

Bella Ranch Homeowners Association

Meeting Agenda

March 29, 2022 at 6:30p.m.

I. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

- Thank you for being here.
- Please remember to sign in.
- Introduce Board members.
- Our agenda tonight is to discuss security concerns. We understand there are other neighborhood related issues that may need to be addressed but tonight we want to focus on neighborhood security. We can discuss other items on a future agenda.
- Our goal is to present the facts then have an open discussion on the best way to move forward.
- The HOA is bound by the guidelines set forth in the Deed Restrictions and Bylaws. Our current Deed Restrictions clearly state that the HOA is not responsible for security. This doesn't mean that we can't provide security measures, but when the developer originally calculated the HOA dues it is based on many factors to provide the basic operation and maintenance of the neighborhood but didn't include security. So, any new security measures that are a significant cost will most likely require an increase in dues.
- There will be no official action taken tonight. If we find that the majority of the neighborhood would like to implement additional security measures that require an increase in dues, according to our Bylaws we have to have an official vote that requires a simple majority (51%) approval to increase dues.
- Please allow me to get through the following agenda items and hold your questions/comments until the end.

II. Security Background and Current Security Measures

Current Security Measures

- Gates – We all understand the limitations of gates. They allow tailgating and they malfunction. Most effective during the early AM hours when traffic is light.
- Cameras – 2 at Vino and 4 at Dio. Cameras have limitations at night due to glare and when the vehicles are moving.
- Once a quarter we call dispatch for Benbrook Fire Department and Tarrant County Sheriff to confirm they have the emergency gate code and remind them

of the Yelp system. I test codes once a quarter and test Yelp system and Knox lock twice a year.

- We request “close watch” from Tarrant County Sheriff at the same time. It’s important that you report all incidents to Sherriff no matter how minor so we stay on the radar. First instinct should be to call the Sherriff.

Security History/Background

- We’ve had many new residents within the past few years not aware of the security background/history.
- Bella Flora was developed first and contracted a Private Security Company.
- As Bella Ranch began to develop, we piggy-backed with their Security Company at 70% Bella Flora to 30% Bella Ranch split.
- As Bella Ranch grew, Bella Flora requested a 50/50 split which, at the time, would require a \$250 increase in annual dues.
- A vote was held in May 2017, 104 votes received...99 voted against increase and 5 voted for an increase.
- Since our current annual dues were put in place to fund the basic operation and maintenance of the neighborhood, the Board has respected the neighborhood majority to not increase dues and has discussed zero to low-cost security options on many occasions in the past including all of the options we are going to discuss tonight.
- At 2020 Annual Meeting, the Board solicited volunteers to form a Neighborhood Safety Committee to look into all things safety related with a focus on developing a Neighborhood Watch Program. We received responses from two people willing to volunteer. So, the program died on the vine.
- Now, due to the recent events of criminal activity, there is a renewed interest in security so we have updated the following security options and associated costs.
- Our goal is to present only the facts then have an open discussion on the best way to proceed.

III. Additional Security Options

A. Neighborhood Watch Program

- Requires many volunteers and strong leadership
- Training and support from Tarrant County Sherriff at no charge.
- HOA sponsored for incidental costs
- Similar service as Private Security at no cost

B. License Plate Readers

- Flock Safety Systems provides license plate readers (LPR)
- Reads license plates and can immediately recognize resident vs. non-resident if the license plate is registered with the HOA. Does not tell us the name of who the vehicle is registered to, that still has to be run through Tarrant County Sheriff.
- Automatically notifies Tarrant County Sheriff if vehicle is stolen or is registered to someone with a Felony Warrant.
- For privacy concerns, we must adopt a Privacy Policy to outline who can have access and what it can be used for.
- Cost – Installation is \$350/camera = \$700 for 2 cameras at Dio and Vino/Strada
Service Contract is \$2,400/year/camera = \$4,800/year
- Can possibly fit into the current operating budget. If not, would require an increase of approximately \$17/year.

C. Private Security Company Patrol

- Pricing based on 6 hours minimum from Midnight to 6:00am. 42 hours/week = 2,184 hours per year.
- Cost - \$34.15/hour = \$74,583.60/year
- If you include a small increase in management cost, requires an approximate increase of in dues of \$260/year.
- If we start this year, would require a one-time assessment to cover remainder of the year
- Level 2 unarmed employee requires 13 hours of training for certification, patrols in personal vehicle with lights and decals.
- Fort Worth PD, Benbrook PD, and Tarrant County Sheriff all warned of private companies because background checks not required, minimum wage, less training, can't run license plates, and can't detain.
- Personal vehicles with lights and decals.
- Basically, a set of eyes that would call the Sheriff Department for suspicious activity.

