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VISIT THE NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE

Click here to view the new Vecinos [website](#)

The new website features:

- A member portal where official documents can be viewed. Sign up and sign in as a Vecinos member to access.
- Descriptions of community projects
- History of Akumal

2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 23, 2023

Vecinos Annual Membership Assembly and Extraordinary Meeting

The annual Vecinos membership meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2023 at La Buena Vida, iconic Akumal restaurant in the center of Akumal Norte. All Vecinos members are encouraged to join this meeting either in person or via Zoom teleconference, as important elections will be held. An Extraordinary meeting will be held on the same day. Meeting times will be announced later, but usually begin in the morning and wrap up around noon. Agendas and election information will be emailed to all members closer to the date of the meeting.

Elections for the Vecinos Board of Directors

Longtime Vecinos President Dan Freeman has announced his retirement effective February 23, 2023, as has Treasurer Tandy Muir-Warden. The Feb. 23 election will fill these two offices. Information relating to how to submit your candidacy and the requirements for the President or Treasurer will be emailed to members before January 15.

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GALA FUNDRAISER ON FEB. 7

Join the Vecinos at the Lol-Ha Dining Room from 5 to 9 p.m.

A gala fundraiser, *Keeping it Akumal*, will be held on Tuesday, February 7 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Lol-Ha Dining Room. Featured entertainment will be the popular local band Rockumal, playing from 6 to 8 p.m. A Silent Auction will include such items as a one-week stay at a beachfront Half Moon Bay condo, an exquisite hand-embroidered tablecloth, restaurant gift certificates (including La Buena Vida), gorgeous jewelry, artwork and photos, and much more.

Ticket prices are \$1,000 mxn (approximately \$50 usd) per person. Funds from this event will help support Vecinos programs in 2023 including street maintenance, website upkeep, and more. Vecinos thanks Laura Bush for her donation of use of the Lol-Ha Dining Room, and to the volunteers of the Fundraiser Committee: Nancy Poor, Shirley Pogodinski, and Marcy Essy.

For tickets: [Click here](#)

Keeping it Akumal

**Vecinos de Akumal Norte fundraiser at Lol-Ha
Tuesday, February 7, 2023 5 to 9 p.m.**

**Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres Silent Auction
Entertainment by Rockumal**

Tickets \$50 usd or \$1,000 pesos

Ctrl - [Click here to purchase tickets](#)



RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

Happy Retirement to Board members Dan Freeman and Tandy Muir-Warden

The Board of Directors has announced the retirement of two key, long-term Vecinos Board members and tireless volunteers: President Dan Freeman and Treasurer Tandy Muir-Warden.

Dan Freeman first came to Akumal in 1982 with the staff of his Occasions off-premises catering company in Philadelphia as a gift for their work. He was soon hooked on the beauty of Akumal and his real joy was open water and cave diving.

Following a productive career in Philadelphia, including teaching, 20 years in catering including ownership of a catering company and Director of Catering at American University in Washington, D.C., and 12 years as Director of Sales and Marketing at the Philadelphia Zoo, Dan brought his con-

siderable experience to serve the property owners of Akumal Norte.

Dan became a member of Vecinos in 2006 and was elected to the Board and appointed President in 2014. His main goal was to develop a plan for the community to complete its service infrastructure.

Akumal Norte has benefitted from numerous projects completed during Dan's tenure:

- Completion of the paving of the main road system of Akumal Norte
- Signing of Legal Agreements with the Municipality of Tulum
- Pursued the installation of fiber optic and phone lines by TelMex

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Annual Meeting slated for Feb. 23, 2023

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A Nominating Committee will be convened to facilitate the election. The Committee will consist of the Director of Elections (to be appointed by the Board) plus two other Vecinos members who are not candidates for election or related to a candidate. Anyone interested in serving on the Nominating Committee should send an email to Director of Elections **before 5 p.m. on January 8:**

vecinosmembers@vecinosakumalnorte.org

The Board will announce the appointment of a Director of Elections to coordinate the election process by January 10. The Board and the Director of Elections will make all reasonable efforts to comply with the Charter Committee's unanimous proposals for the election process.

