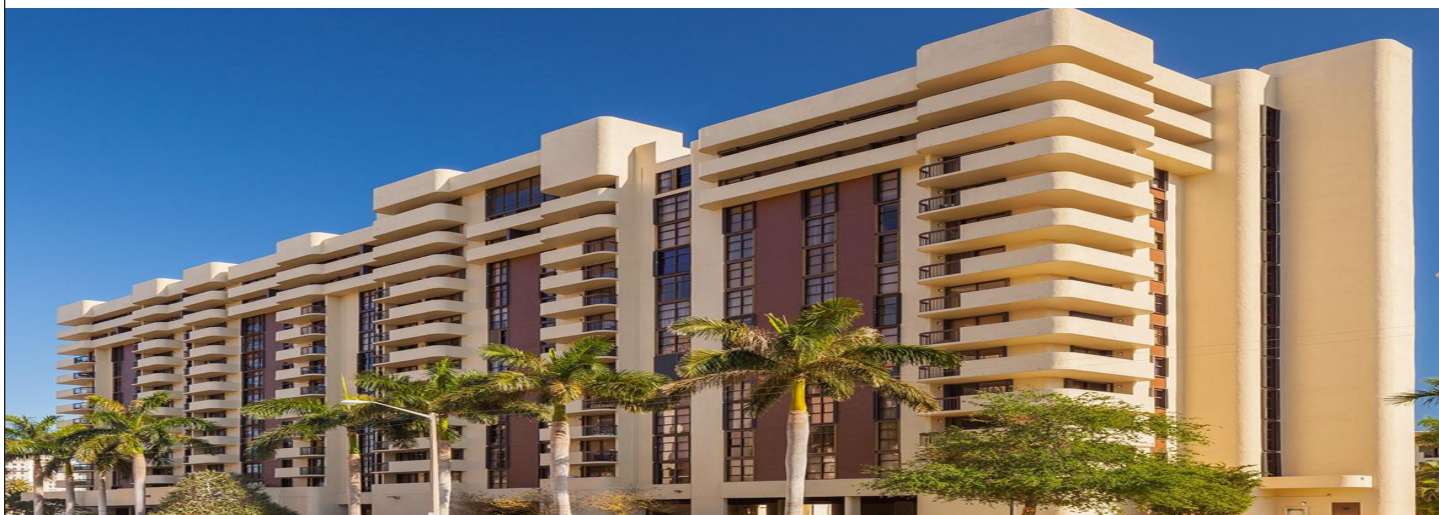


# BILTMORE II CONDOMINIUM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 13 Issue 12

September 2021

## BILTMORE II CONDO

600 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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**Vice Pres.** .....Amadeo Molinos  
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**Director** .....Monique Selman

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**Admin. Asst.** ..... Elisa Burnbaum  
**Front Desk Supv.** ..... Luis Palma  
**Maint. Supv.** .....Eduardo Mustelier S.

### HOW TO REACH US

**Manager** .. manager@biltmore2.com  
**Office**..... 305-448-4765  
**Admin.**..... admin@biltmore2.com  
**Concierge/Front Door**.. 305-443-7914  
**Concierge**.. Concierge@biltmore2.com  
**Maintenance**.....  
maintenance@biltmore2.com  
**Association Website**.....  
<https://biltmore2condo.mycommunitysite.app>

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**Monday-Friday**..... 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

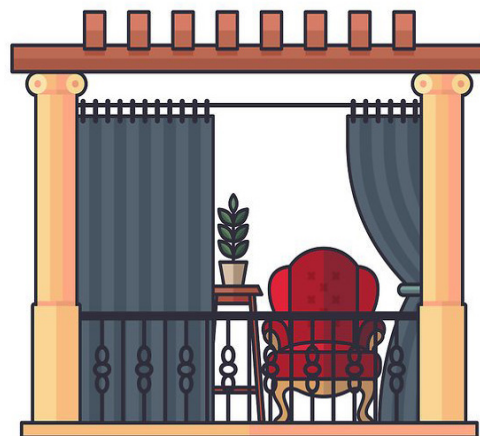


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## MANAGER'S CORNER

A reminder to all residents to familiarize yourself with the Association Rules & Regulations. This month we will review **Unit Balcony Regulations**

