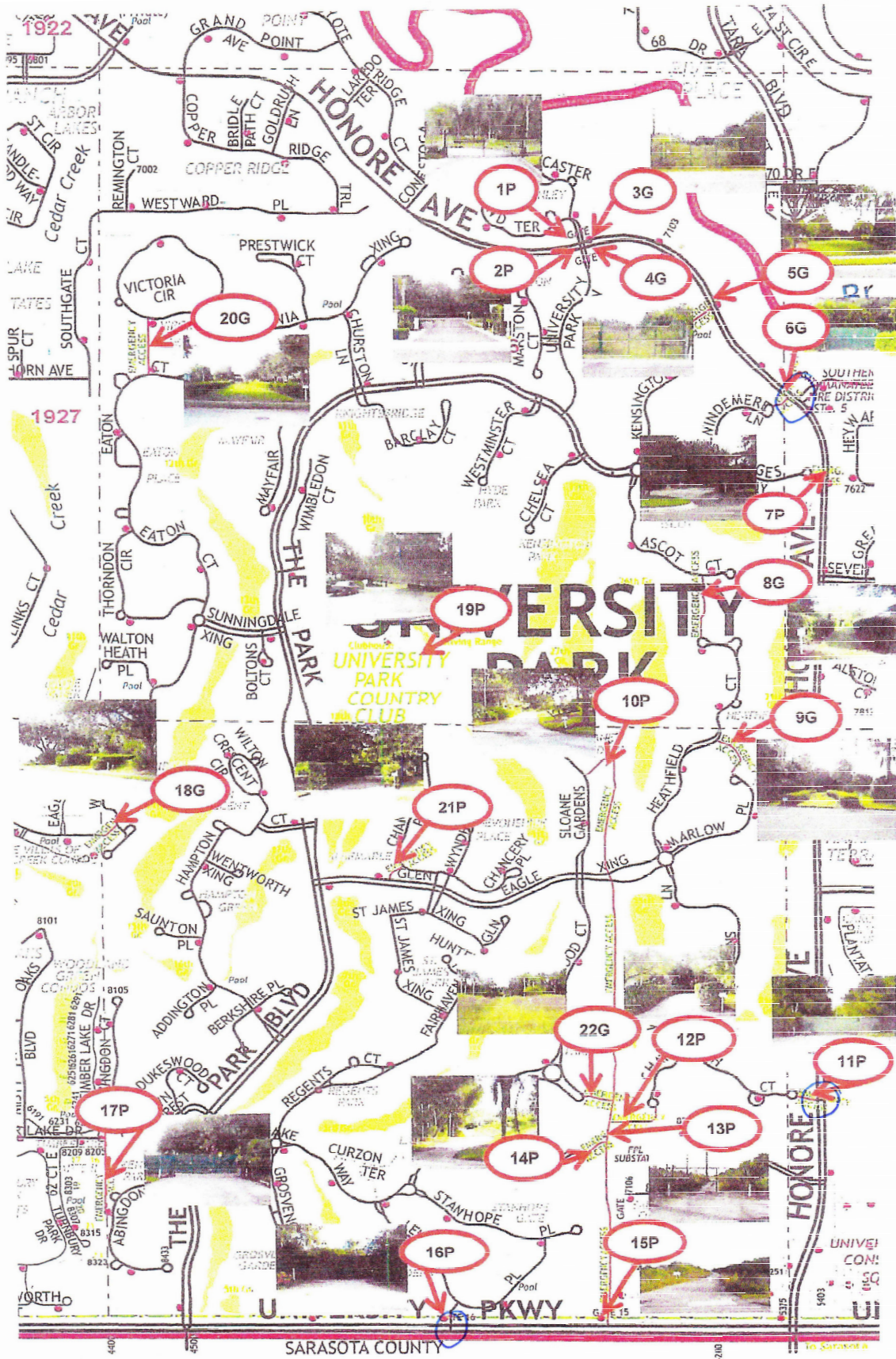
Did you know that there are twenty-two (22) emergency access roads in University Park - including our primary access roadways, The Park Boulevard and University Park Lane? Nine (9) are grass and the remainder defined as “paved.”

Many of the non-primary passageways are between neighborhoods and are to be used solely by emergency vehicles when main roads are inaccessible. They are often located adjacent to residents’ homes. Several of these emergency access passageways are on cul-de-sacs and are lined with tall, landscaped hedges, creating blind spots, visibility issues and subsequently additional risk to our residents.

