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Westwood Lakes

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Community Background Report

Westwood Lakes

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: S.W. 40th Street

South: S.W. 56th Street

West: Florida Turnpike

East: S.W. 102nd Avenue

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

Westwood Lakes, a North Miami-Dade housing community dates its history to just less than 60 years, the community was originally formed in 1955 (Nahed 2005). It was a great place for a kid to grow up in the sixties, the family enjoyed weekend barbeques with the neighbors and going to the beach (Nahed 2005). The area was given its name because of the surrounding lakes. Its principal topographic feature are the lakes, which emerge from parallel to the Florida Turnpike and then crosses to the east toward SW 107th Avenue then south to SW 56th Street. Land on both sides of the lakes naturally slopes toward the old riverbed, and east of SW 107th Avenue the ground rises both to the north and south of SW 48th Street. Hence the topography allows the lakes and its canals to capture storm water runoff. ... Homeowners living in the Westwood Lakes neighborhood said the presence of mosquitoes in the past years seems to have multiplied. The rains and the drains are left with standing water, providing a breeding habitat for mosquitoes (Anasagasti 2005). The completion of an experimental drainage restoration project in Westwood Lakes failed to fix the problem. Typically, work crews open the seeping holes that allow water to spill over into drains “where the water level is not as high as it is in Miami. But as an experiment, the seeping holes were drilled in some parts of both neighborhoods [Westwood Lakes and Catalina Lakes], a mistake”, county officials said. The still water in the drains unintentionally functioned as mosquito incubators. Marlon Nelms, the county's mosquito control chief, said about 99 percent of the mosquitoes in the drains are Southern House Mosquitoes, which don't bite (Anasagasti 2005). ... Westwood Lakes is today a quieter community compared

to that existing during World War II, when many veterans moved to Westwood Lakes looking for a new community (Nahed 2005). The lakes that were once playgrounds for toddlers are now occupied by retirement homes and single family homes. But Westwood Lakes, like the rest of the County, has never seen its housing market this hot. Westwood Lakes real estate buyers include a couple who made a \$150,000 profit by reselling a house they held for just six months. Another investor who paid more than \$300,000 for a home, plans to put back on the market by year's end. The fast trading of properties (flipping) also has economic downsides (Sanchez: Sunset Homeowner Association). High prices are keeping other buyers out of Westwood lakes' market, making it harder for firms to attract a large segment of middle-income workers in pricey markets and this flipping is breeding high consumer debt and speculative buying (Sanchez: Sunset Homeowner Association). The median price asked for home for sale in 2000 was \$212,000 and the median gross rent in Westwood Lakes, in 2000 was \$961 (City-Data.com).

Community Dynamics

The neighborhood of Westwood Lakes boast a population of 12,005 people, 3,477 households, and 2,969 families. In Westwood Lakes the population was spread out with 21.1% under the age of 18, 7.7% from 18 to 24, 28.8% from 25 to 44, 25.3% from 45 to 64, and 17.0% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 39 years. For every 100 females there were 92.0 males. The average household size was 3.41 and the average family size was 3.54. The racial distribution of Westwood Lakes was 92.95% White, 0.79% African American. 76.33% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

The neighborhood of Westwood Lakes has a higher income \$44,602, then that of the County, \$35,966 dollars, and a higher family income \$46,262, compared to \$40,260 for Miami-Dade County. The per capita income for Westwood Lakes was \$16,044. 9.6% of the population and 7.4% of families were below the poverty line. 12.7% of those under the age of 18 and 10.3% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line (Census 2000).

Sources

Anasagasti, Susan. Mosquitoes Swamp Communities. Miami Herald, The (FL). June 16, 2005. Section: Neighbors. Page: 4WK.

Nahed, Aldo. Dade Mechanic had passion for family, films. Miami Herald, The (FL). October 9, 2005. Section: Metro & State. Page 4B.

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Sanchez, Robert. Sunset Homeowner Association. Interview/Phone Interview. April 26, 2006.