D. Off-Duty Officer Patrol (Tarrant County Sheriff Department)

- Pricing based on 6 hours (midnight – 6:00am) to compare with Private Security
- 2,184 hours per year
- Cost - \$50/hour + \$100/week(admin) = \$114,400/year
- Including management costs, requires an approximate increase in dues of \$395/year

- Will allow a 4-hour minimum (say 1:00am to 5:00am) = 1,456 hours per year: Cost - \$78,000/year; with management costs, approximately \$270/year dues increase
- If we start this year, would require a one-time assessment to cover remainder of the year
- Off-duty officers are uniformed and armed but in personal vehicles. Have full resources including radio capabilities to run license plates or call for back-up and can detain if they observe criminal activity.

E. Manned Guard Shack(s)

- Bella Dio Gate is most set up for a guard shack. 120ft ROW with 20ft lanes and 20ft wide median. Could fit a 20ft. x 20ft. structure in the median.
- Structure must comply with our architectural standards (80% masonry). Would need electric, HVAC, water well, and septic.
- Spoke with 3 homebuilders regarding cost and 1 actually built the guard shack for Southwest Christian School.
- The following costs are for Bella Dio only and Bella Vino would be closed for emergency use only.
- Cost – Guard Shack including HVAC, water well, and septic = \$175,000
 - Gate Improvements = \$50,000
 - 15% contingency includes design, demolition, unknowns = \$33,750
 - TOTAL COST = \$258,750
 - One-time assessment of approximately \$870/homeowner
- Annual Cost for Guard - \$22/hour plus approx. \$10,000/year for electricity, maintenance, and insurance
 - 24/7 = \$202,192/year; approx. \$685 increase in dues
 - 12 hrs. = \$106,096/year; approx. \$365 increase in dues
 - 6 hrs. = \$58,048/year; approx. \$205 increase in dues
- It's much more difficult to build a guard shack at Bella Vino. We only have a 60ft. ROW with a 24ft. wide street.
- Would require a minimum of 20ft of ROW from each of the adjacent property owners and a significant re-configuration of the street and gate.
- Assuming property owners are willing to sell us ROW, anticipate an additional \$200,000 compared to Bella Dio. Equates to a one-time assessment of \$1,540.
- Yearly costs would be the same.
- So totals for 2 guard shacks would be:
 - One-time assessment of \$2,410
 - Increase in dues of \$1,370 (24 hrs.), \$730 (12 hrs.), or \$410 (6 hrs.)

IV. Questions/Comments from Homeowners

V. Adjourn

Call to order 6:31pm.

Heath - agenda to discuss the security concerns. Focus on security and not get sidetracked on other issues. Increase in dues in the event we want to put more security in place. 51% approval needed by homeowners. 20% YoY is what the board has the ability to invoke, but that is not what is being discussed this evening. Hold questions until our last item and we'll open it up and try to answer all the questions and this is from the many emails we have received. Hopefully we cover and answer all the questions and concerns.

II. Security Background and Current Security Measures:

Many new residents and we want to ensure the history and background around the topic of security. The gates were not designed by security professionals, but by real estate developers. Cameras - catches entries and exits. Does everyone understand the Vino Gate and Dio Gate? Strata is also a gate. Cameras are not preventative, but are there to help us solve the criminal activity. We have been able to pick up the license plates in certain instances. They have some limitations. Heath will call the dispatch once a quarter to ensure they have our emergency gate codes because the sheriff has responded that they couldn't get in - so we want to make sure they can get in. Yelp system. Knox lock and only the fire department has the key to it. Heath will request a "close watch". Heath encourages you all to call the sheriff department to build a file of reports - this pushes us up the priority order. 1st instinct contact Sheriff's department and 2nd instinct put in on facebook.

Newer resident's - history of background section!

The board has respected the neighborhood in terms of raising the dues. Back in 2019 there were a few incidents, so at the 2020 annual meeting - solicited volunteers to form a neighborhood safety committee. Only 2 responses that were willing to help - so the program died on the vine. Our goal is

to present the facts - spent a lot of time on the phones with other folks that we can leverage in order to vet the appropriate types of solutions in order to bring them forward.

III. Additional Security Options:

Magnetic lights and decals in order to support a neighborhood watch program. Similar to private security at no cost - we can't take matters into our own hands just because we have a neighborhood watch in place.

License Plate Readers - supplement to our cameras (Flock Safety Systems) - system automatically notifies the sherriff's department. Privacy concerns so we'd need to adopt a privacy policy to who can see the data and what the data is used for. Flock Systems could fit into our current budget and might not require an increase, but if not it would be a minimal increase of \$17 per year per home.

