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Town of Pembroke Park

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Community Background Report

Town of Pembroke Park

Boundaries

North: City of Hollywood
South: Miami-Dade/Broward County line
East: City of Hallandale Beach and I-95
West: City of West Park

Community Type: Municipality

Report Last Updated: December, 2011

History

Prior to incorporation, the area that would become the Town of Pembroke Park was known as Holly Hill, and was made up of nurseries, quarries, and mobile home parks.¹ The town was founded by race horse owner Phil Bryan, who served as mayor for 21 years following incorporation in 1957.² The town was named Pembroke until 1959, when the subdivision of Hollywood Ridge Farms was incorporated and the two areas were merged into the Town of Pembroke Park.³

The total area of the town is only 1.6 square miles, including a six-tenths-of-a-mile lake that once was a quarry.⁴ As of 2008, the town was substantially built-out, with only 3.3 percent of developable land remaining vacant.⁵ Pembroke Park continues to be home to a large number of mobile home communities; in fact, the town has 17 mobile home parks, four of which are devoted to recreational vehicle camping.⁶ These communities attract retired and seasonal residents.⁷ It is estimated that the town's population doubles during the winter when the snowbirds arrive, many of which are French Canadians.⁸ In addition to the mobile home parks, the town also has a handful of apartment buildings and single-family homes that are concentrated on the western edge of town.⁹

Community Dynamics

The small town of Pembroke Park is known for its political squabbling, its large mobile home community, and for having a wealth of tax-rich industry that made it the target of forced annexations.¹⁰ Over the past few decades, Pembroke Park has struggled to overcome its image as the laughingstock of Broward County, and even to survive.¹¹

BOZOVILLE

Pembroke Park's unruly politics and history of mismanagement earned the town the derisive nickname of "Bozoville" in the late 1970s. The name gained even more popularity in the early 1980s and continued to be used through the 1990s.¹²

During the 1970s, the town's Public Safety Director established a 35-member police department with two helicopters and a SWAT team for a town of 5,000 residents. The new police force nearly bankrupted the town.¹³ Later, the director was indicted for grand larceny, but the charge was dropped.¹⁴ He left Pembroke Park, only to be arrested and convicted months later for bank robbery in Illinois.¹⁵

During the early 1980s, Barney Koretsky became mayor and was voted out four months later. In spite of this, he remained as a commissioner until he was removed from his seat, after pleading no contest to misdemeanor charges that he had forged signatures on recall petitions against three other commissioners.¹⁶ In 1987 voters reelected Koretsky to the commission, where he was reappointed as mayor.¹⁷ During Mayor Koretsky's controversial term, commission meetings used to be full of residents heckling the mayor, dressed in clown suits and holding signs reading "Bozoville".¹⁸ It was also during this time that Pembroke Park had a high turnover rate among town employees, and a botched comprehensive land use plan that was estimated to have cost \$418,000 in state revenues.¹⁹ By 1990, the mayor became the focus of another recall attempt and was blamed for mismanaging the city. This led to an unsuccessful bill to abolish the town of Pembroke Park.²⁰ Koretsky resigned, and that same year another commissioner was charged with grand theft and fraud, then suspended.²¹

In the mid-1990s, the political calm was broken once again. Chants of "Bozoville" began after town commissioners returned an \$897,000 state grant for purchase of a 15.8-acre parcel for Nature Trail Park.²² Some thought Pembroke Park was back to its old ways when, without explanation, the town administrator was fired after two months and replaced with a deputy town clerk -- a return to the old system in an attempt to push for a strong mayor form of government.²³

ANNEXATION

Over the years, the town's odd-shaped borders have been ripe for outright absorption into the neighboring cities of Miramar or Hollywood.²⁴ In 1989 a state senator called a meeting with the municipalities adjacent to Pembroke Park to discuss annexation, prompted by town officials' "trouble running their own affairs."²⁵ Town officials and residents of Pembroke Park reacted angrily to the suggestion of annexation, accusing the other municipalities of being interested in the town's tax base.²⁶ The City of Hallandale announced intentions to study the idea of annexing the town of Pembroke Park.²⁷ This move set the town against Hallandale, with officials claiming that Hallandale just wanted Pembroke Park because of the industrially rich properties located in its northwest corner (from Park Road to Interstate 95), an area full of warehouses that included more than 600

businesses at the time.²⁸ The Town of Pembroke Pines also threatened to consider annexing a portion of Hallandale in retaliation.²⁹

