

CRANERIDGE TOWNHALL

NOVEMBER 14, 2023



Goal of the Townhall

To envision a positive future for Craneridge

Townhall Summary

1

Mitch Alegre facilitated a World Cafe style discussion that fostered open dialogue among members in a relaxed setting, encouraging the exploration of ideas and the generation of collective insights.

What's Next?

2

We're all about blending ideas from social, environmental, and community perspectives. Residents can organize events based on shared interests, making our community diverse and collaborative. Our vibe is to empower everyone, taking care of shared spaces, getting everyone involved, having a good time, and fixing up our community together.

Townhall Discussions

3 - 5

- Question 1: How can we build a strong sense of community?
- Question 2: As a community, how can we support shared property maintenance?
- Question 3: As individuals and as a community, how can we be proactive stewards of our woodlands?

MOVING IDEAS FORWARD – WHAT CAN WE DO AS A COMMUNITY?


Overall Takeaways

The Craneridge Townhall meeting sparked some great ideas to make our community better in three main ways:

- 1) Making us feel more connected;
- 2) Helping us take care of our shared spaces; and
- 3) Looking after our woods.




Building a Strong Sense of Community




The overarching theme was a desire for active community engagement, varied social opportunities, and collaborative efforts to enhance the overall quality of life in Craneridge. Members emphasized the importance of communication and the need for diverse social activities. The suggestions ranged from strengthening the social committee to implementing community enhancement projects and creating a neighbor support system.

Support for Shared Property Maintenance



The feedback highlighted the significance of fostering a sense of community engagement, communication, and shared responsibility. Key takeaways include encouraging more residents to participate in community cleanup, improving communication about maintenance needs, and recognizing and appreciating volunteers. Incentives, organized events, and small, manageable tasks were identified as strategies to boost participation.

Proactive Stewardship of Woodlands



The community-driven approach to woodland stewardship centers around communication, environmental initiatives, and a commitment to education and individual actions. Recommendations include clear communication channels, creating task lists, encouraging individual property monitoring, and advocating for a shift in mindset towards trees as a necessity. Environmental actions such as creek and stream plans, goat usage to control invasive species, and educational initiatives were also highlighted.

What's Next?

Integration of Ideas:

We want to bring together different thoughts and plans in a big-picture way. We'd like to adopt a holistic approach that blends ideas from social, environmental, and community aspects. For instance, rather than limiting the social committee to organizing parties, we're shifting towards a more engaging approach. Residents will have the opportunity to organize their own events based on shared interests, fostering a collaborative and diverse community experience.

Community Empowerment:

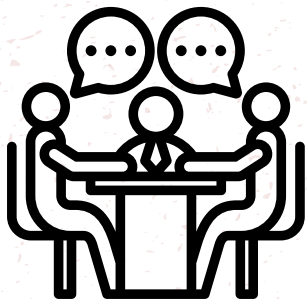
We want everyone in the community to feel in charge of where they live. That means residents taking care of their own spaces, keeping an eye on things, and coming together for fun events. We believe in the idea that 'WE are the THEY,' meaning we all play a part in looking out for our community and making it a great place for everyone.

.... Actions Aligned with our Mission



Engage an Ad-Hoc “Tech Squad” Group

We want to form an Ad-Hoc Tech Squad to explore and improve our use of online platforms like our Website and use of apps. Tech tools can enhance communication, task management, and information sharing within the community. We aim to provide valuable information and resources regarding woodlands and habitat, offer educational content through videos, and create a better system for understanding community needs and volunteer opportunities through streamlined sign-ups. This Focus Group will actively contribute to ideas to create a more tech-savvy and informed community.



Form a Member-led Board Advisory Group

Since we're all volunteers, getting more folks involved will make things run smoother and better for everyone. An Advisory Group can help bridge the communication gap by understanding what's going on, what people are talking about, and addressing any confusion. In short, they would be our community's communication champions.



Neighbor Engagement Committee

Change the Name of the Social Committee to the Neighbor Engagement Committee. Instead of just throwing parties, we want to focus on getting everyone more involved in the community. This means not only having fun events but also reaching out to everyone and working together on things that make our community better. The goal is to make everyone feel like they belong, improve our community, and tackle any specific issues we have. The committee will work by communicating well and coordinating efforts.

