

# CRUMBACHER ESTATES OWNERS ASSOCIATION

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER - JULY, 2011

## WHERE ARE THE MINUTES?

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**The Board has** decided to change the way minutes are mailed out to the association members. Beginning this month, minutes will be delayed until after the following board meeting, when they have been officially approved and signed. This prevents the possibility of circulating minutes that are in draft form, and then having them changed by a motion made during the approval process the following month.

While this will delay the information by one month, the newsletter will continue to provide up-to-date information about what is currently happening in the association. Any pertinent discussion items from the most recent board meeting will be included, so that information is still received in a timely manner.

So, for this month, there are no minutes being mailed out. The minutes for the June 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting will be sent out after approval at the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## WATER RATES

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**The Board devoted** a great deal of discussion during the last meeting to the subject of water rates. A number of members submitted their opinions through the questionnaire that was circulated, and the effects of each were considered.

While there were a variety of rate options favored for domestic water, most members favored some type of surcharge for those lots holding a water right, as they represent a substantial demand on the water delivery infrastructure. Responses seemed mixed regarding the manner in which funds should be raised for water meters.

Consultation was made with the Washington State Department of Health regarding the setting of rates, and what factors should be considered. Heather Cannon, Department of Health Regional Planner, advised that the association should establish three separate funds as line items in the budget: an operating reserve fund, a capital improvement fund, and an emergency fund.

The operating reserve fund would be for the purpose of maintaining normal business activities over a one- to two-month period, should the association encounter a cash flow problem. With our current reserves, we

could easily fund this reserve, and not affect current rates.

The second fund for capital improvements takes into account the age and expected lifespan of the various water system components, and determines what replacement costs are likely to be encountered over the next six years. This has never been done in our system before; our infrastructure spending has typically been reactionary in nature. By setting money aside now, we would be better prepared to replace costly components when they reach the end of their useful life, rather than having to place special assessments on members, or trying to secure costly loans.

The emergency fund would be maintained at a set amount, in order to make rapid repairs to the most vulnerable parts of the water system, should there ever be a catastrophic failure due to an act of nature or sabotage. This could be a fire in the pump house, a well going dry, or an act of vandalism to the pumps or reservoir. Like the operating reserve fund, once a pre-determined amount was reached, this fund would cease to be included on the budget, and rates could be adjusted accordingly.

Ms. Cannon suggested that before any rates were set, the Board should determine what the appropriate monthly payments into these funds should be. It was decided that, rather than make an immediate change to the current rates, it would be more prudent to postpone this decision until we have a better understanding of what these funds would require. The Board hopes to have enough information to move ahead with new rates in the July meeting.

## NEW WATER ASSISTANTS

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**We now have** two association members acting as our on-site water operators, for the purposes of conducting normal system maintenance, small repairs, and system restarts when the power goes down. Rod Moore and Gene Doner will each receive \$50.00/month for taking on these responsibilities, and we are very grateful for their willingness to give up their time for the benefit of our association.

These activities were not included in our Certified Operator's contract, and were being charged extra when we had to rely on his services. Having our own members respond to these issues should save us money, and make for faster resumption of service

when problems arise. Carl Behrent will continue to provide management oversight and maintain our compliance with state and county regulations, according the terms of his existing contract.

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## OUTDOOR WATERING

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**Meter readings have** been collected several times a month since April, and the results may be surprising. Prior to starting the 50-horse pump, lots were using less than 200 gallons per day. As of June 20<sup>th</sup>, when the last meter readings were available, our use had jumped to 2,225 gallons per lot per day.

These numbers correlate very well with our historical power usage. Electricity use has typically jumped tenfold when the large pump has been started, with a corresponding increase in our power bill. Please water wisely, and consider implementing conservation measures where appropriate, to help cut down on the costs of operating our system.

There are many ways to cut back on outdoor watering. One of the best ways to improve efficiency is to install in-ground sprinklers with electronic timers. While this may represent a large initial cost, it eliminates the constant moving of hoses around the yard, allows customized settings for the various watering zones, and allows watering to be done at night when evaporation is reduced. And, there's less chance of going off and leaving the hose running longer than necessary.

Other less costly suggestions include:

- Install battery-powered timers on hose bibs.
- Use soil moisture indicators to determine when the proper amount of water has been supplied.
- Water during cooler hours of the day, rather than the afternoon when much of the water evaporates before reaching the soil.
- Consider more drought-tolerant landscaping, especially in exposed areas.
- Experiment with more efficient sprinkler heads; have an irrigation specialist recommend the best type of sprinkler for your applications.

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## MAILBOX KIOSKS

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**Most of our** members have their mailboxes housed in kiosks, located at the entry roads to the association. These structures are falling into disrepair and need to be either repaired or reconstructed. Paint is peeling, shingles are missing, boards are broken, and support

posts are leaning. Additionally, the protective concrete bollards on either side of the kiosks at the Pine Drive entrance are crumbling and leaning, and should also be replaced.

Like the association sign that was recently repaired, these mailbox kiosks represent the standards in our association to neighbors, visitors, and the general public. The board believes that these stands should be maintained in good condition as a part of our infrastructure, using funds from association dues.

The board will be considering preliminary options for improving or replacing the kiosks. If there are interested parties within the association membership that have the skills necessary to complete this project, we would like to make use of those talents. In the absence of any able volunteers, the board will consider obtaining bids from contractors to complete the project.

If you have suggestions or ideas that would further this project, or if you would be interested in volunteering to help, please contact a board member. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

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## NEXT BOARD MEETING

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**The next regularly** scheduled Board meeting will be held on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at the home of President Doug Hale, 4 Norway Pines Drive. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. All members are welcome to attend.

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## CONTACT YOUR BOARD

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**As always, we** value your input and support. Please use any of the following options to contact your board.

Doug Hale, President	826-1653
Darren Schmidt, Vice President	826-2622
Ken Radford, Secretary/Treasurer	826-1977
Rennie McCormick, Director	826-8034
Rick Weber, Director	826-1209

Email: [ceoaboard@gmail.com](mailto:ceoaboard@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.crumbacher.net>