At one point, the town also faced being absorbed by the surrounding unincorporated area, after the state mandated that all unincorporated areas incorporate by 2010, placing them on an accelerated schedule for joining an existing city by 2002.³⁰ The adjacent unincorporated areas of Lake Forest, Miami Gardens, Utopia and Carver Ranches were given the choice of joining Pembroke Park or Hollywood as their only option.³¹ After Hollywood expressed a lack of interest, residents of the unincorporated area stated a preference for annexing to Pembroke Park.³² For two years representatives from the town and leaders of the unincorporated areas worked toward annexation.³³ But as the vote neared, town officials openly said they did not favor annexation because of an unfinished multimillion dollar infrastructure project; the town of Pembroke Park would have had to pay for the unfinished work.³⁴ State officials countered repeatedly that if the town's residents voted against annexation, Pembroke Park could be abolished and forced to become one city with the unincorporated areas.³⁵ In 2000 Pembroke Park residents overwhelmingly rejected an annexation measure, despite threats from state officials that the town's existence was at stake.³⁶ Pembroke Park hired lobbyists to kill the original annexation proposal. When a new proposal that included a referendum for phased annexations to occur years after the \$78 million infrastructure improvements were completed, officials remained unconvinced.³⁷ Pembroke Park's major argument against the annexations was that they would triple the city's size.³⁸ The city of 5,000 would be adding 15,000 residents, two-thirds of those from the mostly Black Carver Ranches section.³⁹ The merge would allow the newly annexed areas to dominate, changing the political structure of Pembroke Park.⁴⁰ The unincorporated areas eventually decided to create their own city, and became the City of West Park in 2005.

TRAILER PARKS

In 2007 it was estimated that there were more mobile homes within Pembroke Park than any other municipality in Broward.⁴¹ These trailer parks and others in the state were threatened with redevelopment during the residential real estate boom, as property owners partnered with or sold to developers.⁴² From 2004 to 2007, it was estimated that 83 mobile home parks were closed in Florida -- nine of which were in Broward County.⁴³

As mobile home parks began to disappear throughout Broward County, the Town of Pembroke Pines took a stand to preserve this form of affordable housing, and protect the character of the community.⁴⁴ In 2000 the town's residents voted for an ordinance requiring that any proposal to convert the mobile home parks be put on a ballot and approved by at least 65 percent of the vote.⁴⁵ The intention of the ordinance was to preserve mobile home parks by making rezoning as difficult as possible.⁴⁶ However, owners of the mobile home parks disagreed with the ordinance because they perceived it as an infringement of their property owner's rights.⁴⁷ The town was able to take a stance on the preservation of the mobile home parks partly because it receives most of its revenue from businesses such as restaurants, shops, an industrial park, and a bottling

company.⁴⁸ Otherwise, a community of mobile home parks would not be financially feasible, since most of its residents live under the poverty line and would not be able to afford the taxes and fees.⁴⁹

IDENTITY

The community has made an effort to shed its past reputation and improve the town's image. There have been periods of calm. For example, during the mid-1980s, town officials brought the tiny municipality back from near bankruptcy by keeping expenses under control and disbanding the SWAT and police department in favor of having Broward Sheriff's Office deputies patrol the streets.⁵⁰ During the early 1990s, the town's political newcomers and a new town manager brought stability and focused on improving the town's image. Other strides made during this period include: developing the Pembroke Park Preserve; fixing drainage problems; completing water and sewage improvements; and cleaning up vacant lots.⁵¹

The tangible improvements brought civic pride, causing residents to protest when they see a business in Pembroke Park identified as located somewhere else, usually in Hollywood or Hallandale.⁵² For example, Pembroke Park's Coca-Cola manufacturing plant distributes products in southeastern Florida that are represented as manufactured in Hollywood. Dozens of heavily advertised businesses in Pembroke Park, whose messages are seen on television and in newspapers, say they are in Hallandale.⁵³ However, it should be noted that one reason the town gets no mention is because there are no post offices within its city limits and, therefore, mail must be routed through Hollywood or Hallandale, affecting the way businesses advertise.⁵⁴

Demographic Highlights⁵⁵

The town's population has experienced increased diversification in both race and ethnicity, in spite of a net loss in the number of residents.

In 2010 Pembroke Park had a population of 6,102. The town had experienced a slight decrease (-3 percent) in population over the previous decade. It should be noted that the White population was the only racial category to decline (by 14 percent) over this same time period. Considering the added dimension of ethnicity, the only segment of the White population to decrease was the White Non-Hispanic group, which fell by 599 people, or 28 percent. The White Hispanic population increased by 212 people (36 percent), partially mitigating the overall loss in the town's White population. All other categories also increased in population between 2000 and 2010. The Black population increased by 9 percent, solidifying its majority status. In 2000 the White and Black populations were more evenly divided, representing 43 percent and 49 percent, respectively. In 2010 the difference in population between the two categories was greater; 39 percent were White and 55 percent were Black. As previously mentioned, the Hispanic population also experienced positive gains (14 percent) between 2000 and 2010, and now represents approximately one fifth of the town's population.

