

2012 Lake Creek Farms HOA Survey

6/25/12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Not surprisingly, following up on the water rights issue is – by far – the top priority of nearly all homeowners. This has been and should continue to be the board’s top priority as well.

Four other priorities were consistently ranked higher than the others. Two are near-term focuses and the other two are larger projects.

Near-term priorities:

- Better maintain the existing park, even if the HOA does not plan to develop a larger park
- Better maintain the neighborhood’s street lights

Major projects:

- Initial phase of laying out a trail system.
- Development of a small neighborhood park.

The water rights issue scored an extremely high 3.44 average score on a four-point scale. The other four priorities had average scores between 2.49 and 2.56. All other items on the survey had average scores between 2.0 and 2.31 – and were clearly lower priorities for Association members.

Interestingly, phase 1 of a trail system and park development had identical average scores of 2.50. That is where the similarity ended, however. Survey responses and comments about the park were much more polarized than those for the trails. 58.3 percent of respondents stated that park construction was either Important or Very Important to them. Another 37.1 percent said the park was not a priority. By contrast, only 47.2% said the trails (initial phase) were important or very important, but only 19.4% said trails were not a priority – lending to the relatively strong average.

Another issue not specifically asked as a survey question that came up in comments was a recommendation that the HOA focus on clearing vegetation and dead wood in the common areas that would fuel a wildfire. Given the fact that the HOA has had two grassfires over the past decade, this seems like a priority that should be addressed, as well.

Recommendations for Action:

Based on the advice of our members as reflected in this research, the board has agreed upon the following course of action:

- **Water Rights.** The board’s top priority should continue to be working with the HOA’s attorney to bring resolution to the water rights issues.
- **Maintenance Issues.** In the near term, the board should focus on the two maintenance issues that are of highest priority to our members: 1) Doing better maintenance in the current park and 2) Better maintaining the neighborhood street lights.
- **Grassfire Mitigation.** While not specifically addressed by the survey, the need for the HOA to do a thorough assessment of potential fire hazards in the common area and to develop and implement a plan of action seems intuitively obvious.

- **Major projects.**

- Trails. While it is not quite as popular (or as unpopular) as the further improvement of the neighborhood park, the board should immediately explore what options are available to begin better mapping and laying out trails in the common area. Homeowners are not currently interested in a large-scale trail development program, but there is significant support for laying out and doing initial grading of a basic trail system.
 - Begin this project immediately by seeking the advice and bids from at least three landscaping contractors.
 - Complete substantial work on trail layout and grading by fall 2012.
- Park Enhancements. As mentioned, support for park upgrades is even stronger than for that of trail development. But many homeowners also express concerns – some of which can and should be addressed before this project is undertaken. Based on the substantial homeowner interest in park enhancement (58.3% important versus 30.6% not important), the following work plan is proposed. Since the board is similarly split in its enthusiasm for park enhancements (2 in favor, 1 not), the board will need to discuss this issue further before moving forward on this section of the work plan.
 - Make an effort to invite homeowners from plats D (Walker Circle) and E (upper 4800 East and Arabian Circle) to participate in this project. This is just a timing and logistical issue as the County is expressing the desire to fix this situation. If, after a substantial effort over no more than 6 months, the board should move forward on park development without the financial support of others in LCF (who are not contributing members of LCF HOA).
 - Bring the park development question to another vote of the HOA membership by January 15, 2013. The park was previously approved by a vote of members of the HOA, but since many properties have changed hands, it is reasonable to bring this question to a vote again.
 - Contract with a design professional (architect, engineer or landscape designer) to develop a conceptual design for park enhancements. This will allow HOA members and our neighbors to have a more concrete sense of what is proposed.
 - Explore the potential for financial collaboration by Wasatch County or other outside resources such as grants.
 - Explore the possibility of volunteer participation by residents of LCF.

FULL REPORT

Overview

Happily, we have near consensus on one issue. Following up on water rights is a clear priority with an average rating of 3.44 and 88.9% of homeowners who think it is important or very important. Even with that, it is instructive that one person thinks it is not important and three think it is slightly important. So, regardless of the issue, the board should keep in mind that getting full agreement of our diverse group of association members on any issue is not likely.