- Permanent attachment of fixtures such as plants, baskets, containers, chimes, plaques or other objects to the ceilings, floors, walls is not permitted. Wind chimes or any other noise emitting items are not allowed. Nothing placed on balconies, except for potted plants, shall extend above the enclosure of the balconies (railings or parapet walls) and be visible from the ground.
- Residents are permitted to display the flag of the United States from balconies. Appropriate decorations may be displayed during the religious holidays or seasons. All exterior displays must be securely anchored to prevent injury to persons or damage to property in event of winds & storms.
- Clothing, towels, laundry, carpeting or any other similar item may not be draped or hung on balconies. Items being cleaned or used for cleaning may not be shaken on balconies.
- No one may cause wash or sprinkling waters to flow from balconies or cause dirt, debris or damage to windows, walls and balconies of lower units or vehicles parked below. Nothing (including water and cigarettes) may be dropped, thrown or poured from balconies.
- Open-flame barbecuing or cooking on balconies is prohibited.
- No carpeting may be used as a floor covering on any balcony. The material retains moisture and can damage concrete and steel.
- Balconies are not to be used as storage areas. Bicycles are not allowed on balconies.
- No antennas, aerial or satellite dishes may be installed on balconies without prior approval of Association.



## TREASURER's REPORT

### (July 2021)

#### Financial Accounting and Reporting

The change from the old IT system to the new IT system has given us some unforeseen challenges. As of today, we are in the process with Sharma and Associates to clarify a number of items. Hopefully, the clarification will be done within the next two weeks. We will of course provide an update with the next treasurer's report.

#### Income/Expense

The month of July shows a net surplus of income vs .expenses of \$4,731, bringing the year-to-date income to +\$70,438. Please remember that having a surplus is a positive sign, but keep in mind that not all expenses will be incurred on a regular monthly basis. As previously reported, the unexpected repair made to the freight elevator resulted in unplanned costs of \$38,000, approx. 90% of which will be covered by our insurance policies. We have received the check, which will be reflected in our August financial data. Unfortunately, we need to replace the underground diesel fuel tank. Until the new permanent fuel tank is installed, the Board decided to rent a tank thus ensuring that our generator can run should there be any need due to adverse weather conditions. The cost for the rental tank was not expected so it was not budgeted. The fuel in the old tank is contaminated and cannot be used. Therefore new fuel was purchased, which will add to unplanned expenses. Consequently, we will remain at our forecast of an overrun of approx.. \$16,000 by the end of the year. Please remember that the forecast for year-end assumes that we will be starting the Electric Vehicle Charging Station Infrastructure Project in 2022 and not in 2021. There are, of course, other cost elements that are below budget, but, as time passes, such differences will be required for future transactions as they come up. We expect at this point a loss of approx. \$16,000 for 2021

#### Collections

Regarding the collection of Maintenance Fees and Special Assessment values, we still have some units which are late with their payments. The number shown in the reports need, however, to be analyzed further as they do not seem to reflect the actual situation. That is why we have excluded the numbers from this report.

#### Funding at the end of March

The funds as per Balance Sheet is showing in our operating bank accounts (including petty cash) an amount of \$701,000. As for Reserves, we still have a very high level of \$2,560,000 of funds available in our regular Reserve bank accounts. With regard to our Special Assessment, the funds available in our bank account amount to \$688,000.

## EMERGENCY GENERATOR FUEL PROBLEM SOLVED

Biltmore II's new emergency generator was installed on the roof over a year ago. As previously reported, it starts up using diesel fuel and then adds natural gas as the load rises. This places less demand on the single diesel fuel that powered the old generator. While natural gas supply is piped underground and is less impacted by storms, refilling our existing 500 gallon in-ground fuel tank requires truck delivery that might be affected during the aftermath of storm damage. Running on bi-fuel supply, the usage of diesel fuel is lessened. Also, the Association began a project to plan and install a new 1,000-gallon diesel fuel tank. This project is being coordinated by a Task Group of the Building Committee, chaired by Mr. Jose Donis, and is progressing. However, a problem was reported by our Maintenance Supervisor in that a routine diesel fuel analysis in the fuel stored in the existing tank identified the presence of water and metal particles suspended in the fuel, possibly from corrosion of the near 50-year-old tank walls. It was too risky to attempt to clean the fuel while still in the tank, so an alternate solution of installing a temporary portable tank was begun. Although many fuel storage system suppliers were not able to respond quickly, our Manager recalled a firm that had served her well in the past – Kandra Construction. Within a couple of weeks and with the assistance of our Maintenance Supervisor, the new leased double-walled 500-gallon fuel tank was placed in the basement garage and connected to the emergency generator. This swift action ensured essential continuity of fuel supply should an emergency occur. As result, the existing fuel tank is now deactivated and will be officially decommissioned following appropriate City permitted actions to ensure proper soil testing and fuel removal as part of the project to install the new larger fuel tank. The new leased portable tank will remain in service until the larger new tank is installed. Also, our Maintenance Supervisor arranged for the installation of a dual (vs. single) fuel filter to protect the generator. These are challenging times as the demand for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contractors has greatly increased.

