

The Echo Lake News

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Echo Lake Community

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Financial Update

If you've ever attended the spring community meeting, you've voted on the annual Echo Lake budget. And each spring, all residents receive an annual dues invoice in the mail. Beyond these, however, community finances are not a topic that most residents give a lot of thought to.

For our community, dues are the primary source of revenue used to maintain, improve and manage our community resources, including our lake and park. Dues payments account for roughly 95% of revenue, with the other 5% coming from rentals of the community center.

For those of you who pay your dues regularly and on time, thank you. You are supporting your community, and you are helping to maintain our lake and park. Without regular attention, these two centerpieces of our community that we all enjoy would deteriorate rapidly.

As it is, the park is in the best shape it has been in years, and over the past two years, the building has been painted, the beachfront significantly improved, and we've added to the natural beauty with tree maintenance and shrub plantings.

The lake has recovered well from the drought of 2012 that precipitated two major fish kills, causing significant disruption to the ecosystem. The lake has been restocked, aerators have been improved, and we continue to proactively

maintain a healthy balance between treatments and nature's sometimes capricious hand.

Finally, we use some funds to hold an annual community bar-b-que, as well as a handful of other small events. These make up only a small portion of our overall spend, less than 15%, and event spending has been cut back significantly, both due to some unexpectedly high expenses, but also due to declining revenues.

At the upcoming April 16th community meeting, in addition to approving the Echo Lake budget, we will be addressing the topic of dues in some detail. Specifically, how we will begin aggressively pursuing back dues, as well as how we will be enforcing dues payments as we go forward.

The entire community benefits from dues payments, and the entire community shares in the benefit of a healthy lake, a well maintained park, and community beauty that enhances our property values. But all this comes at a cost, albeit an extremely reasonable cost compared to what many communities charge. The community must be maintained, or it will adversely impact us all.

For this reason, in addition to annual dues invoices this spring, we will begin sending out overdue notices for past unpaid balances. Past unpaid dues are still unpaid dues, and unpaid dues stack up over the years if left

Community Meeting
Wednesday, April 16
7:00pm

unpaid.

Before these go out, there are a few things we would like to communicate:

First, some in the community are under the misapprehension that dues are either optional or unenforceable. Regardless of the source of this misinformation, it is just that, misinformation. This has been confirmed through multiple legal sources, and dues are not optional.

Second, attempts to collect dues are not personal vendettas or mean-spirited moves by the board or its members. Dues are the community's sole means of taking care of our lake and park, and maintaining them for current and future property owners in our community. We all benefit from these resources, and it would be unjust to allow some in the community to shoulder that burden while others do not. So for the good of the community, all properties must pay their dues.

Finally, if you receive a notice for a balance that you can't afford to pay right now, contact us and we will do our best to set up a payment plan that will work for you. If you have extenuating circumstances regarding your

dues payment, again, contact us and we will do our best to accommodate. It is not our desire to put an undue burden on any in the community, but continued non-payment or a disregarding of dues owed cannot be ignored.

For those who do not respond, we will begin pursuing action to collect what is rightfully owed to the community.

We invite further discussion of this topic at the community meeting on Wednesday, April 16 at the community center at 7:00pm. You can also contact any member of the board for more information, or to volunteer or discuss an issue.

Coyotes on Echo Lake

Wildlife has been always been a part of the Echo Lake community. Some years we've had deer wandering the streets, and we frequently see raccoons, possums, squirrels and chipmunks. Coyotes are also a part of this ecosystem and have been seen in the neighborhood in recent years, which has caused some residents to express concern.

Lake County publishes the

following guidelines and reminders for living alongside these wild neighbors:

- Coyotes are rarely dangerous to people.
- Coyotes are naturally afraid of people. The most effective way to prevent a bad encounter with a coyote is to reinforce this natural fear through your behavior.
- Never approach a coyote, let your dog approach it, or feed it. If you are approached by a coyote, or it comes into your yard, scare it away by shouting at it and waving your arms over your head. Using an air horn or whistle will also help scare coyotes away from approaching you. These actions will reinforce the coyote's natural fear of people and teach it that your yard is not available territory.

If a coyote is in the act of attacking a person or pet, you should call 911 or the Lake County Sheriff's Department at 847-549-5200 (program it into your cell phone).

If you want a coyote removed from your property, check local listings for a private nuisance wildlife professional.



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