There were several other priorities that came up substantially higher than others addressed by the survey:

Park Maintenance – Better maintain the existing park, even if the HOA does not plan to develop a larger park

Average rating of 2.56

Important or very important: 58.3%

Not important: 16.7%

Trails – Initial Phase (Lay out a basic trail system and do initial grading that would allow walkers, runners, mountain bikes and horses to travel through portions of the common areas)

Average rating of 2.50

Important or very important: 47.2%

Not important: 19.4%

Additional Park Development

Average rating of 2.50

Important or very important: 58.3%

Not important: 30.6%

Street Lights – Better maintain the neighborhood's street lights

Average rating of 2.49

Important or Very Important: 51.4%

Not Important: 17.1%

Grass Fire Mitigation

This was not a survey question per se, but the issue came up in a couple of comments. One homeowner felt strongly that the top near-term priority for the Association should be to work on removing dead wood and other potential fuel for grass fires from the common areas. In a walk-through of the common

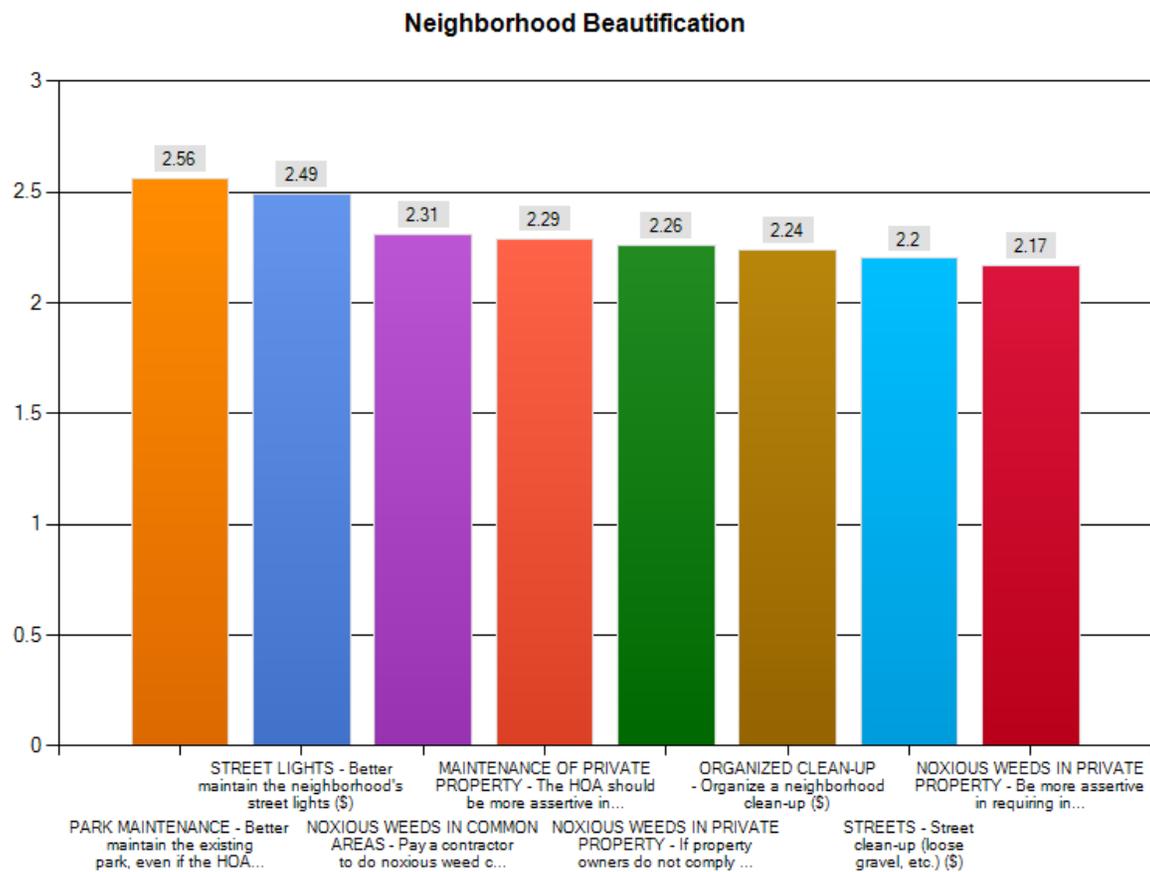
areas, this did appear to be a substantial issue, particularly for the homes near the three Oak cul-de-sacs. Another respondent also commented on this issue, which appears to be one that the board should address.

Led by Robert Hicken, homeowners near the east side of Oak Drive (behind Hicken & McMillans) have done substantial mitigation in the common areas behind their homes (there are several very large piles that need to be burned), and other areas would benefit from similar work. This is the area where the most recent lightning-caused fire occurred. The HOA should learn more about these efforts and make sure the burn piles created there are properly burned in the fall.

