

# TIMBER RIDGE

Homeowners Association

October 27, 2021

Timberridge Homeowners:

I thought I would provide you with a quick update of current events with our HOA. I am doing this in order to clarify the information that is being passed around on Facebook and other sources. I hope this helps you to understand where we came from... and where we are going. As always, I am willing to discuss with any homeowner about any issues that may be occurring in our 100-home neighborhood.

When we finally had enough houses sold to elect one member of the Timberridge Board of Directors (75 houses sold and CLOSED) in February 2021, some of us had been actively working to figure out just what was occurring with our neighborhood finances for years. Because of the rules that all HOA's must abide by, we were limited as to what information was allowed to be shared with owners prior to reaching this level of home sales. After the April annual meeting and Board elections, I was given access to additional records and information about income and spending. What I discovered surprised me! The neighborhood was being overcharged, by a large amount, by our trash provider, Waste Connections. We had a June 2020 contract that had never been implemented! The billing of individual houses was NOT consistent! There was a huge difference between the high and low prices. Using our Essex account manager, Cinnamon Anderson, we started researching and contacting WC to rectify this problem. This effort continues to the current date. We have, with Essex assistance, held numerous (almost weekly) teleconferences with vice presidents, the CFO, accountants, and higher-ranking officials to correct these errors. To date, I have been able to gain a refund of over \$5,000 from Waste Connections. This effort continues as I feel, and am providing documentation, that they still owe us more money from overcharges.

After working on the trash problems for several months, I began to, also, focus on another of our community's concerns. Looking at the community's overall costs, I noticed that we were being billed over \$25,000 a year for landscape services. I felt, as did others, that these costs were too high. I began to request bids from other service providers. This problem did not get solved until the middle of October. The landscape provider quit just before I was going to terminate him. We are going through a transition period at the moment.

So, looking at our budget, we were paying on January 1st 2021 (Trash- \$36,000 and Landscaping- \$25,000 per year) \$ 61,000 of our (75 homes x 540 yearly assessment = \$40,500) income. This was not all of the expenses charged to our neighborhood. During this time the builder, Megatel, paid the same HOA assessment that the homeowners were charged for the unsold lots/available homes in their unsold inventory. That is what they are still doing now, they just have fewer lots. It then becomes the responsibility of the entire association to cover those income vs budget costs to achieve the zero-deficit balance at the end of the budget year. With this in mind, I began to attempt to lower the costs of the necessary services provided to us in an attempt to avoid a special end of year assessment to pay the "shortfall". To this end, I have reached out and obtained bids to lower

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the costs of our landscape provider. After interviewing and obtaining bids from a number of companies, I selected one that would provide us mowing services \$917.21 plus tax per month (instead of over \$2,000 per month). There are some tasks that we will still need to provide as a community. This will drastically cut our costs. I am continuing to try and locate other avenues of cost reduction to avoid future increases in HOA assessments. I have begun the process of obtaining bids for other waste collection providers. With the current trash provider, one of these is the possibility of ending recycling to the neighborhood. This service costs the community over \$6,000 per year. In conversations with the drivers of the trash service, we discovered that our “recycle” load goes to the same landfill as that of our normal trash (landfill near Denton). In other words, all of the recycled container’s contents, that many of us spend time on separating and cleaning before placing in the container, ends up in the same place as all the other trash! We need to decide as a community if we want to continue this service. We need to eliminate this recycling service to save \$6000 a year. I also stopped the monthly costs of the Porter (\$216 per month and we almost never saw them) , the common area litter cleanup (\$500 a year... never saw these guys either). I am attempting to remove trash collection from the HOA assessment. This would mean it would be billed monthly directly to the owner, just like all other utilities, instead of paying for the year upfront. This would take trash collection out of our budget and allow for a clearer understanding of our neighborhood’s needs. As of now, trash collection shows as being over 50% of our HOA assessment costs.

It has been mentioned that one possibility to solving our community problems would be to allow ourselves to be annexed by the city of McKinney. Not a real good idea. Here is why. If we enter the city limits, everyone’s property taxes would increase by somewhere between \$2,000 to \$2,500 dollars. What would you receive for this payment? The streetlights would now be on the city’s budget. You would still be paying for trash collection. It would probably be less than what we pay now. But not by a lot. Remember, there will always be HOA costs. Those costs are the following:

Landscaping services and landscape materials (i.e., plants/mulch)

Water for common areas

Electricity for East entrance and irrigation

Irrigation cost and system repairs

Management costs from Essex or a different company

Insurance for neighborhood

Legal and communication services (includes paper and postage every time a letter is sent)

Miscellaneous other costs

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I continue to work to deliver an efficiently run HOA budget that does not waste money but still provides the services needed by our wonderful community. I cannot wait until we have all three board positions and have complete control over our own destiny.

David

David D. Hawkins, PhD

Timberridge Board of Directors, Secretary