



# Candlelight Oaks

March 4, 2025

Dear Candlelight Oak resident,

Candlelight Oaks is one of Houston's most underrated Houston subdivisions, but it's evident from recent home sells and appraisals that we are no longer a "best kept secret." The subdivision has 280 homes; construction began in 1967, and the development was incorporated in 1969. Since that time, there have been two increases in the annual assessment. Initially in 1969, \$10 month/\$120 annually. In 1974 it was raised to \$20 month/\$240 annually, and in 2003 it was raised to \$30 month/\$360. It has stayed at that level for 25 years.

For most of us, our home is the largest single financial investment of our lifetime. In Candlelight Oaks, we are fortunate to live in a community where individuals look out for each other, where our children attend school together or our families worship together, where crime is low, and where home values are steadily increasing. We are experiencing rising costs in many facets of our lives. And our neighborhood is experiencing those same increases.

The Candlelight Oaks Civic Club is managed by an elected board of volunteers that has oversight of the annual revenue of \$105,000 – approximately \$95,000 in assessments and \$10,000 in pool/pavilion rental fees. After careful consideration, the Board is proposing an increase of the annual assessment to \$45 month/\$540 annually to be due 1/1/2026, followed by an increase to \$55 month/\$650 annually beginning 1/1/2027.

We have not come to this decision quickly or lightly. It has been a topic of conversation for many months. And, we know you will have many questions which we want to address. There are four sections in the subdivision, and each section must vote to approve an increase in the assessment.

Following is a summary of our current financial situation. We encourage you to read this information. Over the coming months, we will provide opportunities for meetings – both by Zoom and in person – to meet with the Board to learn more about the proposal and to gather your input.

We look forward to discussing this proposal with you in greater detail before a vote of residents in the late Spring of 2025.

Sincerely,

Candlelight Oaks Board

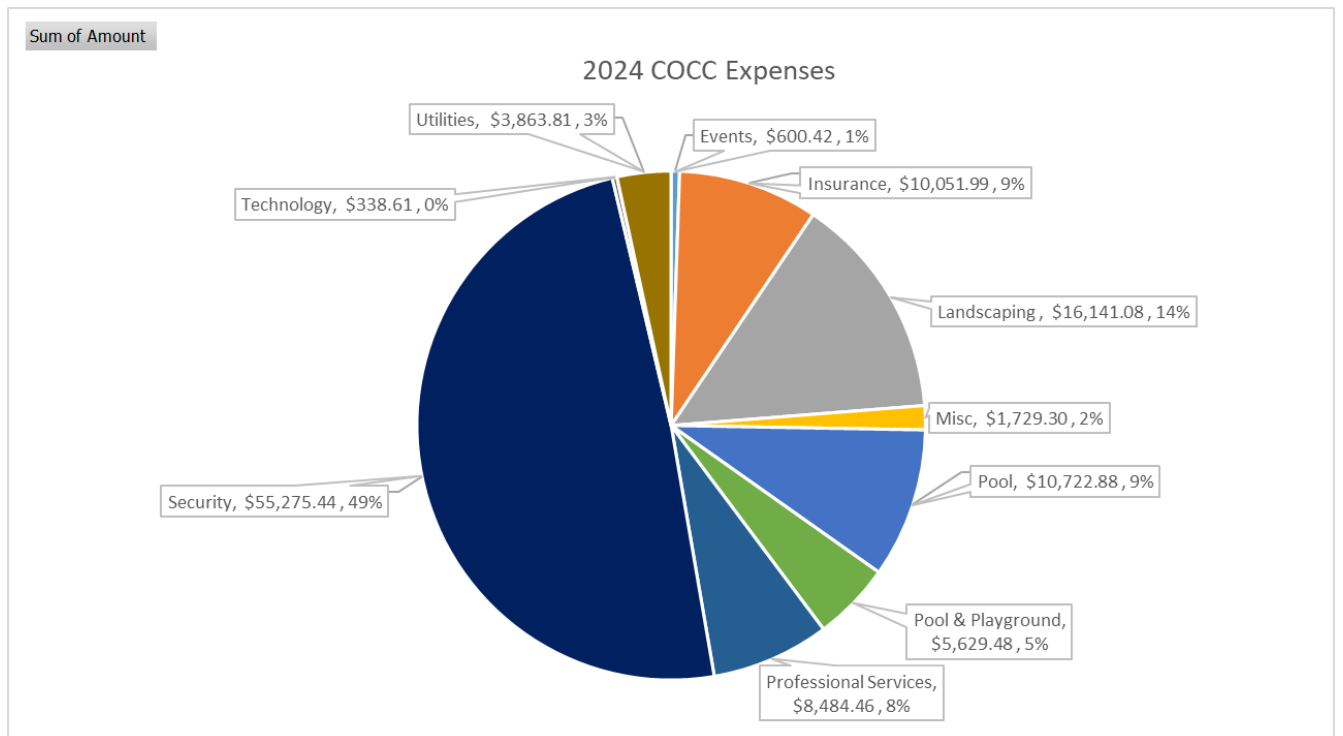
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The Candlelight Oaks Civic Club Board has worked diligently over the last decade to implement cost cutting measures. These include:

