

Responses to Frequent HL Resident Survey Write-In Questions & Comments

◆ Homeowners Associations (HOAs)

- **Hidden Lakes is a community** approaching about 1,660 occupied homes as of September 2007, with a fully built-out population approaching 1,800 homes and over 5,000 people. There is a Master Homeowners Association for all of Hidden Lakes and additional sub-associations for Idlewood and Woodlands I.
- **Each HOA has a Board of Directors.** The Master HOA is still under Declarant (Developer) control, not homeowners' control. Since the Master HOA Board Members are not local, the management company, hired by the Board, is our interface to them - Premier Communities Management Company is currently contracted for property management services for the Master Association plus Woodlands I and IV. SBB Management currently handles Idlewood. The Master HOA does not revert to homeowner control as long as the Developers own any parcel of Hidden Lakes property, unless the Declarant Board decides to transition at an earlier point. Idlewood and Woodlands I sub-associations are already under homeowner control with residents forming each Board of Directors.
- **The Master HOA has nine active committees** of resident volunteers whose recommendations, while advisory, are normally accepted. (There were ten, but Social and Recreation have combined.) The committees coordinate activities through a joint Committee Chairs meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month that is open to all residents.
- **Association Managers.** The Master HOA currently has two part-time Association Managers who are residents. They can be reached at their new email address, managers@HLhoa.com.

◆ Common Areas are the responsibility of the Master HOA. This includes the clubhouse, pools, entrances, sports fields, retention/detention areas, perimeter walls/fences, etc.

- **Landscape**
 - The largest single HOA expense is landscaping, including electricity and water. Irrigation includes a multitude of controllers and over 100 miles of pipe. Rain sensors installed on all of our irrigation sites help prevent sprinklers from running when it's raining.
 - Residents are encouraged to report irrigation problems to the Association Managers.
 - Sky Creek Landscape Services holds the contract for our entrance landscaping and maintenance of the common areas in Hidden Lakes (since January 2005).
 - The Beautification Committee makes recommendations for entrance plantings and new trees.
 - Suggestions were received concerning landscaping along Union Church. This is not currently planned, but will be taken under consideration.
 - Holiday decorations at the main entrances are provided by a contracted service that is periodically re-bid. Power must be upgraded at the Davis entrance before additional lights, such as on the Crepes, can be added. Holiday decorations at the village entrances are at the discretion of village residents, within guidelines.
- **Pools**
 - There are three pools: Bear Creek (by the clubhouse), Preston (across from the elementary school) and Bloomfield. All three are available to all Hidden Lakes residents. The pools are also available to residents from The Meadows at Bear Creek who pay for the privilege (\$400 non-transferable initiation fee and \$180 / year.)

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- Pool access cards are needed to enter the pool areas. The initial card is \$20 (paid at closing) and replacement or additional cards are \$25 each. Initial, additional and replacement cards are available from the Association Managers.
- The pools close at 10 p.m. Quiet behavior is expected in the later evening hours out of respect for nearby homes. Pool cards will not open the gates after hours. Pool bathrooms are locked at 10 p.m.
- **Enhancements**
 - Recent pool enhancements include new entrance gates at both Preston and Bloomfield for better access to the restrooms, re-strapping the Bloomfield loungers, a new baby pool cover for the Bear Creek pool, and 911 phones at each pool.
 - Potential major enhancements are considered by the Long Range Planning Committee. Enhancements encompass additional or upgraded amenities, entrance features, beautification of the floodwater detention areas, uniform signage, infrastructure, and other long term improvements contributing to improved safety & security, and general quality of life. Email ideas to LRPC@HLhoa.com. Options, costs and other factors will be fully explained, and resident concurrence sought, before proceeding with any major enhancements.
 - There is little available land for new amenities such as tennis or sports courts without converting land from some existing use.
 - There are no major enhancements, such as water park features, planned for the pools at this time, but could be considered when the pools are scheduled for major maintenance in a few years. Any major expenditures would be submitted for resident comment and require a special assessment.
 - There were several developers involved in creating Hidden Lakes. The developer for Bloomfield elected to use wood fences instead of brick walls for the entrance along Bloomfield Drive. Converting to brick walls has been considered but no action is currently being pursued as it would require a special assessment of all residents to fund the enhancement.
- **Common Area Drainage** (also see Homeowner Lot Drainage in the Responsibility Table)
 - The City of Keller maintains the public drainage patterns and any changes to drainage / retention / detention structures, such as across from Hidden Lakes Elementary School, must comply with the City's drainage requirements.
 - Drainage problems on the City trails, public streets and sidewalks are the responsibility of the City; however, contact the Association Managers to assist in seeking resolution.
 - The HOA has taken positive steps to relieve drainage problems in several low areas, particularly along sidewalks and in the playing fields. These areas were either filled to achieve runoff in accordance with the City-approved plats, or equipped with French drains.
 - Although most of the acute drainage problems on sidewalks have been resolved, a few have proven persistent and are still being addressed. Please advise the Association Managers of observed problems.
 - Where streets or sidewalks are essentially level (no slope for runoff), algae can develop, particularly in the wet, cool springtime. Contact the Association Managers for public streets, the Boards for gated villages, to review the situation and possible solutions.

