

Crighton Ridge Homeowners Association
Annual Meeting 2011 – 25 October
River Plantation Country Club

At 7:05, a quorum was announced with over 88 lots represented. Attendance was over 80, including representatives from the City of Conroe, representatives from the management company ACMI, and Jennifer Real from CROW. Board President Larry Knigge called the meeting to order, and welcomed Crighton Ridge residents to the annual meeting.

The first order of business was the election of board members. There are 3 members of the board of directors, whose terms of 2 years each are staggered. Two terms expire this year. Candidates for the 2 positions were previously announced as incumbents John Dale and Glenn Masterson, as well as previous board member Matt Paggioli. At the beginning of this meeting, John Dale withdrew his name as a candidate. President Knigge asked if there were nominations from the floor for one of the positions. There being none, Joe Gaglio moved and Edwin Taylor seconded a motion to accept the remaining two candidates as board members and a show of hands indicated the motion was passed unanimously. President Knigge welcomed Glenn Masterson and Matt Paggioli back to the Board and thanked John Dale for his years of service.

The second order of business was a financial overview. President Knigge referred members to a spreadsheet listing the revenues and expenses for the past 4 years, and a projected budget for 2012. The Association's finances are in good shape, with only one assessment delinquent. The board found no reason to raise the annual assessment, and the annual HOA fees will remain at \$550.00 for the coming year.

A member raised a question about trash delivery. Payment for trash collection presently accounts for about 30% of the amount collected for HOA fees. When Crighton Ridge was annexed by Conroe, we were given the option to switch to the Conroe trash collection company (includes recycling and pick up of 1 large can of trash and 1 large can of recyclables once a week), or to remain with our current trash collection company for 2 years. The vote was very close, but 58% of residents chose to remain with Waste Management until January of 2013. At that time, we will revert to the Conroe trash collection company and will be billed individually at about \$13 a month for the basic collection. All things remaining the same, the HOA fees will be reduced then by approximately \$160-\$170 a year.

The other major expense for our HOA is Maintenance, which includes landscaping and maintenance of common grounds, periodic clean up of Crighton Road, power washing the monuments and park facilities, mulching the playgrounds, repair of playground equipment, lake maintenance, security lighting, and removal of dead trees in common areas. Due to the drought, it is anticipated that several trees may need to be removed, and residents are asked to notify ACMI if they see trees that may be dead. Some dead trees have already been removed, and a tree expert will be consulted before any tree removal. Residents were advised that pine trees which have turned all brown are dead, but oak trees may have gone dormant, and may bud out again in the spring.

A member raised a question about City of Conroe cutting down trees or doing maintenance in our parks. The answer was made that our parks are private, so we are responsible for their maintenance, not the city.

A question was raised about the maintenance of the mailboxes. The answer was made that the HOA maintains the landscaping around the mailboxes, but that the Post Office is responsible for the maintenance, as in painting and cleaning, of the mailboxes themselves.

One of the projects financed this year by the HOA was the printing and delivery of a new directory for Crighton Ridge. President Knigge thanked Judy Weidner and the many volunteers who made the directory possible, and pledged that it would not be another 5 years before the next directory was published.

One problem that came before the Board was the low water in the small lake in the park. There is an independent well owned by the HOA that supplies the water to refill the lake. The Lone Star Conservation District regulates groundwater usage, and earlier this summer the HOA was notified that it had reached the limit of water it was allowed to pump from this well. As the level of the pond dropped, the waterfall was turned off to protect the pumps that recycled the water flow, and the fountain was turned off to reduce evaporation. When the water level became so low that the wildlife was threatened, as well as the integrity of the sides of the lake, board member Glenn Masterson was able to intercede with the Conservation District, and they allowed the pump to be turned back on. Eventually the waterfall was turned on, but the fountain is only being turned on between 5 pm and 9 pm for the time being.

