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Commissioners approve neighborhood grant awards

The Sarasota County Commissioners recently awarded over \$48,000 in matching grant funds to 10 neighborhood associations that applied for the latest round of neighborhood grants.

Associations that will receive grants include Arbors Mobile Home Owner's Association (\$2,528), Calusa Lakes Community Association (\$2,156), Jamaica Royale Condominium Unit Two (\$12,000), Lake of the Woods (\$6,921.50), Mockingbird Place (\$916.50), Park Forest Owners' Association (\$2,642.09), Peaceful Vista Homes (\$935.75), Pelican Cove Condominium Association (\$11,819.22), Serenoa Community Association (\$5,912), and Tangerine Woods Owners' Association (\$2,824).

Of the 10 projects approved, two build neighborhood leadership, one preserves character and value, and seven improve the environment.

"Those projects that improve the environment are growing in popularity and increasing in scope, including a proposal for a bioswale," said Vickie French, neighborhood grants coordinator. "The bioswale project is the first of its kind to come through the grant program and has the potential to encourage a new type of environmental project in neighborhoods that are interested in improving the environment in their communities."

In its seventh year, the Neighborhood Grant Program supports the county's initiative to preserve and enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the county. The grant program provides matching grants to neighborhoods to help fund needed improvement projects.

Neighborhood groups can match the county grant funds with cash, volunteer hours, direct donations by neighbors, other grant sources, or by donations of materials and services. There are two grant cycles per year and grants are awarded for projects that provide a public benefit and fall into one of the following categories; improving safety, preserving character and value, building neighborhood leadership or enhancing physical or environmental health.

Orientation workshops to teach residents how to apply for a grant are scheduled through August. The workshops are two hours in length and attendance is required to submit a grant application. The next due date for grant applications is Oct. 5.

To learn more about the Neighborhood Grant Program, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941- 861-5000 or send an e-mail to neighbor@scgov.net.

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