Requirements and responsibilities for eligibility for the office of President are:

- Must be a property owner and full-time resident of Akumal (full time means residing in Akumal at least six months of the year)
- Must have a *Registro Federal de Contribuyentes* (RFC) number
- Signing authority for contracts, bank accounts, and administrative matters
- Representation before authorities
- Custody and management of funds and oversight of accounting

Two-year terms, counted from the date of appointment (election)			
Elected Office	Incumbent	Elected in	Term Ends
President	Dan Freeman	2022	Retiring 2023
Vice President	Helmie Atarie	2022	2024
Secretary	Monica Estrada	2022	2024
Treasurer	Tandy Muir-Warden	2022	Retiring 2023
Vocal 1	Ingrid Datica	2022	2024
Vocal 2	Lynda Kerney	2022	2024
Vocal 3	George Pritchard	2022	2024
Vocal 4	Peter Swensen	2022	2024
Vocal 5	Beryl van Lierop	2022	2024

Requirements and responsibilities for eligibility for the office of Treasurer are:

- Must have a *Registro Federal de Contribuyentes* (RFC) number
- Full time residency in Akumal is desirable but not mandatory

Join the organization

If you are not yet a member of Vecinos, please consider joining. Membership paid prior to February 20 will allow time for processing and to be accepted as a member at the Annual Meeting on February 23. For membership application, click here:

[Membership Application](#)

All owners of property in North Akumal (and business owners) are eligible to become members. If the property is owned by more than one person only one co-owner will be entitled to vote. Documentation of property ownership and a signed accession letter must be submitted together with the membership registration fee of \$250 usd.

COMMUNITY NEWS

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN AKUMAL NORTE

SEWER PROJECT

In recent conversations with state and federal CAPA sewage agencies, Vecinos learned that there is not likely any funding available for at least four years.

In September, President Dan Freeman met with a representative of the MMDesarollas corporation, the developers of the roughly 100 acres located between Akumal Norte and Route 307. In conversation with him, the idea was presented for the community joining their development's sewage project.

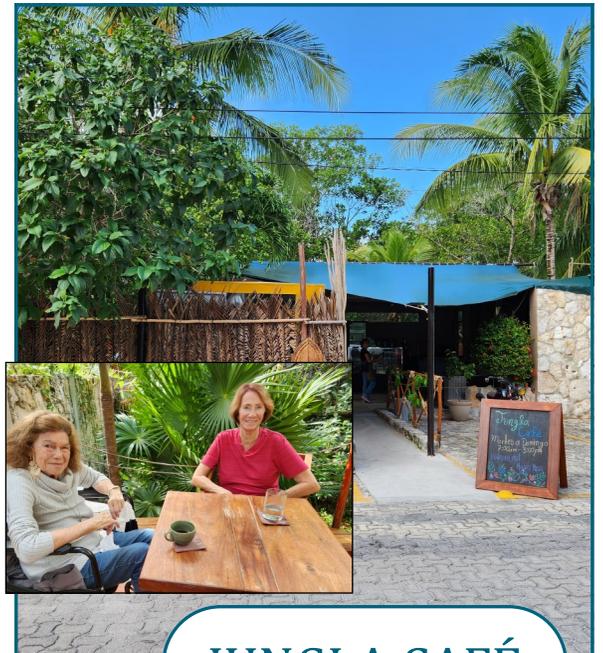
Vecinos submitted the sewage capacity needs for Akumal Norte, and the developers are very interested in partnership. Additional meetings will be scheduled when they began their infrastructure plans for the development. At that time, Vecinos will discuss more detail regarding how the program might work and estimates of the cost.

TOPES (SPEED BUMPS)

Topes (speed bumps) at the Pluma are scheduled for remodeling in early 2023.

Designed to bring vehicles to a complete stop before the gate, these topes have been successful in curbing the frequent and expensive breakage of the gate arms due to vehicle impacts. However, these topes have garnered complaints and Vecinos has been working to improve them while addressing the necessary safety and damage issues.

The Vecinos Maintenance and Infrastructure Committee is formulating a design and plan, and the cost to re-work the topes will be donated by neighbor Lou Vitale.



