

The Hill Creek Chronicle

November 2016

Volume 6, Issue 4

Reminders:

Your Homeowners Association Board

Your current Board Members are: Jeff Shaver (President), Larry Boitano (Vice President), Morten Haastrup (Treasurer), and Tom Giese (Secretary). You can contact the Board any time. See below.

Want to Contact the HOA Board?

Visit our website at www.hillcreekhoa.com or contact the association manager Lori Nicolaus at 253-202-2673

Get ACC Approval for Projects

Please remember to get approval from the Architecture Control Committee (ACC) for your projects (this includes exterior painting and roof replacement). Download or copy the application form and submit it to the ACC as directed. If you are unsure whether or not you need approval, e-mail the ACC at acc@hillcreekhoa.com or call the association manager.

Review the Regulations and Covenants

If you are unfamiliar with our rules and regulations and have questions, you can download them from our website or contact the association manager to request a paper copy.

Exploring Annexation to Milton

The topic of annexation to the City of Milton has been a recurring topic for the HOA over the past decade. This year, the HOA Board has made it a point to thoroughly explore this possibility, as there are significant perceived benefits (in particular regarding policing). However, this is not for the board to decide. The board is merely helping to facilitate the process. To that end, below is a list of questions and information that have been discussed to date regarding what would or would not change and the process of approving annexation. If you have any feedback or additional questions, the board would like to hear from you by December 16th. You can use one of our social media platforms (Facebook or Nextdoor) that will allow others to view the discussion, or e-mail the board directly.

- When did the HOA Board start discussions with the City of Milton? The board conducted an initial exploratory meeting with the police chief/city administrator in early September and then arranged and advertised an informational meeting for our neighborhood in late October that also included the mayor, city engineer, and the City's annexation consultant.
- What are the next steps? The board first wants to share the information that was gathered via this newsletter and solicit comments/questions.

Assuming a generally favorable response, the board will then help coordinate the gathering of signatures that accounts for at least 10% of the assessed property value of the proposed annexation area. This will allow the City Council to consider approval to circulate a petition to annex our neighborhood. If approved, the board will help coordinate gathering petition signatures representing at least 60% of the properties in the proposed annexation area, after which a public hearing will be held before the City Council makes a final vote to accept or deny the petition.

- What is the proposed annexation area? The proposed area includes the Hill Creek HOA, as well as the dozen or so homes in the Hill Creek neighborhood that are not part of the HOA and the single house at the corner of 380th Street and 28th Ave. S near the Hill Creek sign.
- Would we stay in King County? Yes.
- Would our address change? Yes, but only the city name would change. Street names and numbers would be unchanged. The zip code should also remain the same, but it is possible the U.S. Postal Service could change it.
- Would our police service change? Yes. The City of Milton would be responsible for policing our neighborhood, rather than the King County Sheriff. The closer proximity, faster response time and increased patrols that would be realized with the City of Milton are considered a significant benefit of annexation.
- Would our fire service change? Yes. It appears that our fire service would switch from the South King County Fire District to the East Pierce County Fire District. Both have a fire station in relatively close proximity. The closest East Pierce County firehouse is near the windmill in Edgewood, about 1 mile further than the nearest South King County firehouse. However, the City noted that a new East Pierce County firehouse is tentatively planned to be located along Meridian/SR 161 around where it intersects with Military Road.

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- Would our utilities change? No. Electrical, gas, cable, garbage/recycling and water/sewer services would all remain with the current providers. Although the City could request from Lakehaven to take over the water and sewer utilities in the neighborhood, the City said they have no inclination to do so.
- What other services would the City provide? The City would take over responsibility for the roads/sidewalks and storm water infrastructure from King County. This would mean the City would be responsible for maintenance of these items. That includes annual maintenance of the storm water retention ponds.
- Would the City maintain our neighborhood park? It is up to the HOA as a whole to decide if we would want to maintain responsibility for maintenance and keep our park private, or request as part of the petition that the City accept responsibility for the park, which would then make it a public park.
- Would our taxes change? They should be slightly less. For example, in 2016 the tax rate for properties associated with the Fife School District were about \$13.13 per \$1,000 of assessed value through King County and \$12.26 per \$1,000 through the City of Milton. Both of those rates would be increased slightly for properties associated with the Federal Way School District, but the differential would be essentially the same.
- Would any social services or other services we currently receive through King County be disrupted? No. We would remain a part of King County and those services would continue to be available.
- Would annexation impact our property values? It is difficult to forecast impact to property values. However, a quick search of Zillow comparing property value estimates for houses in our neighborhood with those in the Sterling Heights neighborhood in Milton (same vintage and similar construction) indicates no significant differences in property values for similar homes.

- Would there be any change to our political representatives? No, except we would be involved in voting for City of Milton officials.
- Would there be any changes to zoning in our neighborhood? No.
- Would we need to follow City ordinances? Yes. Being part of the City we'd be subject to City ordinances. This includes licensing for home businesses, fireworks restrictions, etc.

Refuse Containers

This is a reminder that garbage cans, recycle bins, and yard waste containers are required to be stored out of sight, except on collection days. Please move the containers out of sight after they have been emptied. If your containers are easily visible, please find a screened or more discrete location for storage.

Holiday Decorations

As we approach the holiday season, please make it a point to remove decorations in a timely manner. That moldy jack-o-lantern should find its way into the yard waste bin well before it has a chance to scare Santa Claus. Similarly, holiday lights and other outdoor decorations should be taken down before January 31st, which is a firm deadline, in accordance with our HOA rules and regulations.

Nextdoor.com

Go to www.nextdoor.com to join our virtual neighborhood. Over 50 of our neighbors have already joined! Not only is the Board using it to post alerts about happenings in our neighborhood, but it is also a great venue for sharing about our community, recommendations for services, etc. with your neighbors.