Pembroke Park’s two major racial categories have very different populations in terms of age. There is a broad chasm between the median ages of the town’s White and Black populations.

In 2010 the median age in Pembroke Park was 35 years old, significantly lower than the county’s median age of 40. The figure is surprising, considering that the town is often described as a place for retirees and snowbirds from the north. An interesting trend emerges when median age is controlled for race: according to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, the median age for the town’s White population was 58 and the median age for the Black population was 24.

The majority of the town’s foreign-born residents are not US citizens, and most hail from Latin America and North America. There is also a rather large West Indian population.

In terms of place of birth, the majority of the town’s residents are native-born citizens (61 percent). However, the town does have a sizeable foreign-born population (39 percent of the total). With respect to foreign-born residents, the majority are not US citizens (66 percent), and were born in Latin America (69 percent) and North America (25 percent). However, when analyzing trends for individuals with one or more ancestries, it is interesting to note that the town has a significant West Indian population. According to the American Community Survey, there are 2,285 people (34.6 percent) of West Indian ancestry, of which 1,090 are Jamaican. There are 2,516 residents (38 percent) in “other groups”, with Canadians (including French Canadians) making up only 5.8 percent.

The majority of the population speaks English—however, 32 percent of the population does not speak English at home.

Regarding the language spoken at home, the trend reflects residents’ place of birth, with the majority of the population (68 percent) speaking only English. Of the 32 percent of the population that speaks a language other than English at home, two linguistic categories are predominant and equal: Spanish and “other Indo-European languages” each represent 15 percent.

Pembroke Park’s high vacancy rate is due to seasonal occupancy.

According to the 2010 Census, there are 3,695 housing units in Pembroke Park. The town has a very high vacancy rate (33 percent), due primarily to seasonal vacancies that make up 88 percent of vacant units. Of the 2,488 units that are occupied, more than half (58 percent) are occupied by renters.

The majority of the occupied housing units in Pembroke Park are not mobile homes, but units in large apartment buildings. There is also a clear delineation between the type of occupied units and homeownership: the majority of the town’s homeowners live in mobile homes, and the majority of the town’s renters live in apartment units.

Since Pembroke Park is well known for its mobile home community, it is interesting to note that the 2006-2010 American Community Survey estimates that only 30 percent of

the town’s occupied units are mobile homes. Of the remaining 70 percent of occupied units, the majority (36 percent) are in buildings with 10 or more apartments, followed by buildings with five to nine apartments (13 percent). The majority (80 percent) of the owner-occupied units are mobile homes, while the majority (53 percent) of the renter-occupied units are in buildings with 10 or more apartments. Furthermore, only 7 percent of the renter-occupied units are mobile homes. It should be noted that Pembroke Park has a high vacancy rate, but that this analysis does not take into consideration the ratio of mobile homes that may fall into this category.

The town’s median household income is lower than the county’s median household income.

The median household income in Pembroke Park was \$36,069, considerably lower than the county’s median household income of \$51,731.

Transportation Trends⁵⁶

The tables below illustrate projected transportation trends in the Town of Pembroke Park:

Travel time to work for the employed population, 2014

	City	County
Work at Home	1%	4%
Less than 15 minutes	18%	16%
15-29 Minutes	39%	33%
30-59 Minutes	34%	38%
60+ Minutes	9%	8%

Average household transportation costs

	City	County
2009	\$7,020.37	\$8,836.33
2014	\$8,477.31	\$10,880.30

Average household transportation costs for public transportation

	City	County
2009	\$347.83	\$555.02
2014	\$429.58	\$721.64

Forecasted number of vehicles per household, 2014

	City	County
0 vehicles	12%	7%
1 vehicle	53%	40%
2 vehicles	24%	40%
3 vehicles	9%	10%

4+ vehicles 3% 3%

Forecasted means of transportation to work for employed individuals, 2014

	City	County
Car, Truck, Van to Work	95%	93%
Public Transportation to Work	2%	2%
Other Transportation to Work	2%	2%
Work at Home	1%	4%

The information below briefly summarizes a transportation-related project in the Town of Pembroke Park:

SW 52nd Avenue⁵⁷

In 2009 the Town of Pembroke Park was a sub-award grantee in Broward County for funds from the Recovery Act. The town was awarded \$200,000 to implement capital improvements and infrastructure projects that included storm drainage and street improvements along SW 52nd Avenue.