JUNGLA CAFÉ

New! Open Tuesday - Saturday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Located directly across the street from Hacienda de la Tortuga, the owners of the beautiful La Lunita restaurant have opened a breakfast and lunch café. Overlooking the mangrove, **Jungla Café** offers a variety of brunch items and of course, cold beer. The Café looks like it is quickly becoming a neighborhood meeting spot.



Vecinos Board of Directors Contacts	
Dan Freeman, President	vecinosmembers@vecinosakumalnorte.org
Tandy Muir-Warden, Treasurer	treasurer@vecinosakumalnorte.org
Lynda Kerney, Communications	communications@vecinosakumalnorte.org
Other Community Resources	
Vecinos de Akumal Norte	vecinosakumalnorte.org
Centro Ecologico de Akumal	Ceakumal.org
Akumal Now news	Akumalnow.com
Akumal Arts Festival	Akumalartsfest.com
Hekab Be Library	Hekabbe.org

Other Community Eateries	
Morningstar Cocina	morningstarcocina.com
La Buena Vida	labuenavidarestaurant.com
La Lunita	Facebook page

SECURITY PROGRAM UPDATE

ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS AT THE PLUMA

Vecinos thanks all the generous donors who responded to the request for assistance with paying the excessive CFE electric bill for the Community Center / Guardia Nacional post. A total of \$58,882 was received toward the bill which allowed it to be paid in full before the deadline.

The Guardia Nacional continues to provide security patrols not only for Akumal Norte, but the neighboring communities of Chemuyil, Akumal Sur, Jade Bay, Akumal Pueblo, and smaller settlements.

The Pluma (Akumal Norte entry security gate) has enjoyed several enhancements and upgrades in 2022.

In February, one side of the arm operating system was replaced at a cost of \$36,740. The other side is slated for replacement in 2023 and is estimated at \$32,650 not including contingency for unanticipated costs.



Operation of the Pluma represents a substantial percentage of the overall Vecinos budget. The 2023 Security budget is under development based on historical costs and current escalation factors. Given the importance of cost control in this area, the Security Committee and the Vecinos Board will continue to monitor Pluma operations closely.

Vecinos has researched and coordinated with the Tulum Municipal Police to identify a camera system that will meet the needs of the Pluma while integrating with the Police Department. Procurement and installation of the camera system is anticipated in early 2023. In addition, Vecinos must determine a location for an antenna to facilitate communication to the Police Department. The Tulum Police Department will be able to see the Akumal Norte gate and monitor via their own CCTV system.

REVISION / UPDATE OF VECINOS BYLAWS

Results of Membership Vote at the December 15, 2022 Meeting

At the 2022 Annual Assembly, the members discussed potential revisions to the Vecinos Bylaws. As promised, a Charter Committee was formed and an attorney engaged to guide the Committee volunteers in addressing the concerns voiced and in producing some proposed bylaws revisions.

An Extraordinary Meeting took place on December 15, 2022. A total of 48 members were in attendance via Zoom, including 10 members represented by proxy. There was no quorum for the meeting called for 3 p.m. so, in accordance with the second notice, the meeting was called to order at 3:30. However, a second call for an extraordinary meeting requires a supermajority of 75% for approval of changes to the Bylaws, rather than a simple majority.

The proposed revisions were presented, and votes were carried out on Election

Buddy using a specially designed ballot for proxy-holders. A total of 49 votes were cast; after canvass there remained 46 valid votes.

Documents including the bylaws revisions and meeting video can be found here (*you must be a member to access this page*):

[Vecinos Official Minutes](#)

There was a motion under Other Business proposing a further extraordinary meeting in February. This meeting will be held on February 23, 2023 on the same day as the annual Assembly.

