


CRANERIDGE SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



Craneridge Annual Membership Meeting & Picnic

 **Sunday, June 22, 2025**

 **2:00 PM**



Pool Shelter

Join us for the **Annual Meeting of the Craneridge Homeowners Association**.

This important gathering is where we:

- **Elect new Directors** to the HOA Board
- **Vote on the proposed Special Assessment**
- **Review the annual budget and financials**
- **Share highlights from the past year** and plans for what's ahead

While this meeting is for updates and voting only (no board decisions will be made here), it's an opportunity to stay informed and engaged with your community.



Stay after the meeting for food and fun!

The Neighborhood Engagement Committee is hosting a **picnic immediately following the meeting**, featuring food prepared by our very own **Gourmet Barbecuing Master, Cory Bowen!**

We encourage everyone to stick around, enjoy a great meal, and catch up with neighbors!



Q & A about the Special Assessment and the plans for the Lighting Project

 **Thursday, May 22, 2025**

 **7:00 PM**



Pool Shelter

Special Assessment Vote Notification

 **Date of Vote: June 22, 2025**

Dear Craneridge Members,

This notice serves as the required 30-day advance notification of a membership vote on a proposed Special Assessment to support the community's street lighting project. The vote will take place during our Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 22, 2025, with online voting available as well. All members will have the opportunity to vote online or in person.

What You'll Be Voting On:

Members will vote **Yes, No, or Abstain** on whether to approve a **Special Assessment of \$180 per lot**, to be billed in 2025. This amount is in addition to the regular Annual Assessment of \$550, which remains due on **July 1, 2025**.

Why a Special Assessment?

The Board of Directors voted to move forward with the installation of **pedestal-style LED lighting** at key intersections—a choice that was informed by:


- A **2024 resident survey**, in which pedestal lighting was favored by a 2-to-1 margin over going dark or using cobra-style lights
- Feedback from **multiple open community Q&A sessions**
- Collaboration with both the **Craneridge Lighting Committee** and the **Town of Concord**

The estimated total project cost is **\$75,000–\$83,000**. While we've secured **loan approval for up to \$60,000** from Cattaraugus County Bank to finance the project over 10 years, this Special Assessment would allow us to pay off that loan in just **two years**, saving the community over **\$21,000 in interest**.

Benefits of the Special Assessment:

- Reduces long-term costs by avoiding 10 years of interest payments
- Protects the Reserve Fund for critical future projects (e.g., invasive species like the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, erosion prevention, and infrastructure repairs)
- Keeps ownership and control of lighting with Craneridge—not the Town

Transparency and Member Input: The Board has followed all procedures outlined in the Craneridge Bylaws:

- ✓ Decisions regarding the project were made only in public Board meetings
- ✓ A resident survey was conducted
- ✓ Two community Q&A sessions have already been held
-  A third Q&A session will be held on **May 22, 2025, at 7 PM at the pool shelter**

We hope all members take time to review the facts and participate in the upcoming vote. More info about the lighting project is here: <https://craneridge.org/street-lighting> Details on how to vote electronically are on page 5 of this newsletter.




If you have questions in the meantime, we encourage you to attend the Q&A session on May 22, 7 pm at the Pool Shelter.

Sincerely,

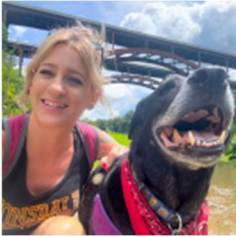


Craneridge Board of Directors

Craneridge Board of Directors Nominees

There are five (5) open seats on the Craneridge Homeowners Association Board of Directors. We have six (6) candidates. Three of the seats are three-year terms. And two are one-year terms. You may select up to 5 Nominees when you vote.

<p>Gwen Alegre (1 year term) 56 Tarn Trail</p> 	<p>My husband, Mitch and I have lived in Craneridge for 21 years, and I have actively served as a board director for nearly four years, when I stepped in to fill a mid-term vacancy. I have also served as the Chair of the Woodlands & Habitat Committee since late 2020, and with our committed hands-on committee and volunteers, we have implemented a wide variety of habitat improvement and conservation programs across Craneridge. Our work continues based on a multi-year strategic plan. I will continue to bring to our board what I have learned from many years' experience working with a variety of non-profit boards. I have also been certified as a "Board Leader" through the Community Association Institute (CAI) after successfully completing an eight-hour training course. In 2022, I became a New York Master Naturalist, and since then have achieved level 12 certification. We all know that Craneridge is an extraordinarily unique and beautiful community, and together, we will do everything we can to maintain that uniqueness. We also know that our residents and their needs have changed over the years. This combined with aging infrastructure will require new ways of thinking and acting to preserve our incredible legacy.</p>
<p>John Dana 83 Hardwood</p> 	<p>My wife and I moved to Craneridge in September of 2024. We previously lived in East Aurora for 26 years. I am retired from Fisher-Price after 33 years of service in IT. I also have volunteer experience ranging from Scouting programs to Aurora Players. I am seeking a position on the Board of Directors as a way to give back to the community and help maintain the cooperative neighborhood culture. I seek to find equitable solutions and make good economic decisions.</p>
<p>Chuck Dickhut 80 Hardwood</p> 	<p>My wife, Marilyn, and I moved to Craneridge in 1970. Both of our sons were born in Bertrand Chaffee and attended Springville schools. Since 1970 I have been President of the association several times. I have been active in the work of the Association's various committees. I would like to see the return of several traditional activities: Santa arrives in Craneridge; Winter adult party; Halloween party; and Dinner club. I want to abide by the By-laws and Covenants and make the minutes and financial reports of BOD meetings available to Association members in a more timely manner. Our Association needs more members to volunteer to work on the various projects. Lastly we need to remember the Association officers and committee chairs are VOLUNTEERS who are working for the improvement of the Association.</p>

