

September 25, 2017

A MESSAGE FROM PORT ROYAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT ANDY DEANE

In some ways, it feels like a month, but in fact it has only been two weeks since Hurricane Irma struck Naples full in the face. Since many of you are summering up north and haven't planned to return to Naples until later in the Fall, I felt it would be helpful to put out an email as a kind of 'after-action' report to describe the Hurricane and its aftermath.

When it was over, building damage was minimal and there was no appreciable storm surge. Unfortunately, the damage to our beautiful trees was devastating. Trying to venture out on Tuesday after the storm was close to impossible due to the sheer number of trees in the road. The City quickly mobilized large front-end loaders to literally punch the trees to the shoulder of the roads – huge trees the size of small buildings.

Gordon Drive was especially hard hit. Twelve years ago, after Hurricane Wilma, Naples replaced many Mahogany and Oak trees that had been destroyed in that category two storm. Gordon Drive was just beginning to fill-in and was a charming alley of overarching trees when this category four storm blasted ashore at Marco Island. It's a very different scene today.

The comments I've heard from others who rode out the storm range from "We dodged a bullet," to "There's an Angel on our shoulder." Certainly, it could have been much worse. The media will be excoriated by many of us for indulging in 'hype,' but they were mostly reporting what they were being told by the experts trying to forecast a super-complex weather phenomenon.

In the aftermath, loss of electric power and a gasoline shortage became the major issues. The gas shortage sorted itself out within three or four days after people realized they didn't have to 'top-up' their tank every time the needle showed half full. Some of the gas lines were literally a mile long. The electric power outage has been a much more resistant problem. It has been two weeks and as of yesterday there were still many customers without power in Collier County. The short answer 'why' goes back to the effect of enormous tree damage. This storm was not only a strong one, it was a large one. At one point, Irma was over 300 miles wide.

A couple of days ago I was invited, along with eight or ten other interested parties, to a briefing from Eric Silagy, the CEO of Florida Power and Light. It was held in a trailer at the Naples Airport site of the Emergency Response Center set up by FPL. Mr. Silagy gave a presentation on the challenges faced by an electric power company by a storm of this strength and breadth. Their power lines, which feed over 60 percent of Florida (mostly the East coast and up the West coast toward Tampa), are long enough to circle the globe three times! He stated they have never faced a storm that crushed as much of their infrastructure as this one.

Power to Port Royal has been coming back in stages. As of yesterday, all power should have been restored. I was out doing spot checks over the weekend and it seems that the community is finally up and running again. If you are experiencing issues with power, please report it with [FPL](#). Electric utility trucks were out on the last few areas working to clear trees and restore lines. As an aside, many of the trucks are from mid-western states from as far away as Minnesota.

It probably will be no surprise that Galleon Drive's beautiful banyan trees were especially hard hit. Once again, as was the case throughout Naples, home damage was minimal. Pool cages never do well but with that exception, our homes weathered the storm beautifully. Certainly, it's a credit to stiffer building codes as well as better preparedness.

For storm debris and damage pickup, the City contracts with the County, who then contracts with a private company, AshBritt. Throughout Port Royal and all of Naples, the streets are lined with tall piles of storm debris that has to be picked up before we restore a sense of normalcy. I understand pick-up has begun, primarily around the schools first so they can properly and safely open to students today, September 25th, but it will no doubt take a number of weeks to clean up the city. We've learned that once the schools are clear, the contractor crews will then move to the main thoroughfares (such as Gordon Drive, Crayton Road, etc.). Additional trucks will then be dispatched to begin to remove large piles of debris throughout each neighborhood in the City.

Many of you have landscape maintenance companies that do an exceptional job! Throughout Port Royal, I've noticed many properties are fully cleared and look as if a storm had never happened. There are no debris piles either because the maintenance company hauled it

away or damage to plants and trees was minimal. As in all hurricanes, the damage pattern was totally random. Some property's trees were ravaged and others came through with hardly a broken branch. In some cases, the twisting action at the stump of the tree indicates the presence of tornadoes. These are frequently imbedded in the larger hurricane and can do terrible damage. I recall the damage to South Miami that I saw in the wake of Hurricane Andrew.

Last but not least, many of you have wondered about our lovely Beach Club. According to Tom Birmingham, damage to the inside of the Club has been minimal and in fact they are going to restore food and beverage service beginning Tuesday the 26th of September. The worst damage, to my eye, was the loss of nearly 3 feet of sand off the top of our beach. Standing on the wood deck at the edge of the sand now requires a large step down to the beach, which looks like it has been scoured flat by the heavy wave action.

As everyone has agreed, we've been very lucky. Damage can be corrected with time and money and it could have been much worse. When you return for the winter season Naples will be different, but still a beautiful place.

Please be well everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andy" being more prominent than the last name "Clark".