

SCHOA and RCSC Are Older Than Previously Reported! (Part #1)

By Ben Roloff, Historian—Del Webb Sun Cities Museum

While at the museum recently, I was asked two interesting questions by the same guest: 1. Who created SCHOA? 2. If SCHOA is a homeowner's association, how come becoming a member is not a requirement? The guest was surprised when I asked about their schedule for the morning, as I knew the answer to both questions, but the answer was both long and complicated.

Because the questions above are asked often, SCHOA has agreed to allow your museum the opportunity to share those answers with a larger audience via this monthly newsletter. Experience teaches that our readers will enjoy learning about Sun City's early history and that the answers to the inquiries above may generate additional questions. Submitting those questions to either SCHOA or to the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum will generate a response for you from one of our historians or SCHOA. Let us begin our journey together by sharing the story of "Sun City—The Community That Changed the Nation."

Before proceeding, an explanation of Sun City's name would be helpful, as it is unique in terms of its origin. Del Webb Development Company (DEVCO) sponsored a nationwide naming contest that attracted entries from across the country. Del Webb himself selected the name Sun City from entries, with the winner receiving a new home built on a plotted home site in Sun City of their choosing.

Sun City as a name for a community that grew to over 38,000 has an explanation, when Sun City has never been a city. DEVCO fully expected that result and gently encouraged it consistently throughout the eighteen-year development from 1960-1978. When the first residents ("The Pioneers") arrived in late April 1960, they were surprised there was no local government, no mayor or city council, no department to complain to regarding recreation, messy neighbors, extra charges for having two toilets instead of one, missing fire hydrants and street lights and other concerns of importance. Conversations at the frequent neighborhood potlucks and at afternoon chats at the community swimming pool led to a consensus of a need to get organized.

That desire for representation marks the starting point for answers to those original questions when neighbors organized meetings at the recreation center auditorium (Oakmont) in both October and November 1960. A seminal decision resulted with a call for Sun City's first election of

representatives to be held in December at the same location. Nine leaders were chosen, who in turn formed The Sun City Civic Association with voluntary membership and dues set at \$2 annually. The defined purpose was to represent the residents in two broad categories: recreational concerns and relationships with utilities, and county, state and federal governments and their agencies.

Governance quickly became more complicated, as in less than 30 days "The Pioneers" returned to Oakmont to vote on accepting a gift from DEVCO in the form of Oakmont Recreation Center with its auditorium, craft rooms, swimming pool, and other outdoor amenities. That day, January 20, 1961, was the official birth of both SCHOA and the RCSC, as an overwhelming acceptance vote result triggered a split of the recreational and governmental functions of the original organization into two separate entities. However, both, at least for the first year, would share the same nine members for their boards of directors. Both would continue and establish membership criteria with membership in the RCSC and SCHOA remaining voluntary at that point. (RCSC and SCHOA initially had different names that were changed more than once over the years for different reasons.)

That concludes Part One of this series. Our unique story continues and gets increasingly more interesting. The ball is now in the court of the readers. Share the story with others? Encourage others to get on the email lists for SCHOA and the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum? Join one or both organizations to receive the additional benefits at a minimal, voluntary, annual fee? Part Two will continue the story.