

WOOD ACRES

A Real Estate Letter from Matthew Maury of Stuart and Maury Realtors

August, 2018

Dear Wood Acres Area Resident,

When I bought my first Wood Acres house in 1982 it had been for sale for months and months. Interest rates had soared to about 15% and the market was terrible. The original owners eventually came around to the idea of taking a first trust on the property and were marketing the idea of 20% down and five years at 11.25%. What a deal! The house had been for sale for \$159,500 and my wife and I bought it for \$147,000. It was a gently lived in home and kept in good shape but everything was old. The décor, the appliances, the HVAC. The yard. It just needed a complete redo. We were young, eager, and ready to tackle the challenge.

Rates quickly got better and I rode the refinance train down repeatedly to about 6% over the years. Buying the house was of course the best decision we ever made. Our kids grew up there as little ones and we added onto the house with a family room, finished the basement to our tastes and pretty much transformed every inch of the home over the years.

I bring this up because that path seems to have fallen out of favor recently. Houses that are already in great shape, with today's colors and open floor plans with walls down to open up the kitchen and family room sell very quickly and for great prices in Wood Acres. Wood Acres homes with today's sensibilities such as bath renovations and lower levels superbly finished continue to be hot commodities. Many of this year's 16 sales have sold for impressive numbers and those homes brought to the market essential elements that buyers want today. The amount of money poured into Wood Acres homes can take your breath away sometimes.

The houses that fall into the great average middle seem to struggle. A nice kitchen addition in 1998 is now 20 years old. The gap between the stellar home and the "good" home seems to be widening and the penalty in the marketplace seems more severe than ever. Younger people just seem to be too busy to take on a "project" and what they consider to be a "project" might surprise you. As an example, Wood Acres baths were built at a very high level of quality. The original ceramic tile is set in heavy cement and Rebar; they were built for the ages. But the tile shape, and often the color, is out of another era. The original baths don't look like what the public continually sees on real estate Cable TV on Saturday afternoon. And thus baths which are completely functional are sometimes deemed in need of "renovation" by a large segment of today's buying public. Bath renovations are expensive. And buyers know this. There are relatively inexpensive alternatives to freshen older baths that cost more like 4K rather than 17K, but this is an education process for most young buyers.

There is an "arms race" in today's real estate market when it comes to presentation. It is not uncommon for sellers to pour tens of thousands of dollars into their house in anticipation of selling. A recent sale in Wood Acres was painted inside and out, top to bottom, floors refinished, kitchen and baths renovated, wall taken down between kitchen and dining room, basement expertly refurbished. They installed a new furnace, a/c and hot water heater too. I mean that's sooo much more than you would have ever seen done to sell a home back in 1982. It just wasn't done back then. But it does occasionally happen now. The house described sold for a very good number, although not quite what they were hoping for. Another home with a similar effort sold for 15K over their asking price! When you hear about sales in the \$900's, a lot of these update elements were in place.

The real estate community is adjusting to the tastes and demands of the next generation. We spend so much more time and effort helping sellers make presentation choices. It can be very difficult to navigate situations in which a perfectly usable and pleasant home has elements that ought to be considered for alteration prior to selling. "We'll leave it for the next owner to do..." is a very commonly heard comment. There is a potential price to be extracted by the public for having to deal with not only cosmetic issues but design issues in a house now. Buyers used to be more accepting of flaws and the need for a little "elbow grease." Those days have faded. And so agents like me know a lot of painters, and floor refinishers, and bath renovators, and landscapers and...well, you get the idea.

It's worth pointing out that homes that are well built, structurally sound and cosmetically ready for updating are almost always the smartest buys, especially in Wood Acres. Opening up the kitchen to the dining area is a very valuable improvement and pays for itself easily, not to mention the enjoyment your family can



2018 Wood Acres Sales



6103 Ramsgate.
List Price: \$1,225,000
Sold Price: \$1,225,000
Days on Market: 4



5912 Woodacres Dr.
Orig List Price: \$1,225,000
Sold Price: \$1,180,000
Days on Market: 23



5917 Ramsgate Rd.
List Price: \$989,000
Sold Price: \$1,050,000
Days on Market: 2
S&M/Bob Jenets sale



5911 Cobalt Rd.
List Price: \$945,000
Sold Price: \$960,105
Days on Market: 6



6005 Wynnwood Rd.
List Price: \$945,000
Sold Price: \$942,000
Days on Market: 22



6006 Milo Dr.
List Price: \$939,000
Sold Price: \$939,000
Days on Market: 1
S&M/Kevin Cullinane sale



5904 Cobalt Rd.
List Price: \$949,000
Sold Price: \$930,000
Days on Market: 27
Matthew Maury Sale



6121 Ramsgate Rd.
List Price: \$899,000
Sold Price: \$895,000
Days on Market: 2



6102 Cromwell Dr.
List Price: \$899,000
Sold Price: \$870,000
Days on Market: 60
Matthew Maury sale



6103 Cromwell Dr.
Orig List Price: \$889,000
Sold Price: \$865,000
Days on Market: 49



5913 Cranston Rd.
Orig List Price: \$849,000
Sold Price: \$816,000
Days on Market: 26



6101 Mass Ave.
List Price: \$800,000
Sold Price: \$801,000
Days on Market: 4
S&M/Bob Jenets sale

derive from the effort. There can be a huge premium attached to buying a home that is “ready to go.”