Craneridge Board of Directors Nominees cont.

<p>Sarah Mazgaj 89 Hardwood Court</p> 	<p>I moved to Craneridge in November 2023, and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I lived in Craneridge as a child, because we had family that lived here (and they still do!). We would always visit for New Year's Eve and watch the skiers at Kissing Bridge come down the slopes holding torches at midnight - a memory I'll never forget. However, it has been many years since I've been back. I spent the last 20+ years in North Buffalo, until I decided that I needed a complete change of scenery. Then one of my best friends moved to Craneridge and reintroduced me to how wonderful it is here. Craneridge was the perfect distance for me to continue to commute to my job downtown in the New York State Supreme Court, while allowing me to escape to the woods at the end of the day. It is such a unique neighborhood and I'd love to be a part of keeping the exceptional environment thriving and hearing the neighborhood's thoughts and concerns.</p>
<p>Sara Moloney 103 Tarn Trail</p> 	<p>I grew up in Craneridge exploring the common land, and my father, John, was a former Board Director. I've maintained a connection to the community and returned as a resident in 2024. I have a background in student finance, retail management, and ski instruction at Kissing Bridge. I've supported Craneridge woodlands stewardship and property values with the LEWPA grant (Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance). It would be an honor to serve the community as a member on the board.</p>
<p>Jeff Randall (1 year term) 82 Hardwood</p> 	<p>This term completes 14 years during 3 stints on the Craneridge Board. I am also married to a former executive secretary as well. Craneridge is very important to us, and we remain committed to the success of our association. Currently the Treasurer, I have held many positions, including President. I have also been active on many committees during the years. We have witnessed many improvements in our community while not overtaxing our residents. I am running for another term to complete the new HOA-Assist onboarding and help in the creation of the next, very important, 3-year budget.</p>

Craneridge Launches New Electronic Voting System

We're excited to announce that Craneridge now has electronic voting as an option for our upcoming election and special assessment vote! This new system will make participating in our community decisions more convenient and accessible for all members.

Benefits of Electronic Voting

- **Vote from anywhere** - Cast your ballot from home, work, or while traveling
- **Vote based on YOUR schedule** - Electronic voting will open one week before our annual meeting
- **Increased security** - Your vote remains private and secure through encryption technology
- **Easier participation** - While paper ballots will still be accepted during our annual meeting, we encourage you to give e-voting a try. **Make your vote count!**
- **Instant results** - Vote tallying is automatic and immediately available **when voting closes** during our annual meeting
- **Higher turnout** - Electronic voting increases overall participation rates

How It Works

We've partnered with **Simply Voting**, a secure online voting platform. When voting opens, you'll receive an email with:

1. A secure link to the voting website
2. Your personalized login credentials
3. Simple instructions to complete your ballot

Before Voting Opens

To help you prepare, we've included a link to an interactive tutorial that demonstrates the voting process step-by-step -- scan the QR Code →

We recommend reviewing this tutorial **before** the election begins so you'll feel confident using the new system. **TIP:** When moving through the tutorial, click the **orange boxes**.



Get Ready to E-Vote!

We're excited about this improvement and believe it will make participating in our community decisions easier than ever before. Thank you for your continued involvement in our association!

Craneridge Launches HOA Assist!

Craneridge has contracted with **HOA Assist** to improve our community's operational efficiency. HOA Assist will provide professional financial management services, easing the workload on our volunteer leadership. With this transition, HOA Assist will replace both the Executive Secretary role and the financial software previously used by the Craneridge.

Log into your Homeowner Portal:

<https://home.hoa-assist.com/login>



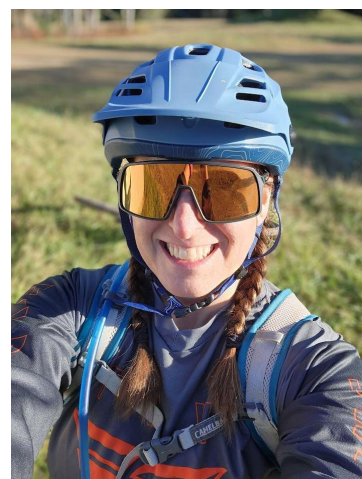
You can now pay your Annual Assessment ONLINE!