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○ Gates

- Privacy gates are located at the entrances of five villages: Idlewood Estates, Idlewood Green, Idlewood Oaks, Woodlands I and Woodlands IV. They are intended to reduce traffic, not to prevent pedestrians from entering, or to provide security. The original developers of Hidden Lakes determined their locations. The streets inside gated villages are private, so those villages have an additional fee for operational and maintenance costs for the streets and gates, as well as reserve funds for eventual replacement of the gates and streets.
- Adding gates to currently un-gated villages requires a vote of the residents in that village. Keller would have to abandon the right of way. There would have to be consideration for the placement of the gate systems; the cost would be significant, requiring a special assessment for that village. If approved by Keller and the residents of that village (most likely unanimous consent required), the village streets would become private and the residents of that village would take on responsibility for the operation and maintenance of streets and gates.
- The process for converting from a gated to an un-gated village is described in the applicable governing documents. If the change were to be approved by the residents of that village, the streets would have to be brought up to the City's standards at the village's expense before Keller would consider assuming responsibility.

○ Hike and Bike Trail

- The trails through Hidden Lakes are part of the City of Keller trail system, and the City is responsible for their maintenance.

◆ Communication with Residents

- **Newsletters:** Newsletters, published based on need and resident interest, are available in full-color on the HOA website at www.HLhoa.com. Residents receive email notification when the newsletter is available on the website. The newsletter costs are completely covered by advertising fees.
- **Annual Directory:** The Hidden Lakes Directory is published annually. The directory contains names, addresses, and phone number of residents only to the extent authorized by the residents, as well as maps, information about Hidden Lakes and Keller, City and local reference numbers, websites, answers to commonly asked questions, and more. The directories are distributed at various locations for resident pickup, and thereafter delivered by volunteers. Residents must sign a Privacy Form before receiving a directory. The directory is totally subsidized by the advertising sold.
- **Periodic E-News:** Periodic updates of important issues and events in Hidden Lakes are emailed to residents twice monthly, usually on the first and third Tuesday mornings. The number of HL residences providing email addresses increased from 800 to 1,549 during the time period 2004 to September 2007. Please report email changes to directory@HLhoa.com.
- **Annual Meeting:** The Annual HOA Meeting is held each spring. In accordance with the HL governing documents, the meeting includes reports on the overall state of the Hidden Lakes community, and updates from each of the Committees. All information is available afterwards online.
- **Committee Chairs Meetings:** Residents are invited to attend the joint Committee Chairs meetings to voice their questions, concerns, and suggestions. The meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at the Bear Creek Clubhouse, 6:30 p.m. typically November – February, 7 p.m. March – October.
- **Website:** Our website at www.HLhoa.com has the objective of offering relevant information, easy navigation, and timely updates. A talented Hidden Lakes resident created the new site and provides

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maintenance for a reduced fee, saving Hidden Lakes budget dollars. Improvement suggestions are always welcome. Email webguy@HLhoa.com.

- **Surveys:** Our most important means of getting community input is through resident surveys. The surveys enable homeowners who are not directly involved in the HOA or committees to participate in major decisions that affect Hidden Lakes. The results help guide committee recommendations to the Developer Board for items such as how best to spend HOA dues and what enhancements are most wanted.
- **Signs:** Signs are posted for special events such as the Annual Meeting and Community Garage Sales in accordance with Keller regulations, which the City rigorously enforces.

◆ **Welcoming**

- A Village Greeter delivers a directory and a bottle of wine to all new residents moving into HL. About 900 new residents have been welcomed since January 2003. Families with newborns are greeted with a new baby basket. This program is run by our Welcoming Committee and any costs are subsidized by advertising revenue.

