



Candlelight Oaks

A meeting of the Candlelight Oaks Civic Club Board was held on Thursday, January 16 and called to order at 7:30. The following individuals were present: Sandy Ericksen, Lori Bulla, Justin Schrader, Hope Edmondson, Aaron Brisendine, John Carr (by zoom), Hope Edmondson, Richard Solis and Johanna Wolfe.

The following individuals were elected unanimously as officers and committee chairs:

President, Sandy Ericksen	Landscape Chair, John Carr
Vice President and Pool Committee, Lori Bulla	Long Range Planning & Deed Restrictions,
Secretary, Johanna Wolfe	Aaron Brisendine and Richard Solis
Treasurer, Justin Schrader	Deed Restriction Chair, Aaron Brisendine
Security, Hope Edmondson	

Lori provided a pool report. It was proposed to increase the Candlelight Oaks Village pool fee by \$25 to \$200 for 2025. The Candlelight Oaks fee will remain at \$125.

Hope reported that other than several loose dogs in the neighborhood, no new issues have been reported regarding security. Homeland Security will maintain its contract with Candlelight Oaks, unchanged, for 2025.

Aaron reported on deed restriction activity. Richard Solis will join Aaron in helping to identify deed restrictions issues on a regular basis. Residents and board members continue to reach out to Councilmember Peck, 311, and City of Houston Waste Department regarding heavy trash that has not been collected. Aaron met with volunteers for the Architectural Control Committee. The Committee is drafting guidelines to support neighbors seeking to make major home improvements. Per legislative requirements, the ACC will operate independently from the Board.

Justin Schrader provided a treasurer’s report. Assessment invoices were emailed in late November, and at the request of some neighbor’s invoices were also delivered by mail to select homes. Duplicate invoices have been requested by some residents. Justin has posted on FaceBook to remind residents of due dates. Late notices will be delivered in early February, following the January 30 deadline.

A summary of 2024 Financials –

Total Income	\$114,217.04
Total Expenses	\$117,089.75
Savings and Checking (combined)	\$98,486.22

Following several months of discussions regarding the Board's desire to maintain and refurbish common spaces – cul de sacs, pool, playground, Tidwell esplanade - an extended discussion was held about increasing the annual assessment. Expenses continue to rise, and there is concern that if an extraordinary expenditure is required, current resources will be inadequate. Sandy pointed out that the assessment has not been raised in over 20 years. Early in 2024, the Board contracted Reserve Study Group to assess the financial position of the Candlelight Oaks community relative to reserves and assets. Findings reinforced the board's concern that revenues must be increased. While the Reserve Study Group recommended an increase that would support reserves \$160,944 board felt that residents would be unable to shoulder an assessment at levels needed to reach that level. However, the board agreed that following over 20 years of stable fees (\$360 annually/\$30 per month per home), an increase is necessary.

A discussion ensued regarding the amount of an increase that could be acceptable to residents, place the Candlelight Oaks community in a better financial position, and support long overdue neighborhood improvements. Johanna reminded the board that raising the assessment will require a vote of 51 percent of residents in each of the four Candlelight Oaks sections.

Following an extended discussion of increased assessment cost structures, John Carr proposed that the assessment be raised to \$545 for 2026 (\$45 monthly), followed by an increase to \$660 in 2027 (\$55 monthly). In order to ensure that future Candlelight Oaks Civic Club boards would be able to cover inflationary costs, John also proposed that the deed restrictions be modified to allow the Board to raise assessments by 2 percent annually without a vote of members. Any higher increases would require a vote as currently identified in the Candlelight Oaks deed restrictions.

The motion was seconded by Johanna Wolfe and unanimously approved. Johanna will draft a letter to send to residents and create a plan to share information broadly in order to bring the increase to a vote in Spring 2025. Discussion of the letter and implementation plan will continue at the February meeting,