Results of the December 15 Vote on Proposed Bylaws Revisions						
Agenda Item	Bylaws Article	YES vote percent	Status	Agree	Disagree	Abstain
V	2	100%	APPROVED	46	0	0
VI	9	52.1%	NOT APPROVED	24	20	2
VII	10	69.5%	NOT APPROVED	32	13	1
VIII	13	65.2%	NOT APPROVED	30	15	1
IX	17	56.5%	NOT APPROVED	26	16	4
X	18	97.8%	APPROVED	45	1	0
XI	21	89.1%	APPROVED	41	4	1
XII	Regs	65.2%	NOT APPROVED	30	14	1

FAREWELL TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

President Dan Freeman and Treasurer Tandy Muir-Warden

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- Rebuilding of the caseta security building at the pluma main entrance of the community
- Installation of topes and storm drains
- Prioritized conversations with CAPA about installation of sewer service

When asked what advice he would give to an incoming Vecinos president, Dan recommended being confident in oneself, in the decisions made, and in the direction given to the Board and membership. He shared some further insight:

What do you feel is your greatest Vecinos-related accomplishment?

First, the completion of the road system and development of the solar street light program. The lights were placed five years ago and have cost us nothing over those years for electric.

Second, the building of our community center. The Center gave presented a solid image for Akumal Norte as a recognized community. It was envisioned to be our town hall. As it turned out, the very month it opened it became the home of the Guardia Nacional. Through our contacts in the office of the President of Mexico Dan and Rocio Cue were able to have a special unit of the Guardia Nacional assigned to Akumal Norte. This was the crowning achievement for me. The Guard unit provides security for Chemuyil, Akumal Sur, Jade Bay, Akumal Pueblo, Akumal Norte and the smaller settlements.

What were the greatest challenges? *Getting others to see the true value in the plans to build the community center. People did not understand, and I received a lot of criticism over the plan. It took three years to secure the funding through donations. As soon as it was built, we were able to secure the Guardia Nacional. Then I received praise for my ability to conceive of the ideas.*

What has been the most significant change in Akumal in your experience? *Overdevelopment of condos versus private houses. To keep the community's unique personality and not become like Playa or Tulum, (resort cities) we need to keep a balance between these components.*

What changes do you believe would benefit the organization? *The question should be, as it has been in my philosophy, what changes would benefit the entire community? Our ability to maintain our status of operating as a private, self-determining community rests on the government seeing Vecinos as an association that is representing and serving needs of the entire community of owners. So, the change that I would make is to help our members*

understand this and what we can legally mandate.

Dan and his partner of 56 years, David Zucker, have owned Casa Gatos for 21 years and look forward to enjoying their retirement and traveling. The invitation to visit the patio at Casa Gatos remains open on any weekday morning to discuss Akumal, its beauty, its future, or any other issues.

Tandy Muir-Warden has served the Vecinos faithfully for more than 11 years. Now ready to fully enjoy her retirement, Tandy will be spending more time on the beach in Akumal, where she and her husband David bought their La Mirage condo in 1998, drawn by the great diving opportunities. A half-time resident of Ontario, Canada, Tandy's background and her experience working in communication, compliance, enforcement and management with the Canadian federal government, plus serving on other condominium boards has translated to better organization and recordkeeping for the Vecinos. Her shoes will be hard to fill.

Tandy leaves the Association on solid financial footing, with better understanding and support from the majority of the community, and well-positioned to take the next steps to secure legal status for the area.

Most significant change in Akumal Norte? The area is no longer comprised of older, retired people.

Tandy believes her greatest accomplishment has been development of the Vecinos organizational structure. Today, there is an experienced Board, a committee structure and process, and greater financial responsibility and reporting. The organization is near completion of updated bylaws.

When asked what advice she would give to an incoming Vecinos treasurer, Tandy cautioned that the office will take more time than might be expected. She emphasized adapting to the Mexican tempo and processes, being more aware of cultural differences and giving greater prominence to the Spanish language.

What were the greatest challenges? *Lack of active participation by Mexican residents, lack of interest by members, lack of understanding of the Mexican laws, requirements and business methods, and communication / language issues.*

What has been the most significant change in Akumal in your experience? *The area is no longer primarily comprised of older/retired people. There are new condos, and younger owners.*

What changes do you believe would benefit the organization? *More involvement of full-time residents and younger members would be of benefit, as would a clear vision of what the whole community wants and needs.*