



CITY OF HOLLYWOOD
NEIGHBORHOOD
MASTER PLANS



HISTORY OF THE EMERALD HILLS COMMUNITY

How did Emerald Hills come about? Sam Horvitz of Hollywood, Inc. had the vision of making this area one of the finest sub-divisions in the state of Florida. The land was acquired by him in 1932 as a result of Joe Young's Hollywood Land & Water Co. going bust in 1926. Money was owed to Same Horvitz's company for paving work. In lieu of payment, Horvitz, as well as others, received land and formed their own company. Eventually, Sam Horvitz bought out his partners and formed Hollywood, Inc.

What was the area like before it became Emerald Hills? A river ran through it and it wasn't part of Hollywood yet. It was in incorporated Broward County in undeveloped land called Ironwedge. No one seems to remember where the name came from nor does anyone remember if the river had a name. There was the drainage canal (which crossed 46th Avenue north of Sheridan Street) and there was Butler Dairy Farm reputed to be where TY Park is now.

Back in the early 1960's, there were many oak trees on a ridge that ran through the area. Most of those trees are still standing today. 46th Avenue was a dirt road in the woods and it was named Hawthorn Road.

The area had no parks, but there was one recreational sport at that time. In back of where our former tennis club was situated, there stood an exclusive nudist club which subsequently moved to Davie.



In 1955, William Horvitz was brought from Cleveland to Hollywood by his father, Sam to handle all Hollywood developments. Once the Hollywood Hills development was completed, Hollywood, Inc., moved north of the Hills in 1968-1969 to land that we now know as Emerald Hills. Their concept was to establish an elegant residential community that would look totally different than any other in the area. Financing for this venture was borne solely by Hollywood, Inc.

The Villas on Geyser Court Avenue were built around 1968-1969 and were the first structures on this land. The construction was done by Hollywood, Inc.

Many of the builders of Hollywood Hills moved to Emerald Hills. Model Row was built on the west side of 46th Avenue, and about 14 builders put up their models and sales offices there. Some of the builders were Biltrite Homes, Delcrest Homes, Durbin, LeMar, Progel, Chambers and BBH. Builders had to qualify in order to construct homes in this area and eventually in the Emerald Hills Lakes area. Lots were allocated to each builder.

Plans for building homes in Emerald Hills were submitted to the City and were turned down by the City Commission at that time. The City wanted only 50 ft. lots for each home site.

Hollywood, Inc. did not want this type of restriction and had the land de-annexed from the city. The plans were then brought before unincorporated Broward County and completely approved. The City of Hollywood, upon learning of this situation, asked Hollywood, Inc. to return to the City promising that their original plans for larger size lots would be approved. The first phase of homes built in 1969 were from East 46th Avenue to 33rd Avenue. Second phase was from West 46th Avenue to 56th Avenue, and the last phase was the lake section built in 1973-74.

For each phase, the area was cleared but most of the trees were preserved. Less than 10% of trees in the whole area were eliminated. Utilities "plumbing" was put in for water, sewers, drainage, electricity and phones in addition to roads. The terrain was difficult for natural drainage because the underlying base was coral rock rather than the sand ridge of Hollywood Hills. Much of the drainage problems we have today stem for the underlying base and lack of foundation.

As the homes were being built, Emerald Hills Country Club and Tennis Club were also being built on North Hills Drive. The Country Club was a handsome establishment, and the golf course was reputed to be one of the best in the area. The course was designed by Von Hegge and the pro for the club was Bruce Devlin. Many streets around the club reflect the golfing image, Palmer Drive, Sarazen Drive, Casper Court, etc.

The original plans Hollywood Inc. had devised for Emerald Hills included land set aside for a school (Hollywood Hills High School built in 1967), church, temple medical complex and shopping area. They envisioned an area that would accommodate the needs of everyone living in this area. Post Hast Shopping came to be in 1971. Deli Den became a popular restaurant as well as meeting place for all in the neighborhood. There was a gas station erected on Sheridan and N. 46th Avenue with probably the only gas pumps in the city that were not in front of the station, but were placed in the rear of the station.

There was also a strip shopping center on Sheridan Street between N. 46th and 56th Avenues which had a Jefferson store, Publix and some other small retail shops. At one time, Hollywood Inc., intended to build an enclosed mall on the property, but once the Hollywood Mall on South Park Road was erected, their plans were canceled.

The last phase of Emerald Hills was called the Lakes of Emerald Hills which was developed about 1973, it is a beautiful area with lovely homes built around magnificent oaks trees that were deliberately left by the developer. There are winding streets and lake areas. There are townhouses as well as villas. A park was also developed within this neighborhood.

There was some controversy about opening North Park Road to Sheridan Street. It was opposed by those living on North Park Road. The road existed from Stirling to the canal. In time, the City found North Park Road to be a County road and therefore had to be opened to all traffic.

The complex called Fairways on North Hills Drive was built by Hollywood, Inc. in 1973-74 as a condominium. It consisted of 235 units. At that period in time, there was a glut of condos on the

market. As a result, the Fairways became rental apartments.

A new owner bought the tennis club and eventually wanted to construct homes on that property. His proposal was turned down by the city. As a matter of fact, at one time Holiday Inn wanted to erect a hotel on this property and that too was refused by the city because of lack of parking spaces.

The Tennis Club was also sold in 1989. The new owner wanted to use the land for construction of high end homes. The City again denied the rezoning request.

Grandview Condominium was constructed on North 46th Avenue by Hollywood, Inc., in 1974. This project was to consist of eight floors in the front buildings and twelve floors in the back buildings. The Emerald Hills Association opposed the size and location of the buildings, and eventually after much discussion between the City, Hollywood, Inc. and Emerald Hills representatives, the structures were built to their current size. The initial plans called for these condo buildings to be placed much closer to the sidewalks, and this too was opposed by the Emerald Hills Homeowners Association.

The Emerald Hills Country Club was sold to a new owner in 1989. Much renovation was done to the club house as well as the golf course. It is considered an excellent course by most golfers.

Many changes in Emerald Hills would come about because of Hollywood, Inc. divesting themselves of all their properties in this area. They were sold to Michael Swerdlow companies in 1988. Sheridan Plaza came about in the 1990's. There was a complete renovation of the old Publix shopping center on Sheridan Street. It was turned into a mega shopping area with many stores of different types as well as the largest Publix that they now build encompassing a restaurant, pharmacy and flower shop. A 12 screen movie theater, banks and many restaurants are also available. In addition, Luria's new superstore was opened in November 1995.

The Emerald Hills Homeowner's Association has been a viable force in its area. It initially started in 1970-1971 and Roger Newman was the first president. It was very active well into the 70's and then became dormant. It again resurfaced in 1992 and has been most influential in many areas in the Emerald Hills community. The Association now has members who are liaisons between the City of Emerald Hills. This brings about action on most matters. Much progress has been made in the way of beautification, road repairs and traffic matters as well as an effort to establish a master plan with the City for Emerald Hills which should provide the residents with more available city services. The Association wants to make a concerted effort for self-improvement as well as City input to improve the quality of life for those living in this neighborhood.

Emerald Hills grew from the wilderness and became an exciting community. It is active in city affairs as well as in its own community activities. This community looks forward to its own enhancement and to significant progress to continue to keep Hollywood one of the most appealing cities in the State of Florida.