Results

Neighborhood Beautification

Two priorities rose above the others in this section of the report: Better maintenance of the street lights and better maintenance of the existing park. These should be the board’s initial priorities for neighborhood beautification.



How Assertive Should the HOA be in Enforcement of Property Maintenance?

This was a question of significant interest to the board. Responses to this question were not particularly strong. The overall average was 2.29 with only 4 HOA members stating that this is very important. Twice

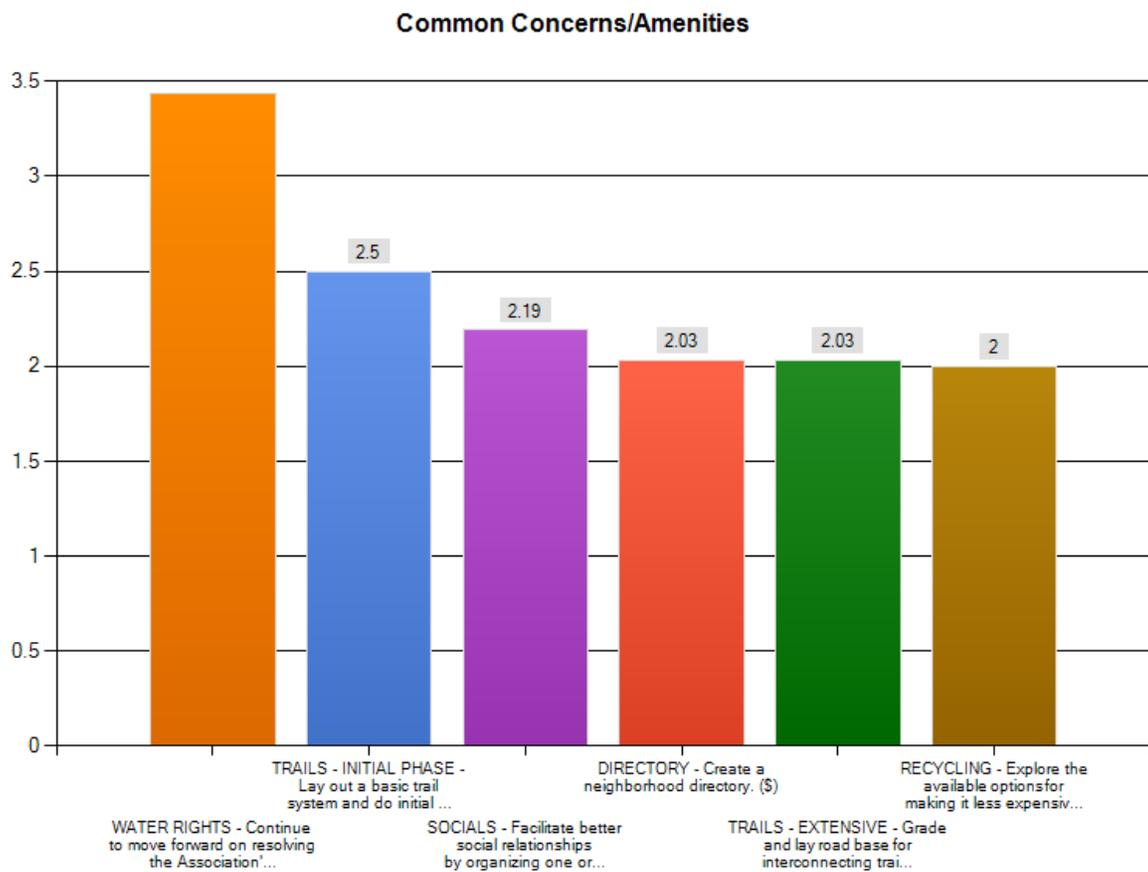
that number (8 – 22.9%) said this was not important. Most homeowners chose the middle ground with 13 (37.1%) saying it was slightly important and 10 (28.6%) saying it was important.

The board’s conclusion – based as much upon the sparse comments as the ratings – is that there may be mild interest in better enforcement, but that this is not one of the top priorities of our homeowners.

Common Concerns/Amenities

The second set of questions focused on other common concerns of the association – ranging from solving the water rights issues and adding trails to creating a neighborhood directory or facilitating neighborhood socials. As cited previously, the water issue is – far and away – the most important priority for homeowners.