Private security is also an option but it would require an annual increase of \$260 per. If we were to make a choice of this it would require a one-time assessment. We do NOT currently have this in the budget. FWPD, BPD, and Tarrant County Sherriff's all warned against private security - can't run license plates and can't detain. A Story - a security guard was an actual accomplice to help his buddies come in and rob the neighbors.

Off-duty Officer to patrol - Tarrant County Sherriff's Department - only group we can lean on. Any option will require a one-time assessment. Personal vehicle, but full resources available to them.

Run license plates, call for backup, and they can detain but they must see the criminal activity - can't pull over based on suspicion solely.

Manned Guard Shack - Dio is setup to facilitate the guard gate.

Option 1 total cost - \$258,750

There were some insinuations that the HOA Board doesn't care about this issue via social media or

comments in general via email. Many people that would support a dues increase and many that wouldn't.

This concluded the prepared remarks by Heath and this where will insert the prepared remarks with costs, etc.....

Questions from the Homeowner Group:

- Questions/Comment - Thank you to the board! All the numbers and minutes will be put onto the website.

Guard shack related thought - if doing that on the Dio gate and making Vino gate emergency.

Making that exit only versus an emergency exit. Heath response - reverse tailgating is still an issue.

Have a barricade as an option.

- Question & Comment - came from Thornberry and there were a lot of issues. Traffic stacking up at the guard shack because now you have to have the guard calling homeowners and that will be it's own problem. License plate reader is a no brainer and should be a go right away. Spike strips would be a good option on the Dio gate and would solve the tailgating problem and many seconded that vote from the homeowner. Put the spike strips right under the gate. Speed bumps - not totally against it. Off duty officer for 4 hours per night would be a good start. Police officer in the neighborhood worth 10 security guards.
- Question/Comment - Sherriff at the annual meeting - change the code on the gates, license plate reader - do we know how effective and has it deterred any thefts from using it - NBC 5 report that said it is has eliminated it. Two types - helps to deter and to solve - Heath sees this as a tool to solve and then the notification has helped to deter. WE WILL EMAIL OUT THE NBC 5 REPORT and a MARKETING FROM FLOCK SAFETY. Solid privacy policy Heath would support the LPR and

something we can fit into our current budget. Only a benefit, not a negative. Wayne - like the cameras the builders set out in Crossing as a deterrent . Brian - privacy issues - if you had a neighborhood watch you could have someone who is keeping an eye on the Flock System.

- Question/Comment - Neighborhood Watch - perhaps more interest now and low cost, free training, get some volunteers.
- Question/Comment - Sherriff patrol is it an unmarked car? Heath - It is a personal vehicle but they would be fully uniformed. Homeowner opinion - Not sure that there is any deterrence with the personal vehicle.
- Question/Comment - Bella Crossing not gated and no security is the assumption. Is there another connection with the Steve Hawkins? Heath - We will not have any connections to the thorough fair .
- Question/Comment - spikes - can you explain how that works? Heath - we have had NO discussion on spikes. Indirectly, they may be security related because the intent is to keep people from going against the wrong way, but the board has had no discussions on spike strips.
- Question/Comment - LPR - only front or does it read back? Heath - it will read the back of the license plate.
- Question/Comment - issue with tailgating - have we thought about arms, along with existing gates and with the LPR - could that solve the issue at least 80% of the way? Something to look into.

Sidebar - HOA not paying for the repairs as they are covered by the insurance on the gate damage that we've seen.

- Question/Comment - Flock System - good deterrent, but they didn't register license plates because they were living in Ridglea and the homeowners didn't want their license plates known.
- Question/Comment - combination of things that could be done, LPR is no brainer, Guard Gate would be great, but it never a 100% secure guaranty. Bar code reader is another idea that works

pretty well, not as expensive - barcode on the back of your car and it would read the code and it has worked pretty well in the past. Costs on the guard shack is just the beginning!! No community is safe. Homeowner commented that the HOA Board doesn't deserve the type of abuse we take.

- Question/Comment - another option - 24 hour virtual guard gate - LPR is what it comes. \$16 per household per month. VINO gate would be residents only and the DIO gate would be guests only - QR code would go to them and they would have to scan DL. Initial cost is \$52K. About \$172 additional per household, it is 24 hours though. This could be another option to consider. Not manned, but manned 24 hours somewhere else. They have the arm to slow the tailgating option.

Brian - an issue we have with the VINO gate - not equipped for people to turn around when they can't get in. We would have to solve for people getting in and needing to turn around.

- Question/Comment - where do they go use the bathroom for security guard, something to think about.

- Question/Comment - What do we think as the board members and what are our ideas?

