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Village of Pinecrest

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Community Background Report

Village of Pinecrest

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: S.W. 88th Street

South: S.W. 136th Street

West: S.W. 57th Avenue

East: US 1

Community Type

Municipality

History

The Village of Pinecrest is one of Miami-Dade county's newest municipalities. Pinecrest is located in southern Miami Dade County along with Palmetto Bay and portions of unincorporated Dade County, where the village occupies 8.1 square miles of land. The area of Pinecrest began to develop in the 1920s when Henry Flagler used property located at US 1 and SW 102nd street as a staging area during the construction of the overseas railroad to the Florida Keys. Even in its early stages, Pinecrest resembled the idea family oriented communities. Families and Children were able to ride horse alongside the tree-shaded lanes and vendors sold flower and produce along S.W 57th Street. ... In the 1930s, the areas growth continued and the community began to evolve around one of the first tourist attractions established in the Miami area, Parrot Jungle and Gardens. The attraction, founded on twenty acres of property located at red Road and SW 111th street, became a world famous tourist attraction whose visitors included British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Parrot Jungle was a place where thousands of exotic birds flew free amidst beautiful and exotic gardens. To date, Parrot Jungle is now the home for 1,100 tropical birds, 2,000 varieties of plants and flowers, and the best trained bird show in the world. The site relocated in 2002, to its current location alongside the Macarthur Causeway between downtown Miami and Miami Beach.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the area flourished with residential and commercial development. A majority of the residential homes were ranch style homes on acre lots, laying the foundation for the rural and lushly landscaped properties existing in the community today. Since

then, the village has undergone changes. In the 1990s, village residents dealt with graffiti, a tetrachloroethylene scare, and Hurricane Andrew, which devastated most of South Florida.

During the 1990s, The Village's residents became frustrated with the county's bureaucracy and the limited services it offered. Gary Matzner and Evelyn Greer, whom resided in the Pinecrest area, embarked on a grassroots campaign to incorporate. After highly public disputes amongst the county and residents, The Village of Pinecrest incorporated as Miami-Dade County's twenty-ninth municipality on March 12, 1996. The village decided to incorporate because its residents desired more accountability and service for the tax dollars they were paying into the county. Until its incorporation, The Village served as a "donor" community, or a community that pays more taxes to the government than actual services it receives. By incorporating, The Village gained control over its own building and zoning decisions and were able to heighten well-needed police protection throughout the community. A five member Village Council governs Pinecrest and the village operates under the council-manager form of government. The city is steadily growing; in 2003, Pinecrest was home to 19,317 residents.

Community Dynamics

Since its incorporation, the village has undergone numerous changes. The Village of Pinecrest still identifies itself as one of the most beautiful and desirable residential areas in South Florida. As a result of incorporation, the village's taxes dropped eight percent, now \$2.4 for every \$1,000 assessed property value. Despite the relatively low taxes, the village has a tax base between \$1 billion and \$1.6 billion, that help provide strong public schools and its own police force. Newsweek Magazine recognized Palmetto High School as one of the top 35 high schools in the nation. Pinecrest is also one of the most affluent communities within Miami-Dade County making it a highly desirable place to live. Between 1997 and 1998 home prices jumped 24 percent. The median income for a household is \$107,507 and the median family income is \$122,526. Only 6.5 percent of the village's total population falls below the poverty line. As of the 2000 Census, ninety percent of the population is Caucasian, 29.6 percent being of Hispanic descent and only 0.12 percent is African American.

The first major capital program following incorporation was a village road resurfacing project. Residents have access to seven recreational parks. One of which is the Pinecrest Gardens site, the old Parrot Jungle Site. The village is in the process of building a 2.4 million dollar library and community center construction at the Pinecrest Garden Site. In March 2005, Mayor Matzner unveiled a WiFi spot at Evelyn Greer Park. The WiFi spot provides access to the internet for park visitors with wireless internet connections on their laptops. This action came in response to Mayor Matzner wanting to increase the amenities offered to residents while promoting the city's parks as a great place to congregate and enjoy the outdoors. By 2000, 100 miles of the villages roadways were resurfaced. With a Street sign Identification program, a street tree program, and a US 1 Beautification program in the works, The Village of Pinecrest serves as an inspiration to surrounding communities of everything that goes right with incorporation.

Sources

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