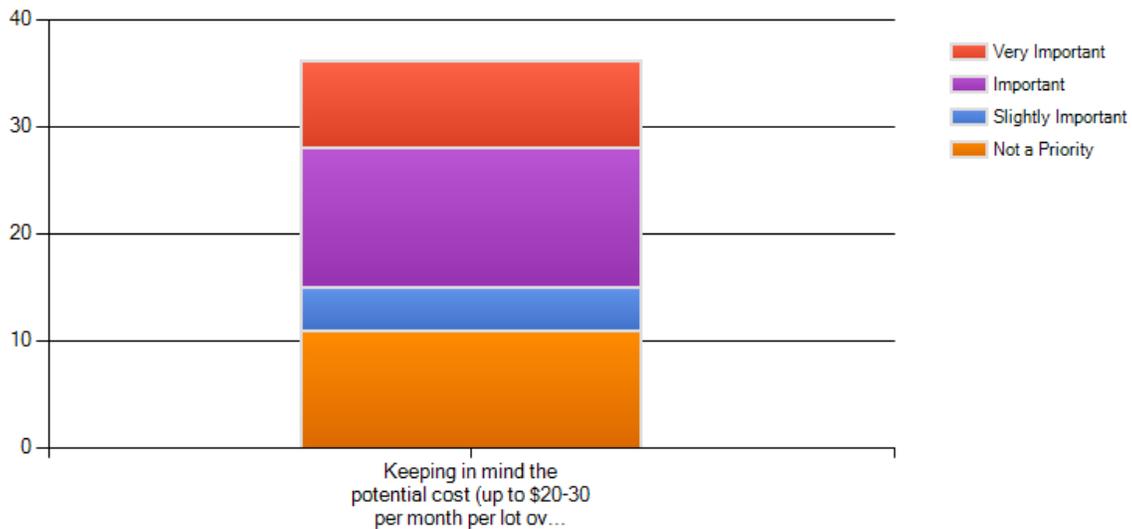
Next to water, starting initial work on trails is the members’ next highest priority. But with an average rating of only 2.03, members were clear that extensive, costly trail development is not a strong priority at this point.



Park Development

Responses to the park question were fairly polarized – both numerically and in terms of comments submitted. Further park development is – at the same time – one of the most popular items on the survey and one of the least popular.

Park Development - In 2008, the HOA members approved a special assessment of up to \$250,000 to upgrade the Association's park located on the northwest corner of Lake Creek Farms Road and 4800 East. Aside from the obvious benefits of added amenities, the most compelling argument in favor of the park was its potential to increase property values. The committee responsible for organizing this project proposed financing the park upgrades through a low-interest loan that would have required the existing 94 lots to pay no more than \$20-30 per month over 10 years. Given the importance of resolving the association's water issues and the economic stress felt by many families in the neighborhood, the board decided to delay development of the park. With lower construction costs and the potential resolution of the association's water rights concerns, the new board is curious about whether homeowners feel that having an upgraded park would be advantageous. Proposed features included: * A spacious, elegant timber



Some 58.3% of homeowners say that park development is very important or important. A total of 69.4% of homeowners feel that park development – even given the cost – is slightly important or more. By contrast, 30.6% of homeowner respondents say that further development of a park is not a priority for them. Even those who support the park have some concerns that should be addressed before proceeding – the most common of which is that residents of the other phases will have access to the park without contributing financially or in any other way.

Methodology

This survey was conducted over a three-week period from May 25 to June 15, 2012 using Survey Monkey. The target population was members of Lake Creek Farms Homeowners Association. Up to two responses per lot or home were permitted.

Notice of the survey was mailed to all 94 homeowners along with a request that homeowners register on the new HOA website – and the offer of a small incentive (a drawing for a \$75 dinner for two). Only two of these letters were returned. A second notice of the survey was distributed in the form of a flier to all homes in the subdivision (this method did not reach non-residents, but at least two lot owners did respond to the survey). At least three reminder notices were emailed to all homeowners who registered on the Association’s website.

There were three reported cases where respondents were unable to access the on-line survey. Two of those three were ultimately able to respond. Since the third respondent did not provide contact info, we were not able to follow up.

There are 94 lots in the HOA. There were 39 responses overall. Up to two responses were allowed per lot. The owners of 35 lots in the HOA submitted responses (37.2% of all lots). Only four homeowners submitted the allowed two responses per household. Only three responses were anonymous. The IP numbers from these responses did not align with any other IP numbers submitted and responses were varied, so our assumption is that they were valid. For a survey of this nature, a response rate of 37% of households is reasonable good.

The survey was conducted by Dr. Kimberly Gilboy. Gilboy has an MBA and an EdD from Stanford University with a specialization in program evaluation and has substantial experience with both quantitative and qualitative research in education and the private sector.