As a homeowner - we all rendered our opinion. We all aligned to not raise dues.

Heath - Would you support a dues increase? Yes/No - by a show of hands in the room a majority would support a small increase!

If so, for what? Yes/No - we did not take a straw poll on this.

LPR - Yes, across the board - but there is a privacy issue - you must be comfortable with this as a privacy issue. Privacy policy would be implemented

- Question/Comment from audience - put the options out to a vote. Heath - tough to get a single majority in this format.

LPR + Sherriff would be a vote

- Joy - after the break ins she indicated that certain people were willing to step up and pitch in to get

us better security out of their own pockets without dues increases. Joy indicated that they had security, cameras, arm the house - they did all that they were supposed to do. The criminal still got in no matter all the things that were done. A vote for who would be willing to pitch in for the upfront cost. No desire to raise HOA dues, but there is no price for safety.

- Steve - comment/question - neighborhood watch - he was interested and he felt like we had no clout and he is not sure if that has changed. If this has changed, then he would look into that.
- Private security - challenge us - can carry a gun. Option between low level and high level security. Level 2 is where we went. Another option - could we have them floating different nights, M/W/F one week and then T/Th/S.

Brian - recommendation by this group that we can take to the broader group of homeowners!

Heath - from what he is hearing from everyone - propose a vote for increase in dues:

- LPR, Spikes, Change the Code as a single option?
- Question/Comment - arm was always broken - they would walk up and push it.

Take a vote on cost increase in the different options!

Heath - obligated to put forward what the neighborhood wants:

- Private Security Patrol - \$260 per year
- Off Duty Officer - (4 hours) \$390 per year, or \$270 per year
- Question/Comment - Why can't the board do an MOU with the Sherriff's department - they are not receptive to this idea.
- James - Off duty officer - a lot of buddies make \$50 per hour, this seems pretty light given what he has heard friends that are officers would make - Heath - we could technically be writing 7 checks per week.

Wayne - if you were at the annual meeting when the Sherriff was here, the crimes were primarily dealing with high school or college kids and it was during breaks.

Question/Comment - defense in depth and measured response - agree with what many people have said. Putting a vote out to the entire community:

- Option 1 - LPR
- Option 2 - LPR with Roving Patrol
- Option 3 - LPR and XX and YY
- All would show the cost
- We would then pick the top one and two and back our way into the majority vote.

Heath - as we were planning for this we came across the same challenge of how we would come to a majority decision. We will not be able to come up with a unanimous if we take a multi option survey to the homeowners.

- Comment/Question - before we take a vote and see if there is a renewed interest in the Neighborhood Watch

Chris - nothing the board has to do to get the neighborhood watch.

- Comment/Question - we should put out a survey to gauge interest of neighborhood watch.
- Comment/Question - board to reach out and see who would volunteer some funds and the board could use this to try. Test the market with a one time security assessment with LPR, security officer,
- Comment/Question - Something we can do that we all as a community can do.....
- Comment/Question - send out a survey to take a temperature of the neighborhood. Like the idea of the virtual reader.

Heath - no official action was to be taken this evening.

Brian - the thing we were looking for was a possible recommendation to take to the broader homeowners.

- Question/Comment - you will have to cut down on the choices

Brian - off duty officer, virtual guard gate

- Comment/Question - LPR will happen without any increase?
- Comment/Question - what if we vote on an amount and then decide to unwind the increase in future years.

Heath - guard shack is a non-starter

- Comment/Question - you don't start with the guard shack - bringing a bazooka to a deer hunt

Steve - expectations from what the board would want from the neighborhood watch would help decide, and it is free.

Heath - form a committee, which would have a single board member and a few other neighbors to form the committee.

Beth - perspective that we haven't thought about - exit on 377 and making Dio the primary gate - even with the virtual gate option and the amount of traffic that would begin to pile up as a result of the virtual or guard shack.

James - survey monkey - check all that apply that you would be for to narrow down in very short order.

Heath - Dues increase Yes/No, Off duty officer or virtual guard shack

- Question/Comment - neighborhood watch - any liability that we are taking that on. Someone trips as they are chasing someone and then we have a lawsuit on our hands.

Heath - we would need to take this up with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department. We don't want any contact with the criminals.

- Question/Comment - can't become a vigilante type group for the neighborhood watch. If enough people are involved you could do this in pairs or one night a week.

Heath - this would be part of the training program. If it was to be HOA sponsored it would have to well vetted, trained, etc....

Question/Comment - Police officer and vino gate entrance for resident's only.

Brian - personally saying this on behalf of the board - Heath did all the work. Recognize Heath for the work he does and the money he has saved, but also that we do recognize their

Meeting adjourned 8:34pm