## BICYCLE ROOM UPDATE

Please be advised that the (4) bicycle storage rooms have been decluttered. Those bicycles that were not tagged with your unit, have been moved to a safe storage area. If you have any questions, please contact the Management office.

*The Management*





## LANDSCAPE TRANSITION

### (1<sup>st</sup> of 6 Articles)

Biltmore II Condominium Association residents share an important asset – the largest landscape of any condominium property in the City of Coral Gables. Our mid-century modern building is placed in the center of an entire city-block size property. Unlike nearly every other condo structure, our building is set far back from the bordering streets on all sides. Our tree canopy is substantial, and it is highly valued by the Association and the City of Coral Gables, which prides itself on the expansive tree canopy that adds beauty and heat-reducing shade for the benefit of residents and visitors. A recent survey of Biltmore II's trees and palms was conducted, and the results are impressive, as our property contains 92 trees and palms. The most significant species are 19 Southern Live Oaks, 19 Royal palms, 9 Bismarck palms, 14 Crape Myrtle trees, and 2 huge Screw Pines that anchor the curves in the front driveway on Biltmore Way. Completing the landscape are an assortment of hedges and other accent plants.



Some of the landscape will not be affected by the garage roof deck restoration and waterproofing project. 11 of 19 Royal palms, 2 Screw Pine trees, 5 of 14 Crape Myrtle trees, and 1 of 3 Ligustrum trees (center walkway planter) are planted directly into the ground located at sidewalk level in the center of the property along Biltmore Way. This part of our property is on-grade, meaning that there is no basement structure below ground – just natural rock and soil. As a result, this part of the landscape will not be disturbed by the pending restoration and waterproofing of the basement garage roof deck. This on-grade portion of the landscape is shown above. This unaffected part of the landscape holds about 20% of Biltmore II's landscape.

The other 80% of the landscape sits in planters built on top of the basement garage roof deck. This includes the elevated lawns and Royal palms at the NE corner facing Segovia Circle and a similar landscape at the NW corner, planters in the east and west parking lots, and all landscape on the south side of the building, including the various patio areas, the near block long planter along Valencia Ave, and the planter at the west end of the pool. Starting sometime in 4Q2021 and throughout 2022, this landscape will be removed to expose the top of the basement garage roof deck. This is being done to allow Restoration Technologies Inc. to examine the concrete deck, make any repairs that might be needed, and then

add a new waterproofing layer. Once that work is complete, a new landscape design will be installed.

“This is one of six articles that will appear in the September, October and November editions of our newsletter regarding the new landscape that is part of the Basement Garage Roof Deck Restoration and Waterproofing project. Other articles in this issue include “Design Priorities” and “Trees and Palms”. The October issue will include “Disposition of Current Trees and Palms” and “East and West Parking Area Planters”. The series will end in November with “Southside and Valencia Ave. Planters”.

*Bob Petzinger – Editor & Chair – Landscape Task Group*



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## LANDSCAPE TRANSITION - DESIGN PRIORITIES

(2<sup>nd</sup> of 6 Articles)

In 2017, the Association created a Landscape Task Group to recommend landscape improvement projects to bring Biltmore II's landscape to a higher standard. The Task Group, working with the landscape service contractor, annually proposed a list of landscape upgrade projects for Building Committee review and subsequent Board of Director approval. This annual plan included description of the plants to be removed and those to be added, along with its cost. These annual landscape improvement project plans have made significant changes to Biltmore II's landscape and earned positive feedback from many residents. A lot was learned about landscape design principles and about which plants look good and grow well in our planters. That knowledge was used to guide the creation of a new landscape design for the portions of Biltmore II's landscape that sits on top of the basement garage roof deck, which is about 80% of our landscape. Those principles are as follows:

- A manicured landscape best fits Biltmore II's formal 1970's mid-century architecture.
- Trees and palms farthest away from the building's structure should be as tall as possible, consistent with planter dimensions, to complement the height of Biltmore II.
- Design should be simple – not too many plant species.
- Symmetry is desired as building architecture is symmetrical with its east and west wings.
- Where possible, hedges should be curved to acknowledge the curved building and balcony corners.
- Accommodate the City of Coral Gables desire to utilize native Florida plants where possible.
- Maintain or increase the size of the tree/palm canopy. Do not reduce it.
- Increase the amount of color in the landscape.
- Use plants that have been successful.
- Favor plants that are easy to maintain.