The 16 home sales that have taken place in Wood Acres in the first seven months of the year are very impressive. We had only 18 total Wood Acres sales in all of 2017. And these 16 sales have averaged \$943K this year. I mean, wow! We’ve averaged 15 home sales a year in Wood Acres over the past 10 years. Earlier this year I spoke in this forum of “uncertainties” that could affect the market place. The looming tax bill and the reduction in the value of mortgage interest deductions, the reduction in the value of property tax deductions, and rising interest rates. Well...I can tell you flat out, no one seems to care. I can’t tell you WHY they don’t care, but these issues are just not factors right now. I literally have had no buyer say to me, “But I can’t deduct interest over 750K”, or “property taxes over 10K are no longer deductible”...or “interest rates are up an entire percentage point since last year.” These are all financial impact issues. Buyers don’t seem to care, they just keep coming. Pretty impressive. Is Rome burning? We’ll see.

Take note of the three homes that have sold in Wood Acres over a million dollars this year. Two of them were three bedroom houses upstairs. The high sale on Ramsgate Rd. has a very large two story addition and garage that was added to the home somewhere in the 2007 range. That design included an expanded grand master bedroom suite rather than creating four bedrooms upstairs. The home is now 3082 square feet above grade. The home sold for \$1,225,000 this year. Eight years ago in 2010, the home sold for \$1,129,000.

The home at 5917 Ramsgate Rd. sold for \$61,000 over the asking price at \$1,050,000. That’s the highest sale ever for an original sized Wood Acres home. Its square footage above grade is a typical 1666 square feet. But the detail and quality in that home is astounding. Every inch of it. From the superior landscaping and hardscape to the exquisite interior finishes, it was a very special house.

The second highest sale this year, at 5912 Woodacres Dr., has a large 800 square foot addition on the side which was added in the 90’s. The home is now 2400 square feet on the first two floors. The owner, a real estate agent, did a nice job renovating the home before it went on the market. The original price of \$1,225,000 turned out to be a touch ambitious. A price reduction to \$1,195,000 resulted in a final price of \$1,180,000. I sold that home, with the large addition in place, in 1999, for \$594,000. Thus, it almost exactly doubled in value in 19 years. That works out to be about at 3.8% return per year.

A series of fine three bedroom homes have been sold for very good prices this year. Each of these homes were extensively renovated and “prepared” to go on the market. The home at 5911 Cobalt was really special inside and had a great yard. It sold about 15K over the asking price at \$960,105. That price, for a 1806 square foot home, seems quite good, although I will say that I was the listing agent when they bought this house in 2006 and they paid \$825,000 at that time. They poured a lot of money into it before it went up for sale too.

The winding scenario of 6005 Wynnwood Rd. is fascinating. The home was sold last Spring for \$860K, then those buyers never moved in, updated the house and sold it for 914K. Then those buyers got transferred and sold it again, this time for \$942,000. I don’t know that I’ve seen a house in Wood Acres sell three times in 12 months!

My listing at 5904 Cobalt Rd. sold for 930K recently. That home has a wonderful family room addition and one of the finest, most cleverly designed lower levels as well. And earlier in the year my listing at 6102 Cromwell sold for 870K. That was the first house I’ve sold in which the buyers never “saw” the house. It was purchased from online photos, Facetime, and the recommendation of a family member who did see it! And the new buyers love the house. Ain’t technology grand.

Finally, I listed 5708 Harwick Rd. a few weeks ago. The sellers had purchased the home for \$850K in 2013. This time around, after improvements, we asked \$925,000 and got three offers on the first weekend. It is pending settlement and the final sales price is going to be a great “comp” for the community. This home has a truly sensational side yard.





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6017 Woodacres Dr. List Price: \$1,039,000

I also have a brand new listing at 6017 Woodacres Dr. The home has a two-story addition which was designed by former Wood Acres resident architect Jess Mellvain back in the late 70's. Jess designed and supervised the construction of many Wood Acres additions in the 70's and 80's. He was also my neighbor for 16 years from '82-'98. This fine residence has four bedrooms upstairs and a family room addition on the first floor, as well as a den, finished lower level and a wonderful backyard. The price is **\$1,039,000**.

Sincerely,

Matthew Maury

Over \$925,000,000 in career sales

