



## Local News

### Condo association resolves underpayment of fees

May 19, 2009



MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (WSVN) -- After condo owners in foreclosure brought down the neighborhood by skipping out on maintenance fees, a new payment plan has been arranged to ensure the condo association can collect what's due.

Mullings Winston is a resident living in nasty conditions. "It's just getting out of control ... This grass hasn't been cut probably for the last two months," he said.

Winston said rats have also infested the building.

He is one of many residents frustrated at the Oaks, a condominium complex located off of 126th Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Miami Gardens. They have busted lights, an emergency fire alarm hanging by its wires. Security gates and meter rooms have been left wide open. The safety risk is loud and clear, leaving sirens going off at all hours.

The management blames their problems on unit owners in foreclosure who have not paid their dues. Typically, the association expects to receive \$11,000 for all 60 units. That had fallen to just \$3,000, and they said they're doing the best they can to keep the condo community from closing, a fate residents suffered at the Coral Gates Apartments, in Northwest Miami-Dade, on April 22, or the dozens of families left without water at the Mirassou Condominiums.

Ben Soloman, the association's attorney, said, "People that we know are being affected by this. Their dues are going up, their assessment is going up and it affects the property value of these units."

Those who are paying their maintenance fees said they are putting up about \$200 a month, and there is always talk that price will go up to pick up the slack for all the empty and

delinquent units that no one seems to be paying for, but there is a solution. Thanks to the re-interpretation of a state statute, tenants will now send their rent check to a third party, instead of the landlord. The Association will then take their fees from there, leaving the owner out of the equation.

Once the practice is approved for one unit, all of them can follow. "Hopefully within six months to a year, we'll have the association back on it's feet again," said J. Flores of the Florida Property Management Group.

Residents said they can't wait to see the changes. "Of course," said a woman as she drove into the property.