These access passageways are not public. They are exclusively for the use of emergency vehicles. The only exception would be landscape vendors and PBM staff for the purpose of patrolling and maintaining the area. They are not for public use to include walking (with and without dogs), golf carts, or vehicles.

These areas are being patrolled by PBM and violators will receive a violation notice and possible fine. This is a serious matter and we hope you will help us keep our passageways clear at all times.

See Map on page 5





So What is a Bottom Weed?

Proving to be more difficult to manage than algae

Note: This article was written late September 2024.

In previous seasons, the primary challenge for our pond management vendor was focused on **algae**. This included weekly treatments of floating filamentous algae and sometimes the really ugly green planktonic algae which changes the color of the entire water column. But unlike all previous years since the formation of the Ponds Committee, our current challenge is **bottom weeds**, which are proving to be more difficult to manage than algae.

Year to date we received far more rainfall (June-August) with a record-breaking six (6) inches monthly, washing the algae out of our ponds more effectively than normal. With less algae, even though we are experiencing higher water temperatures than normal, rain is reducing our ponds' exposure to algae, but creating the bottom weed "characters" below.

SOUTHERN NAIAD produces slender narrow straight green leaves that can grow up to three feet (3') long. It can form dense mats underwater that can float to the surface. It actually improves water quality by absorbing nutrients from the water, but doesn't look pretty in our ponds.



Southern Naiad



Vallisneria

VALLISNERIA is commonly called "eel grass" or "val." It presents twisted spiral shaped green leaves that can grow to several feet long. When the leaves come to the surface, they are brownish in color. They float around the pond driven by winds.

CHARA sports a cool common name, "skunkweed" because if the leaves are crushed it smells like a skunk! It has stems with small green leaflike structures on the end and does improve water quality but stabilizes soil on the shoreline reducing erosion by producing oxygen that fights algae.



Chara

Why have these three weeds suddenly become problematic? In the past we were able to chemically control/limit the number of bottom weeds. But this year these bottom weeds can be seen floating around like large islands and/or up against the perimeter littoral shelf material. The "theory" is our ponds' bottom sediment is primarily soft mud from which plants roots can be easily pulled out. With the highly elevated water levels we've experienced there is additional aquatic pressure pushing downward on the bottom sediment. Couple that with added downward bottom pressure with the increased buoyancy/upward pressure with deeper water, resulting in some of the weeds being pulled off the bottom, roots, and all.

How can we eliminate all this floating stuff? Unfortunately, decay is the only financially acceptable alternative and mechanical removal would be cost prohibitive and disruptive. Therefore we will continue to spray chemicals to expedite the decomposition of these dead weeds floating around.

And for those who just enjoy reading about "this kind of stuff," there's more at: <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/phag/2022/03/18/time-to-think-about-pond-weeds/>.

Our Garden Group is Healthy and Growing

When the University Park Women's Club (UPWC) was formed in 2001, the Garden Group was one of the original Special Interest Groups (SIGs) created to enable members who share similar interests to meet and learn. At the time, UPWC had about 100 members. Almost all SIG communication was conducted by phone, email or handwritten note, supplemented by a monthly newsletter sent by mail.

Fast forward 24 years and today, approaching 500 members, our communication is provided online and via website, and there are over 20 SIGs. The Garden Group has been wildly popular since day 1. Members quickly jump to register for monthly get-togethers since most outings can only accommodate 20 women.



Rob Branch Botanical Garden

From September to April, the Garden Group travels to local spots to see and learn about "all things gardening," exploring topics such as:

- ✿ How to create a Florida-friendly landscape using native plants
- ✿ Right plant, right place
- ✿ Identify invasive plants and how to avoid them

They visit local parks and preserves, and learn about environmental resources (e.g., the Lemur Preserve in Myakka City, the Mote Research Center, Strawberry Research Center, Mariposa and Sweet Bay Florida Native Plant Nurseries, even an elephant preserve).



Sweet Bay Florida Native Nursery

Some activities are hands-on, as in the project to build and present a mobile tabletop garden for an assisted-living facility. Cynthia Quick, the original Garden Group Chair, had recently entered this facility; the project enabled her and others to continue their love of gardening and enabled the facility to begin growing useful herbs for kitchen use.

The Gardeners have a strong connection with the Manatee County Extension Center. Its talented Florida Friendly Landscape Manager, Susan Griffith, provides programs designed to give up-to-date information to help gardeners maintain beautiful landscapes and specialty gardens. This Center offers a Landscape Assistance Program (available free to all homeowners).