Some may have noticed a new name for the street at the entrance to Section 2. The past street sign was for Beechwood Chase. When the stop sign there was knocked down and needed to be replaced, the street sign was also changed. On the plans the name of the street was shown as Beechwood, so that is the name now shown on the street sign. Since no homes have a Beechwood (or Beechwood Chase) address, this change should not make a difference to us. A resident pointed out that a light is out on the corner at the Beechwood entrance. Since this is a security light, the HOA will take care of it. Residents were reminded that when street light located on common grounds go out, they should notify ACMI. The City of Conroe maintains street lights, so problems with those lights should be reported to the City or to Entergy.

A question was raised about dark streets in the neighborhood. A Conroe representative responded that the City installs new lights for traffic safety, not security. Residents may call the city office or go online to report an area that they believe may need a light installed. Someone will come look at the area and determine if a light is needed for traffic safety.

It was pointed out that golf carts and their actions are not the responsibility of the HOA. City of Conroe has a regulation that it is illegal to drive golf carts on city streets without a drivers' license. It is legal to drive a golf cart to and from the golf course, but not for other purposes. While the police are not going to be spending their time chasing down golf carts to determine where they are being driven, residents should be aware that their kids should not be driving golf carts, particularly "joy-riding" in golf carts.

President Knigge asked if there was any additional business to bring up. There being none, the next item on the agenda was a presentation by ACMI President Bert Williams.

ACMI is the management company for the Crighton Ridge HOA. ACMI President Williams told residents that the Texas State Legislature had passed several new laws for Homeowners Associations. These new laws will have a limited impact on the Crighton Ridge Homeowners Association because in most cases our procedures already comply.

It is a new law that all residents must be allowed to vote and must be allowed to serve on the Board of their HOA, even if they owe money to the HOA. While this will not likely become an issue for us, since there are very few ever delinquent in payment, Mr. Williams thinks that in practice there may be some problems that arise as a result of this law.

It is a new law that when candidates for HOA Board members do not run unopposed, the vote must be conducted by ballot instead of by a show of hands.

Another law: all documents and resolutions must be recorded in the county. Documents include deed restrictions and the like. If the HOA has a website, documents must be posted there. Crighton Ridge has already recorded its documents, and they are posted on its website which is www.crightonridge.org.

Another new law governs foreclosures: Payment plans must be available to residents who owe money to the HOA, and collection procedures must be documented, and posted on the website (they are). Instead of the former method of foreclosure, a new statute requires that a foreclosure must be made in front of a judge, and the procedure described. If a fine system is in place (Crighton Ridge does not use a fine system), there cannot be a foreclosure for fines. Debts owed to the HOA cannot be sold to a collection agency.

Finally, law now requires that all board meetings be open to all members of the association. Most of the Crighton Ridge board meetings (which take place 3 or 4 times a year) are conducted by e-mail and teleconference. It is now required that meetings where a budget is adopted or accounts are sent to a lawyer must be open to the public. Therefore, next year, that meeting will probably be incorporated into the annual meeting.

President Knigge opened the floor for questions.

One resident asked if there had been interest in becoming a gated community. The answer was given that the question had been raised before, and Pro's and Con's stated. The main Pro was the belief that a gated community might be a safer community. The main Con was that the HOA would then have to add maintenance of streets and drainage ditches in the community to its budget.

One resident asked if there was any recourse to incessant dog barking. She said she had called the management company and was told there was nothing in the deed restrictions to address the problem. President Knigge suggested that if there were too many animals, that the management company could write a letter. The resident said that letters had been written and ignored.

President Knigge asked the advice of the Conroe representative. The answer was made that there was a city ordinance, and the resident should report the annoyance to the police department, who would help her to intercede with the neighbor.

A resident asked about trees along Crighton Road that had died, and about trash pickup along Crighton Road. The answer was made that we pay for trash pickup periodically along Crighton Road, from the bridge to Kidd Road. The City is now responsible for all of Crighton Road, and should take care of trees on the north side of the road. There is a “green space” owned by the HOA on our side of the road, and the HOA should be notified about trees in that area that need to be removed.