◆ **Financial**

○ **Budget**

- The annual budget is based on previous year's actuals and projections for the upcoming year. Recent utility increases and inflation resulted in a dues increase for 2006, the first in four years. All contracted services are competitively bid periodically. While some smaller communities reduce management costs by having residents assume some of the required tasks, it is not practical for a community the size of Hidden Lakes.
- A conveyance fee was initiated in 2006 for new residents to Hidden Lakes (collected at closing) to help fund special projects.
- Most committee expenses, such as Social/Recreation, Communications, and Welcoming activities are almost entirely supported by advertising or user fees.

○ **Allocation**

- Funds are allocated by need, not by village or number of residents. This allows expenditures to account for variables such as terrain, the features built by the developer (e.g. walls, entrances, pools), the distribution of common areas, number of entrances and length of streets, etc.
- The 2007 budget is \$934K with the distribution of expenses as follows:
 - Landscape and hardscape (including wall repair), playgrounds - 33%
 - Amenity Centers (pools, clubhouse) - 13%
 - Utilities (water, electricity, gas, phone) - 23%
 - General administrative, property management fee - 21%
 - Committees (long-range projects, website, newsletter, directory, etc.) – 4%
 - Reserves – 6%

○ **Master HOA and Sub-Association Assessments**

- The Master Association dues for 2007 are \$475. This was the first increase in four years. (There was a \$70 per lot special assessment to initiate a reserve fund during this period, however.) The dues cover amenities and common areas. The last comparison with other

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HOAs in Keller, NE Tarrant County, and the Metroplex showed that the HL annual dues are very competitive for our features and amenities.

- Idlewood is a separate sub-association with SBB as the current management company. Additional dues for Idlewood Estates are \$343; Idlewood Green \$240; and Idlewood Oaks \$145 for 2007, with adjustments made yearly.
- Woodlands I is also a sub-association. Additional dues in 2007 are \$360 for operations and reserves. Their management company contract for financial-only services is currently with Premier Communities.
- Woodlands IV was established by the developer as a special development area subject to assessment as determined by the Master HOA. The current fee is \$300 for 2007. It is not a separate sub-association.

○ Reserves

- A Reserve Study conducted in 2003 indicated that about \$60,000 should be set aside in 2006 (increasing yearly with inflation) to build sufficient reserves for future replacement of capital assets, to prevent huge assessments when replacements are actually required.
- We are meeting this commitment within the current budget. As anticipated, reserves are withdrawn to pay for capital repair/replacement such as the ongoing wall repairs.
- To provide reserves for long-range improvements (versus replacement), a separate reserve fund may be set up.

○ Disclosure

- The quarterly financial reports are posted on the website, typically 30-60 days after the end of the quarter. Financial committee quarterly meetings are open to Hidden Lakes' residents. (Contact Finance@HLhoa.com for dates/time/location since they vary.)

◆ Courtesies

- One of the top-rated satisfaction areas for Hidden Lakes is "having great neighbors." But even great neighbors have to work at it. The survey identified several items that are really appreciated when addressed by neighbors. These are areas over which the HOA really has no jurisdiction but are ways to demonstrate you care about keeping Hidden Lakes a great place to live.
 - Maintain your yard. Many complaints are received concerning weeds, tall grass, and un-kept landscape. Weeds are not only unsightly, but also encroach into neighbors' yards.
 - Pick up after your dog. This is by far the most mentioned item in any survey (not to mention the most common email complaint received). This applies to common areas as well as resident lawns. (Keller has a leash law, but currently no pet litter law except in city parks.)
 - Quiet barking dogs or bring them inside.
 - Keep trash bins and recycle containers off the sidewalks to prevent creating an obstruction to walkers. Secure trash so that it doesn't blow through the neighborhood. Trash and recycle bins should be put out no sooner than the night prior to pickup. Return to out-of-sight storage the same day as pickup.
 - Respect backyard privacy by keeping noise and music down, particularly after 10 p.m. Keep play structures away from property edges to ensure privacy on the other side.

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- Park in garages or driveways whenever possible - not on the street, especially not in front of neighbors' homes. Realtors say street parking reduces the desirability of a neighborhood. Cars parked on the street can also be a safety issue with kids at play. However, ensure cars piggybacked in the driveway do not block the sidewalk – it's against the law.