Question 1: How can we build a strong sense of community?

The Townhall participants generated diverse and creative suggestions aimed at fostering a stronger sense of community within Craneridge. Members emphasized the importance of building connections across age groups and time schedules, proposing a wide array of social activities such as game nights, potlucks, parades, and specialized clubs. The recommendations spanned from family-oriented events like Kid Art Day and summer recreation days to adult-focused activities like bourbon and scotch clubs. Community improvement projects, such as guided woodland trails and a community garden, were also highlighted. Communication and inclusivity emerged as key themes, with suggestions ranging from the creation of a community Facebook group to implementing a volunteer coordination system and addressing loose dog concerns. **The overarching takeaway is a strong desire for active community engagement, varied social opportunities, and collaborative efforts to enhance the overall quality of life in the neighborhood.**

Summary of Members Ideas from Question 1 below:

Strengthen the Social Committee	Enhance the effectiveness and activities of the social committee to facilitate community engagement.
Host more Diverse Social Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host game nights, daytime get-togethers, lunch bunches, potlucks, block parties, and adult weekly happy hours.• Organize parades (e.g., 4th of July), and events like Taste of Craneridge.• Establish weekly bonfires during the summer and increase music events.
Utilize more of the Community shared Facilities	Emphasize activities around key community facilities (Playground, Meadow, Shelter, Pool) to encourage social interactions
Create more Age-Group Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities for connecting across age groups and different time schedules in Craneridge.• Break the ice and overcome intimidation through small, approachable events.
Encourage the Specialized Clubs and Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement various interest-based clubs such as knitting/crochet, book club, bourbon and scotch club, gourmet club, and technology education seminars.• Explore outdoor activities like guided woodland trails, hatchet-throwing competitions, and kickball.
Hold Youth and Family Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize kid-focused events like Kid Art Day, smile face treasure hunts, and summer recreation days.• Plan winter activities such as sledding, skiing, snowshoeing, and a KB Ski Day.
Community Enhancement Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage community members to work together on physical enhancements through designated workdays.• Establish a "Brain Trust" database for sharing talents and strengths.
Encourage and Enhance Communication and Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a Craneridge Facebook group for residents to connect, share information, and ask questions.• Improve communication through neighbor obligation, street text groups, and a local directory for services.• Utilize platforms like Nextdoor for volunteer recognition and community needs awareness.
Neighbor Support System	Establish a system to support neighbors in need, including rides, meals, babysitting, tutoring, and grocery assistance.
Hold a Community Market Weekend	Organize a Craneridge Market Weekend where residents can set up tables with goods, and proceeds contribute to community initiatives.

Question 2: As a community, how can we support shared property maintenance?

The Townhall participants generated a variety of suggestions to encourage community involvement and support. Key feedback included the need for increased participation in community cleanups, with suggestions for mandatory attendance and better tracking of involvement. Participants emphasized the importance of communication, including advertising goals, before-and-after photos for those who couldn't attend, and appreciation/recognition for volunteers. To enhance engagement, the community proposed better informing residents about the mechanics of maintenance and the dependency on volunteerism. Strategies included leveraging social media, specifically a private Facebook group, and timely, digestible email updates from the board. The group also recommended creating area-focused volunteer parties, themed maintenance events, and micro-groups to tackle specific tasks. Incentives, such as waiving fees for volunteers or organizing catered events, were suggested to motivate participation. The group highlighted the significance of starting with small projects and involving children in less complex tasks to build excitement and motivation gradually. Additionally, ideas were presented to improve specific areas like the pool clubhouse, implement pool ID cards, and enhance overall community aesthetics through initiatives like planting wildflowers and installing window boxes. **The key takeaways regarding community support for shared property maintenance in Craneridge is the emphasis on fostering a sense of community engagement, communication, and shared responsibility. The overarching message is that a collaborative and informed approach, combined with incentives and small, manageable tasks, can contribute to building a more actively engaged and cohesive community dedicated to maintaining shared spaces and amenities.**

Summary of Members Ideas from Question 2 below:

Improve Community Engagement and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage more residents to actively participate in community cleanup and maintenance activities, possibly considering mandatory attendance.• Promote a sense of shared responsibility by reinforcing the idea that "WE are the THEY," urging residents to pick up their own trash.
Improve the Communication and Information about the Maintenance Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertise maintenance goals to inform and motivate residents.• Improve tracking and communication by utilizing before-and-after photos to showcase the impact of community efforts.• Enhance overall communication strategies, including the use of private Facebook groups, board email updates, and media publications.
Include Incentives and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and appreciate the contributions of volunteers through appreciation events, themed parties, and incentives.• Explore incentives such as waiving fees for shelters, pools, or social events for those who volunteer.
Community Collaboration and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the formation of committees and micro-groups for specific projects, making it easier to communicate and keeping members engaged.• Divide tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks and identify specific areas of interest for volunteers.• Implement a maintenance task list that allows people with specific skills to sign up for relevant projects.
Incorporate more Flexibility and Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer flexibility in volunteer commitments by allowing residents to sign up for ½ to 2-hour increments at their convenience.• Create a "Honey Do" list of easy, short-term tasks that residents can tackle informally.• Identify small projects that can be done on residents' own time.
Facilitate Community Improvement Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve the community in generating ideas for improving different areas, such as a basketball court or the pool clubhouse.• Implement initiatives like planting wildflowers, installing window boxes with herbs, and organizing regular lawn debris pick-ups.
Engage Specific Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve children and families in less complex tasks to build community bonds and motivate participation.• Explore ways to get residents to enjoy community facilities by engaging in activities, fostering motivation to maintain these areas.
Consider Contracting out more Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider contracting certain tasks that need to be done in a timely or complicated fashion.

Question 3: As individuals and as a community, how can we be proactive stewards of our woodlands?

The Townhall participants emphasized the importance of communication, including knowing who to contact about tree removal and sharing recommendations from the DEC forester through accessible channels like a website or app. Recognizing the Woodlands Committee for effective outreach was highlighted, alongside the creation of to-do and task lists on webpages. Street volunteers were suggested to take charge of their areas, conducting individual property monitoring and understanding trees, plants, and diseases. Environmental actions encompassed plans for creeks, streams, and culverts, with considerations for goat use and the designation of an arboretum area. A call for leaving no trace, support from external agencies like PRISM and DEC, and education on tree health, invasive species, and disease recognition were emphasized. The community expressed a desire for diverse educational opportunities and property-specific actions, such as stopping common property mowing and promoting tree planting. **The overarching takeaways include a community-driven approach to woodland stewardship, encompassing communication, environmental initiatives, and a commitment to education and individual actions for the well-being of the woodlands.**

Summary of Members Ideas from Question 3 below:

More Communication and Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear channels for information on tree removal, including contact details for relevant authorities.• Share recommendations from the DEC forester and create an accessible information website or app.• Acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the Woodlands Committee in reaching out and sharing information.
Organization and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a to-do list and task assignments on a webpage to guide proactive stewardship efforts.• Consider re-staking property lines to maintain clear boundaries.• Encourage street volunteers to take charge of their own roads and properties
Individual Property Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage individual property owners to conduct a census of lots and contiguous common ground.• Form teams led by street for monitoring and understanding trees, plants, invasive species, and diseases on the properties.
Environmental Consciousness and Mindset Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for a shift in mindset, viewing trees as a necessity rather than a commodity.• Emphasize the importance of leaving no trace and being conscious of environmental impacts.
Woodlands Management and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a proactive plan for creeks, streams, and culverts, including monitoring and clearing debris.• Explore the use of goats for vegetation control.• Consider the creation of a little woodlands trail network, <u>similar to the one started in the Meadow.</u>
Community Engagement and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educate the community on tree health, species, and potential diseases.• Raise awareness about invasive species and control methods, provide training to recognize invasive pests and diseases, offer guidance on spotting diseased trees/issues.• Encourage tree planting through nursery expertise.• Facilitate education through various methods beyond in-person sessions.• Promote educational opportunities for the community.

FEELING INSPIRED BY ANY OF THESE IDEAS?

READY TO JUMP IN OR SHARE YOUR OWN
THOUGHTS? REACH OUT TO US—WE'RE ALL EARS
AND EXCITED TO GET EVERYONE INVOLVED!



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QUESTIONS?

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