Susan Griffith addresses gardeners

This is an adventurous and curious group that isn't afraid to get their hands dirty. Members volunteer and work hard to spearhead arrangements for most outings so Polly Curran, Garden Group Leader since 2004, can focus on the content. Polly usually posts photos on the website. In fact, Polly is an accomplished Nature photographer; her art can be seen on display at "Art in the Park" and other local art venues.



Manatee County Clicker Caper

Solar Paneled Cameras Installed at Three Operational Emergency Access Gates

Last October, early in the morning, a Jeep Commanche with the keys in the ignition was stolen from a resident's driveway. The perpetrators were teens who "swapped" another stolen car in its place. Although they were apprehended in St. Petersburg that same day, before they left the Park, they stole another resident's purse left in her car that was also unlocked. A very thorough review of our camera systems showed the exit of the stolen vehicle leaving the Park, but there was no evidence of the vehicle entering. The only other possible access was through one of our four emergency access gates off Honore or University Parkway which have no systems to indicate when they are opened and or closed. These gates are used by Manatee County emergency vehicles and operated by their "emergency hand" clickers. Further investigation revealed the availability of illegal clickers with codes on the internet that operate emergency gates not only in UP but all HOAs in Manatee County.

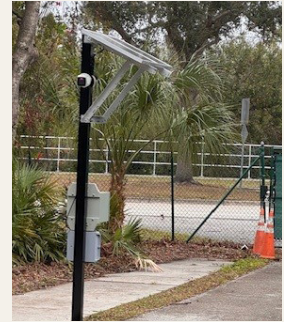
Following our incident, Manatee County refused to change their clicker code or design and acknowledge the existence of their illegal use. Therefore, we concluded that our only option was to install camera systems with internet connections to take

pictures of vehicles entering at the emergency access gates that would be transmitted to our Gatehouse for ID and notification to Manatee County police if appropriate.

None of our emergency access gates have A/C power from FPL. They all operate on a motor powered by solar panel and battery to open and close the gate. Because all our current camera security systems are A/C powered, we pursued a proposal for suppling A/C power to the gates and installing an identical camera system to that of our main gates. That bid for three gates was \$92K and that high cost necessitated a new effort to identify who could provide a solar panel powered camera system.

Throughout our efforts we could not identify any other HOAs who had developed solutions to this problem. For example, in recent articles about our friends at LWR they allegedly have lost control of controlled access to their community because of resident clickers with ongoing complaints to County Commissioners.

At first there were no available vendors, and it took some months to identify and qualify one. Finally, we placed an order for DC systems at each of the three emergency access gates. Each system was to consist of two cameras (vehicle front and back pictures), solar panels, battery, control system and a cellular communication device to the main



gate . Our total price for three systems was approximately \$25,000 that included trimming trees to afford maximum sunlight to operate the panels. Our vendor, Breakfree Technologies, has told us that a number of other HOAs have contacted them about providing similar systems to ours.

Fast forward, solar-powered cameras have been installed at the three operational emergency access gates in Lennox Gardens, Warwick Gardens and Wentworth. They will let the gatehouse know when the gates open or vehicles enter or exit University Park. This should help maintain the safety of our community and ensure the gates are used properly.

But it also helped significantly that our Infrastructure committee member, Lynn Meredith, who led this project had designed and installed security systems at the White House, Air Force 1, and other significant secure locations. Thank you Lynn!



2025 ALC Requests

As we start a new year, here is an important ALC message if you choose to make a change on the exterior of your home or landscape.

Effective Immediately

ALC requests must be submitted to PBM no later than Friday at noon starting Friday, January 17, 2025. Please ensure all back up documentation is included. Incomplete requests will be returned for resubmission to include any missing information. Applications are to be submitted to alc@upcai-fl.com.

ALL ALC REQUESTS MUST INCLUDE:

- ALC request form with written description
- Fee
- Clear photos with clear labels of subject house and street address

AND PREFERRED BUT NOT MANDATORY:

- Actual samples (whenever possible)
- Estimated completion date of project (if possible)

COMCAST CONTRACT TASK FORCE



Xfinity/Comcast Calling

Don't delay. Make your call TODAY to reserve your spot for the mandatory Optical Network Unit (ONU) upgrade to your Comcast equipment. To date, 65 homes have been converted with appointments pending for January (105), February (98), March (97) and April (32). "Snow-birders" we need your home scheduled before you leave.

What to Expect During the Upgrade

- A Comcast technician will replace the current ONU on the exterior of your home.
- The gateway inside your home and the wiring connecting it to the ONU will also be updated.
- The entire process will take approximately 2-4 hours.
- You, or a designated individual over the age of 18, must be present during the technician's visit.