- ◆ **CC&Rs** (Conditions, Covenants & Restrictions). The governing documents for each phase of each village were drawn separately by the developers. While they are generally the same, there are many minor differences, making enforcement more challenging and sometimes creating the appearance of lack of evenhandedness. The management company, not the volunteer committees, is responsible for monitoring and notifying residents not in compliance. Common questions about CC&Rs are addressed below.
 - **Notification and Enforcement**
 - The Association Managers schedule drives through Hidden Lakes to look for non-compliance issues with the CC&Rs, as well as external changes that were done without the Architecture Committee's (HLAC) approval. Courtesy reminders are mailed where warranted, normally allowing ten days for correction before further action is taken, unless the situation requires more urgent action. State law regulates enforcement actions which may delay correction.
 - Trampolines are not addressed specifically in the CC&Rs, but Architecture Committee approval is required for these. See the Responsibility Table for other items.
 - Permanently-mounted basketball goals require Architecture Committee approval; portable goals must be stored out of the street when not in use. With risks from our traffic and street parking, frequent discussions with your children concerning safety and consistent monitoring are in order.
 - Streets in all but the gated villages are under the jurisdiction of Keller which has no ban on street parking; however, street parking is discouraged to improve appearance and safety.

- ◆ **Property Values** Improving property values is usually the hottest topic of the surveys. For most of us, the purchase of our home is our largest investment and we want to protect it.
 - **The Hidden Lakes HOA mission in EVERYTHING it does is to improve quality of life and property values.** Although not directly mentioned, each time we plan a social or recreational event, choose landscaping for the common areas, enforce the CC&Rs, consider long-range projects such as additional amenities, greet new residents, conduct surveys, plan promotional functions for realtors, renegotiate contracts for pool maintenance, website maintenance, etc., we do so to make Hidden Lakes a better place to live and a more desirable community in which to purchase a home. (Also see Enhancements under Common Areas, above.)
 - **Feedback from local realtors** has been that Hidden Lakes "is a happening place" and the buzz about what the HOA is doing to maintain home values has influenced many realtors to bring more and more prospective homebuyers to Hidden Lakes.
 - **Quality home construction** is key to maintaining home values. The developers and the HOA continually monitor this area for new building in Hidden Lakes. The HOA cannot work directly with the builders, but keeps the Board of Directors (developers) apprised of any potential problems and concerns through the management company, Premier Communities.

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○ **Enhancing Property Values**

- Support of realtors involved in Hidden Lakes sales is intended to increase the desirability of Hidden Lakes, thereby increasing property values.
- Homeowners can have a significant effect on property values. The following list was developed from realtors' comments (via a survey) of things that influence prospective homebuyers' decisions on which community to choose. They also affect homeowner quality of life. Homeowners should:
 - Keep lawns well maintained, free of weeds, and full of seasonal flowers
 - Plant more shade trees NOW so that in 8-10 years Hidden Lakes will be a "sea of treetops" not "sea of rooftops" as some realtors said in their survey (tree deals have been negotiated by the HOA for residents)
 - Keep cars parked in the garage, not on the street
 - Don't leave basketball goals, bicycles, or other toys in the street
 - Pick up after you own pets

◆ **Construction**

○ **Minimum Building Requirements & Compliance**

- The developers set minimal standards for specific construction requirements, which vary somewhat from village to village, to comply with applicable DAD (Development Area Declarations) as filed. See your governing documents provided at closing.
- All new and replacement roofs must be minimum 240# shingle weight Weathered Wood coloration (with some exceptions for sections of Creekwood and Woodlands)
- The Master Architecture Committee, through the management company, is responsible to ensure builders meet these minimum HOA construction standards.
- Foundation requirements are not covered by the DAD but determined by the builder and his engineer. The City inspects and must approve.
- The HOA does not have the authority to determine "who" the builders are in HL, or the style, size or price of the home, as long as it meets the minimum standards described above.

○ **Construction Status (September 2007)**

- A few lots are still vacant, spread between Idlewood Estates, Enclave, Creekwood and Woodlands. Less than 25 lots remain to be built upon, not counting the new developments in Bloomfield.

◆ **Safety and Security**

○ **Speed and Traffic**

- The posted speed limit on Bear Creek Parkway is 35 mph. Preston is 30 mph. The speed limit in all villages is 30 mph, whether posted or not, except Preserve, which collected petitions from over 75% of registered drivers and received Keller Town Council approval to reduce the speed limit within their village to 25 mph.
- The Safety Committee periodically uses a radar gun from the Keller Police Department to help monitor speeding. The KPD then sends "reminder" notices to the registered owners of the vehicle asking them to adhere to the various speed and traffic laws.