Next on the agenda was a presentation from Jennifer Real, from CROW (Citizen Residents Opposed to Wells, aka Stop the Toxic Wells). Jennifer thanked everyone for continuing to support the effort. More information can be found at their website: www.stopthetoxicwells.com Currently, TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) has granted a permit to TexCom despite the withdrawal of the Railroad Commission approval. CROW is appealing this decision, since TCEQ’s own procedures demand it receive the Railroad Commission approval before granting a permit. A permit for a driveway on Hwy 3083 has been blocked. A donation from our Crighton Ridge HOA helped fund a study that showed there was not enough room for a driveway in the proposed location. TexCom is now applying for a variance, but local engineers feel that TCEQ will not offer a variance. However, that remains to be seen.

A Town Hall meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 8, at 7 p.m. at the River Plantation Country Club. Everyone is encouraged to attend this meeting – vote first, then come to the meeting. Representative Brandon Creighton and Montgomery County Attorney David Walker will be present. There should also be a representative from the Railroad Commission. Nothing speaks louder than your presence. Legislators will listen when the numbers are there.

The EPA has met with CROW and is sympathetic to our concerns. However, the way Texas laws are written for water, the EPA can’t do a whole lot right now. We need to push legislators to get the laws we need. Please help with your attendance, with writing e-mails and letters, and with calling. Governor Perry is not returning calls. He seems to be more interested in jobs than in environmental issues.

The mineral rights are now owned by Bank of America. They have written a strong report in our favor. Also, the Denbury Production company is concerned because their oil production will be affected. CROW hopes to win its appeal at District Court. If not, the next step may be to go to a Federal Injunction. Again, thanks for your help, and please come to the Nov. 8th meeting!

The last item on the agenda was a presentation from City of Conroe. Those present included Sam Micell, Utility Billing Manager; Dean Towery, Superintendent of Water & Sewer Construction; Chris Loomis, Water Conservation Manager; Ken Viniarski, Conroe Water Department; & Colin Boothe, Conroe Financial Department.

The presentation began with an overview of the agreement when Crighton Ridge underwent voluntary annexation. The agreement between Conroe and Crighton Ridge was that Conroe

would purchase the CCN from AquaTexas and that since the annexation process would normally take 3 years, the estimated taxes from that time would be applied to our share of the purchase price. The cost of obtaining the right to supply water to Crighton Ridge/Crighton Woods was about \$3 million, + closing. The Crighton Ridge portion of that amount was \$1.7 million. Three years of taxes was estimated at around \$1.3 million, leaving a total of \$369,300 that Crighton Ridge would pay. A surcharge of \$1.06 per 1,000 gallons was added to the water bill. It was originally estimated that it would take 4 years to collect the total, but it now appears that it will take less time, since about 29% of the total has been collected since January. When the total amount has been collected, the surcharge will cease.

Water usage throughout Conroe has increased due to the drought. In the year Oct 2007-Sept 2008, Conroe supplies 2.9 billion gallons; the next year it supplied 2.8 billion gallons. Since October 2010, that amount has risen 155 million gallons to 3.5 billion. In May of 2010 an incremental pricing was added to promote water conservation. April through September has the largest use of water for landscaping. In many cases landscaping is overwatered, leading to waste of water. Leaks can also contribute to water wastage, from pipes, faucets and sprinklers. All of us need to be aware of ways that we can conserve water.

The Lone Star Conservation District was established in 2001; its purpose is to protect and regulate ground water usage. The San Jacinto River Authority instigated a surface water fee in 2010, to fund future surface water sources. Ground water providers, of which Conroe is one, must come up with alternate resources by 2015, when all water must be provided from surface water sources.

Crighton Ridge water meters are read and billed around the 9th of every month, although the exact date may be pushed forward or back depending on holidays and weekends. Ninety percent of the water meters installed in Crighton Ridge are Badger meters. These must be read manually, since the electronic readers used by Conroe are for Neptune meters. Ten percent of Crighton Ridge meters are Neptune meters, and as meters need to be replaced, they will be converted to Neptune meters so drive-by readers can be used.

Fire Hydrants: Conroe will add 7,600 feet of 6" fire line and install 57 fire hydrants in Crighton Ridge. Installation will begin in mid December of this year and is estimated to be finished in March of 2012. Fire hydrants will be placed first, then the 4" lines that exist in some parts of the neighborhood, largely down cul-de-sacs, will be replaced. During this process, lawns will be marked with flags and spray paint to indicate existing lines. Homeowners are encouraged to mark their sprinkler lines, if they know where they are. **Please allow flags and paints to stay in the yard!** The new lines will go in the ditch area and no driveways will be torn up. The grass will be replaced. Just look at Crighton Woods, where fire hydrants have already been installed, and you will see that everything has returned to the way it was before. A picture showing the location of the fire hydrants will be given to the HOA to be put on its website.

