



Bass Lake assessment challenge holds up

BY MIKE ROBERTS
Village Life staff writer

John Thomson's challenge of Bass Lake Village Zone B's Landscape and Lighting Assessment District is legit.

That was the conclusion the El Dorado Hills Community Service District board reached on Jan. 29, when they decided to refund \$365,539 to Woodridge neighborhood residents.

The assessment has been used to maintain little-used Oak Knoll Park since fiscal year 2003. Residents who have lived in Woodridge the entire time will get about \$1,234 per household.

In an open letter to the community services district, Thomson, president of the Bass Lake Action Committee, claimed maintenance of the 2.6-acre park was specifically excluded in the LLAD formation documents, and demanded the funds collected for its maintenance be refunded.

The community services district was in the midst of planning a makeover of the park, which serves two separate developments within Bass Lake Village, each with its own LLAD.

The older Zone A was instituted in 1995 with an annual \$99 assessment on the 278 homes in the Hills of El Dorado development. It funds maintenance of landscaping on Magnolia Hills Drive and 15 streetlights. At that time, park maintenance was not included in LLADs.

After the adjacent 294 home Woodridge development was annexed into Bass Lake Village in 1999, Zone B was formed with an initial \$274.84 annual fee which included maintenance the Woodridge entryway landscaping, some street lights and a village park.

An initial park location on Summer Drive in Woodridge was rejected by the CSD. Oak Knoll Park, located on Alyssum Circle in the Hills of El Dorado, was built instead with restrooms, parking, a small pool, a clubhouse and a playground area with swings and picnic tables.



Thomson contends in his letter that the initial \$274.84 annual assessment for Zone B was set arbitrarily. His concern piqued when the assessment increased to \$299 in 2008, despite an apparent \$200,000 surplus in the operating fund.

After researching the formation documents for both Bass Lake Village assessment districts, Thomson concluded the CSD has over assessed Woodridge residents.

Like Thomson, CSD staff could find no official documentation authorizing Bass Lake B funds for Oak Knoll Park.

The board decided to refund the portion of the assessment that went toward park maintenance, essentially complying with Thomson's request.

The refund also applies to former residents of the 294 home Woodridge development who paid into the assessment, according CSD General Manager Wayne Lowery. It will be prorated for residents with less than six years in Woodridge.

Lowery committed to making a good faith effort to find former Woodridge homeowners owed a prorated refund. Each recipient will be notified in writing of the claim procedure.

How did this happen? "Either the board approved it and we didn't document it properly at the time, or someone assumed something they shouldn't have," said Lowery.

Thomson, reached by phone at his home, said he was pleased "the board acted quickly and responsibly to remedy the situation."

A community meeting will be held to explain the situation and answer questions at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at the Rescue Union School District Board Room, 2390 Bass Lake Road.

The refund jeopardizes CSD plans for Oak Knoll Park improvements. Options for the park will be discussed at the community meeting.

mroberts@villagelife.com