*Bob Petzinger – Editor & Chair-Landscape Task Group*



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## LANDSCAPE TRANSITION - TREES and PALMS

### (3<sup>rd</sup> of 6 Articles)

The basement garage roof deck restoration project involves removing and then replacing about 80% of Biltmore II's landscape. While this is heart wrenching for those who care about trees, palms, and all plants, it is necessary every couple of decades to investigate, repair (as might be needed) the cement garage roof deck lying just below the planters, patios, and pool) and add a new waterproof layer. Also, it offers the opportunity to correct some landscape problems, such as replacing Southern Live Oak trees that never should have been planted in such small planters. This article will provide a summary of the impact of the new landscape design plan on the existing tree and palm canopy.

The City of Coral Gables has been named a Tree City USA for the past 35 consecutive years. It takes the job of managing the urban forest canopy very seriously. With five arborists on staff, the City manages the overall health and protection of about 39,000 trees planted on City property and rights-of-way. In addition, it regulates

the removal and replacement of trees on private property, such as Biltmore II's property. Trees and palms cannot be removed without city permission. Our Association retained the services of a large landscape development firm, Plant Professionals, to inventory and inspect all existing trees and palms on the property, and then to identify the tree/palm species and size that would replace every tree and palm being removed. This was done by GSLA Design, a landscape architecture firm sub-contracted by Plant Professionals, to design a new landscape for Biltmore II. The local government's interest is protection of the Tree/Palm canopy. Any loss of canopy results in an order to contribute (\$1,500 per 500 sq. ft. of canopy loss) to the city's Tree Fund, which enables trees/palms to be planted elsewhere in Coral Gables to make up for private property canopy loss. Biltmore II residents will be pleased to know that the new landscape plan reflects a substantial increase in tree/palm canopy size, so no Tree Fund payments will be required.

Royal palms are a significant element of our landscape, with 17 along Biltmore Way. It's an important image of Biltmore

II. The 11 Royal palms most directly in front of the building are planted on-grade so they are not impacted by the concrete restoration project. However, the 4 Royal palms in planters elevated at the NE corner (facing Biltmore Way near the Segovia Circle) and the 2 Royal palms in planters elevated at the NW corner most likely will be removed. Please be assured that these 6 Royal palms will be replaced with 30 feet tall Royal palms, which will maintain the iconic palm lineup along Biltmore Way. The remaining 2 Royal palms are in planters at the west end of the pool, and they will be discussed in another article.

Most of the other major trees in our landscape are in planters bordering Valencia Ave. on the south-side of Biltmore II. Every other planter from west parking to Segovia Blvd. has a Southern Live Oak – 14 of them in small raised-wall planters. In addition, there are 5 other Southern Live Oaks (2 in larger raised-wall planters in the south patio area; 3 in east parking area planters). This tree species has strong and aggressive roots that want to spread outward away from the trunk to the outer edges of the tree's canopy, which in proper conditions might extend 30 feet away from the trunk. Unfortunately, it was the wrong tree selection for such small walled planters that measure only 5 feet square. Confined to such a small area, the roots are "girdling" as they encircle the trunk putting substantial outward pressure on the inner planter walls, cracking the walls of 5 planters. See photo below left of a cracked planter wall due to the pressure of Oak roots. They will be replaced with a less aggressive tree – Bridalveil, which is from northern South America (e.g., Venezuela). It is popular with the City of Coral Gables and has been



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*Continued on page 6*



## Landscape Transistion (cont. from page 5)

planted along several streets in the downtown area – see photo on Giralda Ave. below right.



Another significant image of Biltmore II's landscape are the 9 Bismarck palms located along Valencia Ave. This beautiful silver-leaf palm is from Madagascar. While the existing palms must be removed, they will all be replaced with the same species of palm – the Bismarck. See photo on right.



Some new tree/palm species will be added to bring some color and interesting palm frond and trunk shapes to the landscape. Two Verawood trees with 6-months of yellow flowers will be placed in the larger planters of the patio opposite the south-side of the east covered garage. This beautiful tree from Venezuela was introduced to the USA by David Fairchild (see photo below). Also, a strikingly unique palm from Madagascar with a unique triangular shape of the silver palm fronds will be planted in different planters near the pool. It is commonly called the Triangle Palm.



Other new tree/palm species include *Thrinax radiata* (native), Silver Buttonwood (native), and Allspice (from Jamaica).

*Bob Petzinger – Editor & Chair – Landscape Task Group*



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