President's Message – June 2025

Dear Craneridge Neighbors,

As I prepare to wrap up my seventh and final year on the Craneridge Board of Directors—three of those as President—I want to take a moment to reflect, share a few hard-earned lessons, and celebrate what we've accomplished together.

I stepped into this role with a deep love for this community and a strong desire to make things better. And while we've done a lot—I also learned an important truth: you can't do it all, and you shouldn't try. Craneridge runs on volunteers, not superheroes and we can only succeed when we work together.



Shannon Wichlacz

What We Accomplished This Past Year (2024-2025)

Financial & Operational Modernization

- Fully transitioned to HOA Assist, giving the community access to professional financial management and streamlined communications.
- Closed outdated bank accounts and improved our internal tracking systems for budget forecasting, accounts receivable, and payroll.
- Reconciled delinquent accounts and positioned Craneridge for its best chance yet at recovering unpaid dues.

Community Lighting Project

- Facilitated a transparent, multi-phase decision process on intersection lighting, including multiple resident Q&As, a resident survey, and a detailed analysis of costs and funding options.
- Negotiated with the Town to pause cobra-style light installation, in favor of a Craneridge-led plan using aesthetically appropriate pedestal lights.
- Finalized a contract recommendation, selected intersection locations, and initiated financing plans with broad Board approval.

Pool & Facilities Improvements

- Upgraded security and maintenance at the pool shelter: installed motion lights, a new key lock box, and replaced the awning cords at the pool shelter.
- Ensured proper pool chemical management and staffing through coordination with Beauty Pools and the Pool Committee.
- Organized lifeguard payroll procedures under HOA Assist and aligned with labor compliance.

Woodlands & Habitat Stewardship

- Implemented a multi-year treatment strategy for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), utilizing both budgeted funds and Board-approved reserve dollars.
- Secured partnership with Erie County Soil & Water for an erosion control project behind Deer Run properties, with committed Craneridge funding. Project completion expected in 2025.
- Conducted educational outreach, constructed and planted two large "air prune boxes" with native tree seeds, and sustained neighbor engagement initiatives to promote native habitats.
- Maintained three native perennial gardens while continuing enhancement efforts. Provided ongoing care for over 400 trees and shrubs planted throughout Craneridge during the past three years.

Maintenance & Infrastructure

- Developed a succession plan for the Maintenance Committee, including onboarding a new Chair and establishing asset management protocols.
- Initiated planning and cost estimates for long-term needs, including fencing, siding, basketball court lighting, and playground improvements.

Architecture & Compliance

- Launched a centralized Architectural Review submission system via HOA Assist, ensuring faster turnaround and improved documentation.
- Approved dozens of home improvement projects while maintaining design integrity and HOA standards.

Neighborhood Engagement

- Reinvigorated community spirit through events like The Party Squad concert, Oktoberfest, and open houses at Mystic Hills—each planned by volunteers and supported by the Neighborhood Engagement Committee.
- Expanded outreach to encourage resident-led event planning, with guides and support tools now available.

A Message to All Members: The Realities of Volunteer Leadership

Throughout my presidency, I've come to recognize a major challenge facing this community: **how we treat the people who step up to lead it.**

We are a self-managed HOA. That means ***every decision, every email, every budget, every event—*** it's all being handled by people who live here and volunteer their time. But too often, instead of appreciation, what volunteers receive is blame, pressure, or criticism. That's not sustainable.

Let me be clear:

- Volunteers are not customer service representatives. Most work full-time jobs and juggle family obligations. Expecting instant responses, late-night texts, or constant availability is unfair.
- True emergencies (like flooding, trees down, or safety issues) should go to first responders or utility companies—not the HOA.
- Board meetings are where decisions happen. If you want to understand a vote or a policy, **come to a BOD meeting**. Don't rely on the meeting minutes, rumors, or social media comments taken out of context.

We've built systems to help:

- Use **Craneridge Connect** for questions or requests—we will forward your message to the appropriate contact: <https://craneridge.org/craneridge-connect>
- Or submit a "General Request" through HOA Assist to ensure your issue is routed properly.

No one person can do it all. And they shouldn't have to.

****What we need is a cultural shift****—from expecting more from our volunteers to members offering more to our community.

- **Instead of complaining → get involved.**
- **Instead of assuming the worst → ask questions respectfully.**
- **If you disagree with a decision → step up and be part of the process.**

Moving Forward

I will remain Chair of the Communications Committee, but after June, I will not serve in any additional Board capacity. **It's time for others to lead**—and for us, as neighbors, to rethink what it means to live in a volunteer-run community.

We're not perfect. But we've made real progress this year—and we've done it **transparently, accountably, and together.**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

**With gratitude,
Shannon Wichlacz
President, Craneridge Association**



A Heartfelt Thank You
**TO ALL OF OUR
AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!**
We couldn't do it without you!