Comcast Telephone Number for scheduling this upgrade: **844-330-7188**.

Newly Initiated Wall of Fame Recipients



Richard Crouch (l) with Tom Christopher



Peter Conway

Thank You University Park for Christmas Turkeys and Food for so Many Wanting Tables



(l) Scott Bieler, Mayors Feed the Hungry Program; Peggy Lowndes Board Director

Stately Owl



Photo by John Cloud

We invite all residents to send pictures snapped "around and about" the Park for community viewing pleasure, and we'll include them in subsequent UP to DATE issues. Please indicate a subject caption in your words with your picture and email to: Jennifer Everingham at jevingham@upcai-fl.com.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

quarterly district & club news update

2024 YEAR- IN- REVIEW PRESENTATION:

Take a closer look at the incredible accomplishments of the past year with our 2024 Year in Review Presentation. Scan the QR code below or [click here](#) to explore highlights, including operational milestones, departmental achievements, and financial success.



UPRD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ELECTION:

The UPRD election will take place at The Varsity Club on February 18, 2025, to fill three Board Supervisor positions. Polls will be open from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (noon).

If you are submitting a ballot via mail or using the ballot box at the UPCC administrative office, please ***ensure your ballot is sealed in the envelope provided in the voter mail package***. Ballots submitted without the proper envelope may be invalidated.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) below for quick access to candidate bios, voting information, and more:



HURRICANE RESILIENCE:

Our community came together with incredible strength during a challenging year, overcoming the impacts of two hurricanes. To honor the efforts of our residents, staff, and partners, we created a special video of appreciation.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) below to watch:



PBM MAIN

941-355-3888

Patrick Bell

Landscape Manager
Ext. 194
pbell@upcai-fl.com

Renee DeLeo

Community Association Manager
Ext. 107
rdeleo@upcai-fl.com

Jennifer Everingham

Assistant Board Secretary/
Neighborhood Committee Liaison
Ext. 233
jevingham@upcai-fl.com

Amanda Goodhue

Staff Accountant
Ext. 244
agoodhue@upcai-fl.com

Nicole Hird

Administrative Assistant
Ext. 105
nhird@universitypark-fl.com

Janice Kemper

Administrative Assistant
Ext. 106
jkemper@upcai-fl.com

Beverly Latine

UPCAI Contoller
Ext. 261
blatine@upcai-fl.com

Dava Reyes

Administrative Assistant
Ext. 104
dreyes@upcai-fl.com

Fidel Villegas

Infrastructure Systems Manager
Ext. 263
fvillegas@upcai-fl.com

Receptionist

Ext. 103

Gate Access Control Supervisor

Ext. 256

John Fetsick

General Manager
Ext. 226
jfetsick@universitypark-fl.com

Curtis Nickerson

Director of Property and Facilities/
Deputy General Manager
Ext. 249
cnickerson@universitypark-fl.com

Park Boulevard Management Offices
are located in the
UPCAI Business Offices
just before the gatehouse at
8301 The Park Boulevard.
Their hours of operation are:
Monday - Friday
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

UPCAI Board of Directors

Tom Christopher

Board President
2023 - 2025

Janette Gatesy

Board Secretary
2024 - 2026

Robert Grady

Board Director
2024 - 2026

Bill Lockhorn

Board Vice President
2023 - 2025

Peggy Lowndes

Board Director
2023 - 2025

Lars Lundholm

Board Director
2024 - 2026

Pat Thompson

Board Treasurer
2024 - 2026

UPCAI Website

<https://www.upcai-fl.com>

Gate Access Website, dwellingLIVE

<https://community.dwellinglive.com/universitypark.aspx>

SAVE THE DATE

Most committees are
currently meeting online via Zoom.
Watch your emails for the
Zoom invitation information
for each meeting.

Architecture & Landscape Committee

Every other Friday at 10:00 a.m.

CERT

Second Tuesday every other month
2:00 p.m.

Chair Council

Second Monday each month
4:00 p.m.

Finance Committee

Second Tuesday or Thursday
each month
3:30 p.m.

Ponds Committee

First Thursday each month
2:00 p.m.

UPCAI Board of Directors

Third Thursday each month
10:00 a.m.

Infrastructure Committee

Second Thursday each month
2:00 p.m.

UP to Date

Can be found on the UPCA website
<https://upcai-fl.com/lifestyle/>.
To send comments, ask questions or
add suggestions for articles,
contact Jennifer Everingham at
jevingham@upcai-fl.com