Special Events

The Town of Pembroke Park does not have a community events calendar. However, the town does have a Parks Department that is responsible for social, recreational, and educational activities, and other types of events as may be needed to provide cultural, educational and social services to the citizens. Please visit the following link for more information about the Parks Department:

<http://www.townofpembrokepark.com/parks.html>

Business Landscape

Referred to as "The Small Town That Means Big Business," the Town of Pembroke Park is home to a number of corporate and government firms.⁵⁸ Major employers in the town include: Coca Cola Bottling, Grainger, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Mohawk Carpets, Window Classics, Stratton Framing, Marinize Products, Home Depot, Sun-Sentinel Publishing, Home Depot Distribution Center, and ME Productions.⁵⁹

The town has a 7.2 percent unemployment rate, slightly lower than the county's rate of 8.9 percent.⁶⁰ Of those that are employed, the majority work in the following industries: retail trade (19.3 percent), educational services, health care, and social assistance (16.5 percent), and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental/ leasing (13.8 percent).

The following section lists various statistics, business-related initiatives, and recent developments that help to describe Pembroke Park’s business landscape:

"The Small Town That Means Big Business"

The town of Pembroke Park is home to a number of corporate and government firms.⁶¹ After residential, the top two land uses include industrial, at 28 percent, and commercial, at 6 percent.⁶² Pembroke Park established a “one-stop permitting” process and an open door policy at the Town Hall to help enhance its business-friendly environment, and make it more convenient for companies or movie producers to conduct their business within the town.⁶³ Also, because of its proximity to I-95 and the Florida Turnpike, and its central location among the major population centers of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, Pembroke Park has become the home of over 700 businesses. These were also attracted by the town’s modern warehouses and business-oriented development within its industrial areas.⁶⁴ Many of the businesses are Fortune 500 companies, such as: Mohawk Carpets, Sound Advice Industries, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Home Depot, and others.⁶⁵ The town also has television towers and radio facilities, such as: WLRN (Public Broadcasting), Trinity Broadcasting (religious), WFOR (CBS network), and others.⁶⁶ In addition, Pembroke Park boasts a large Coca-Cola plant, as well as smaller businesses ranging from restaurants and thrift shops to adult entertainment clubs.⁶⁷

Pembroke Park’s top five property taxpayers in 2010 were:⁶⁸

Tax Payer	Taxable Assessed Value	Rank
Seneca Industrial Holdings, LLC	\$45,598,270	1
Fl. Coca-Cola Bottling Company	\$29,326,760	2
Coca-Cola Enterprises, Inc.	\$18,828,996	3
KTR Seneca I, LLC	\$17,634,620	4
WPLG/TV10	\$17,614,733	5

Below is a summary with more detailed information about the businesses and industries located in Pembroke Park:

Industrial Park

In 2000 a San Francisco-based industrial developer, Bristol Group, partnered with a local developer to “transform the tiny town of Pembroke Park into the industrial hub of southern Broward County.”⁶⁹ The partnership led to the development of the Seneca Industrial Park within the 106-acre area between Hallandale Beach Boulevard and Pembroke Road, and between Southwest 40th Avenue and just west of I-95.⁷⁰ In 2007 Seneca sold for \$130 million, considered to be the top price paid for a major South Florida Industrial Park.⁷¹ Recent developments include a new headquarters for the TV

station WPLG at Seneca in 2008, and a new regional distribution hub for HHGregg at Seneca North in 2011.⁷²

Movie and TV Show Industry

Pembroke Park facilities have been used for a number of motion picture productions.⁷³ Examples of the movies filmed in Pembroke Park include: “Striptease” with Demi Moore; “There’s Something About Mary” with Cameron Diaz and Ben Stiller; and “Hoot” with Luke Wilson.⁷⁴ Most recently, Pembroke Park was chosen by Fox Television Studios as the setting for “The Glades,” an hour-long original scripted drama series that debuted on the A&E cable network in 2010.⁷⁵ “The Glades” is the first scripted series to be filmed in Broward, which beat out Tampa as the chosen location.⁷⁶ Pembroke Park hopes that it will benefit indirectly, after negotiating with the film company to hire local crafts people and use local vendors for goods and services.⁷⁷ Apparently, filming will continue after the first season, due to a positive reception. “The Glades” drew 3.6 million viewers for its season premiere, making it the most-watched original drama series telecast in network history.⁷⁸

It should be mentioned again that Pembroke Park is now the new home of WPLG - Channel 10. After having difficulty in finding a new site for its headquarters in Miami-Dade County, the TV station decided to build its \$35 million facility in Pembroke Park.⁷⁹

Related Links

Town of Pembroke Park

<http://www.townofpembrokepark.com>

Comprehensive Annual Report for the Town of Pembroke Park (2010)

http://www.myflorida.com/audgen/pages/mun_efile%20rpts/2010%20pembroke%20park.pdf

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