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- The school zones for Hidden Lakes Elementary were expanded based on residents' concerns. The entire periphery of the school is now 20 mph in the morning and afternoon on school days.
 - The pickup lane in front of HLES is one-way. If you don't want to be stuck in the noon kindergarten line, please park on Preston Lane. Do not use the pool parking lot when picking up or dropping off during pool season May -October. Do not park directly by the fire hydrant on Preston Lane just south of the school exit.
 - With risks from our traffic and street parking, frequent discussions with your children concerning safety and consistent monitoring of their activities are in order.
 - Traffic lights and stop signs are the purview of Keller who relies on traffic studies. The Safety Committee works with Keller to promote traffic control measures throughout Hidden Lakes.
 - Crosswalks and signs and rumble strips have been installed at Preston & Bear Creek Blvd and by the Bear Creek Clubhouse. Stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks. Ongoing evaluations may result in additional changes to improve safety. Crosswalk lights are being considered by the City Council.
 - Your HOA worked with the electric companies to have new streetlights installed in areas that were not well lit, including two on Lark Court in The Retreat, and one at the end of Preston at Shady Grove Lane. If additional lights are needed, we will work with the utility to assess what can be done. Contact managers@HLhoa.com.
 - Street light bulbs frequently burn out. The closest homeowners should contact their servicing utility, either Tri-county or ONCOR/TXU, to report the outage. (See Utilities in the front of this directory.)
- **Vandalism and Theft.** We have experienced vandalism at the pools, the pool bathrooms, and with repeated soap episodes in the fountains. We also seem to have a rash of car burglaries every six to nine months. It would be wise to park your cars in the garages if at all possible. Never leave valuables like purses, computers, phones, etc. in your car, and always lock it. If you must park in your driveway or temporarily on the street, leave your garage door opener out of sight, or better still, remove it.
- **Deterrents**
 - Expanded use of surveillance cameras is planned in 2008.
 - Village Neighborhood Crime Watch committees are in place in several villages to serve as another deterrent. Email safety@HLhoa.com for help setting one up in your village.
 - The Hidden Lakes Teen Patrol, formed in spring 2005, is also contributing to the goal of a safer community.
 - Keller Police Department has a Crime Watch newsletter available through their community officer. The KPD also offers free home security inspections that can increase the safety of your home and lower your homeowner insurance costs. Contact Officer Scott Bradburn at sbradburn@kellerpd.com for details.
 - Graffiti on Hidden Lakes property should be reported to the Association Managers. Graffiti on the bridges should be reported to the Keller Police Department.
 - If you have a monitored alarm system, you are required to register with the Keller Police Department and provide a local alternate contact. There is a one-time fee of \$50.

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◆ Sky Creek Ranch Golf Club

- Sky Creek Ranch is a totally separate entity, not legally associated with Hidden Lakes.
- Sky Creek Ranch Golf Club (SCR), rated 4 Stars in Golf Digest's Place to Play, was designed by nationally renowned architect Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Nestled within our Hidden Lakes community, it is a public, not a private club, nor is it even a "part" of Hidden Lakes. It is separately owned by an Oklahoma company, Golf Club Partners, LLC. Big Bear Creek winds through the entire property and comes into play on 16 of the 18 holes, making it a very lush and beautiful course, yet a highly challenging one to play.
- Membership. SCR offers golfers two memberships: The Annual Membership allows unlimited use of the club, 7 days a week, cart fee not included, \$10 off rates for guests, 20% off apparel, 10% off hard goods for an annual fee of \$4200 plus applicable taxes. For Monday-Thursday play only, excluding holidays, plus all the other benefits listed above, for \$2500 plus tax. Either plan can add the "family option" for \$850 more.
- Instruction. SCR offers private and group / clinic instruction. Go to their website www.skycreekranch.com for more details.
- Homeowner Responsibility. When homeowners whose property backs up to Sky Creek Ranch Golf Club "extend" their backyard onto the golf course, they are encroaching on private property. The HOA has no authority on golf club property. SCR is fenced off although there are some access gates to allow golfers to retrieve errant shots. No jogging, walking (with or without pets), or cutting through from one area to another is permitted. Additionally, some minors have disturbed play by using air horns or other noise-making devices. KPD has been called and will continue to respond based on calls from the course. No sleigh-riding or snow siding is allowed on Sky Creek property, including the SCR hills (thousands of dollars of damage has been done by residents during past snow storms).