- Self-managed board (no fees to an external management company. Only outsourced accountant and legal advice, as needed.)
- Vigilant follow-up with residents to ensure near 100% fulfillment of required assessment fees.
- Communication with title companies to coordinate fee payment and unpaid assessments for home sales.
- Year-round volunteer upkeep of the pool by a resident and board member.
- Collaboration with Near Northwest Management District to mow the Tidwell esplanade.
- Volunteers recruited twice annually to help with basic landscape upkeep.
- Contract with new security company several years ago to increase security coverage and reduce costs.
- Grant secured to create playground several years ago.

Despite careful management of costs, and vigorous collection of assessments, expenses now exceed income by approximately \$10,000 annually. With the rising cost of insurance, security, utilities, and other core expenses, we expect that expenses will continue to rise as assessment fees remain flat. Reserves have been used to cover the gap between income and expenses, and as a result reserves are dwindling.

Below is a snapshot of our 2024 expenses. Note that we are required by our bylaws to spend a minimum of \$50,000 of our income annually on security-related expenses.



Due to concerns about the HOA's financial stability, the Board contracted with Reserve Study Group to provide a review of our neighborhood's financial status and its impact on our future. Their findings mirrored many of our own concerns.

In the recent past, we have deferred or put stop gap measures on regular maintenance all the while seeking to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. However, within the next several years, funds may not be available to handle basic maintenance or extraordinary expenses that could be incurred from storm damage or other catastrophic events. Already, we are making very cautious decisions regarding expenditures. Cul de sacs are in need of landscaping, signage along Tidwell is in poor repair, the playground requires an upgrade of mulch, the deck in the pool area will need to be replaced in the next few years as will the pavilion, and – a top priority - added security measures are needed to protect residents at the pool and playground. We are unable to pay for these improvements with our current funding.

As good stewards of our neighborhood, we cannot wait until there is an emergency to take action. At that point, it will simply be too late to improve the quality of our neighborhood, and we would be unable to maintain its current condition, much less to make improvements that are needed now.

We propose an assessment increase in the following formula:

Assessment Due 1/1/2026	\$45 per month/\$545 annually
Assessment Due 1/1/2026	\$55 per month/\$660 annually
Thereafter	permission for the Board to institute an increase of 2% annually as needed. This will enable us to avoid large increases in assessments and manage cost of living increases efficiently. Any increase larger than this nominal amount would require resident approval.

We hope that you will see the value in approving a requested increase in assessment funds to improve landscaping, ensure adequate funding for security and neighborhood watch, and care for the neighborhood assets of pool and playground that increase the value of our community and our homes. We look forward to hearing your feedback and to a discussion about shared priorities.

Please mark your calendars to join us for one of these upcoming meetings. The assessment increase will be the primary focus. We hope to use the spring months to gather input.

March Board Meeting	March 13, 7:30 p.m. at Advent Lutheran Church
April Board Meeting	April 10, 7:30 p.m. by Zoom
May Board Meeting	May 8, 7:30 p.m. at Advent Lutheran Church

More information about the proposal will be available at these meetings and also will be communicated via social media, on our website [www.candlelightoaks.com](http://www.candlelightoaks.com), by email, and through print materials distributed to the neighborhood. We look forward to our discussions about these important topics and gathering your input. In the interim, please reach out to [board@candlelightoaks.com](mailto:board@candlelightoaks.com) with your questions.