Bridge Project: The bridge across Stewart's Creek will be replaced with a 2 lane bridge, in a joint venture with TX DOT, that is estimated to start Spring 2012. The estimated time of construction is 9 months, and during this time Crighton Road will stay open. Replacement of the

bridge will include some straightening of Crighton Road, and the portion of the road between the bridge and I-45 will be widened to 5 lanes at the intersection of I-45 and Crighton Road.

Water Conservation: Normally at this time of year, we have received 46 inches of rain. Right now we are about 36 inches behind. There is a huge drought in Texas, Louisiana, Mexico and Arizona. Lakes are low. Lake Travis in Austin is down to 30% of its capacity. The cause of this problem is the weather pattern called “La Nina” and it is expected to continue on to next year.

There are 3 aquifers that supply the Conroe area. The Evangeline is the shallowest and the Jasper is deeper. New wells are being dug down to the Catahoula, the deepest. The new well being drilled in Panorama should bring up to 5,000 gallons of water a minute. We are drawing down the aquifers faster than they can recharge. There has been a 30% drop in the Evangeline just in the past year. The Jasper has dropped 50%. It takes 20 years for surface water to filter down to the aquifer to recharge it. We need to start conserving our water.

W.I.S.E. Guys programs: At no charge, the City of Conroe will send out professional conservationist. They can change heads on sprinklers or put on pressure regulators. They will recommend settings for your sprinkler system to get the most out of the water you use. Their suggestions can help you conserve water, which will also lower your water bill. Go to the website www.cityofconroe.org and click on the tab at the top labeled Water Conservation. Answer 5 questions. Then you will be called to make an appointment. One of the WISE Guys will show you areas to be optimized and how to set your controllers.

Rain barrels and deep irrigation are recommended. Eighty percent of water used in summer months is for irrigation, and 50% of that is wasted. System repairs can be simple enough that you can do it yourself. Regardless, repairs will save water and save money. City Council will be voting soon to renew funding for the WISE Guys program.

Drought Contingency Program. As in the past, there will be 3 stages. However the stages will be managed a little differently than in the past.

Stage 1 – Voluntary – residents will be asked to water only 2 x a week and only at night.

Warning may be issued if residents do not comply, but fines will not be issued.

State 2 – Mandatory – residents will be told to water only 2 x a week and only at night. Warning will be issued and at the time of the 2nd warning, fines will start.

Stage 3 – No Watering. Residents will be told to turn off their sprinkler systems completely.

None of these stages count for hand watering, which will be allowed.

A question was made about the funds raised through fines and surcharges – where does this money go? Is it used for general city projects? The answer – all funds stay in projects for water and sewer systems.

Meter Flow test: A resident may request a meter flow test, if they feel their meter is not registering correctly. The meter will be removed, another meter will be installed, and the possibly defective meter will be tested. However, virtually all meters will under-read rather than over-read water usage when they begin to fail.

Water Meter Regulator: Conroe provides pressure to the water system that is high enough so that all customers have good water pressure. Crighton Ridge is on the low side of the water system, which means its pressures will be higher. Most pressures in Crighton Ridge are running around 80-90. This will not cause damage to pipes or appliances, which are tolerant to 120. Why would someone need a pressure regulator? The greater the pressure, the more water will be running through the system, and the more water running through the system, the higher the bill. Also, higher pressure through sprinkler systems may cause them to mist, which wastes water. Higher pressure may cause joints or rings that are approaching the end of their life span to fail earlier than when they experience lower pressure.

Water rates: When the city increases its water rates, there are hearings and workshops that are open to the public. These events will be reported in the Conroe Courier and on the City of Conroe website. Residents are welcome to attend and to give input at these meetings.

There being no further questions or presentations, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Reported by
Judy Weidner