

Comments on the Grotto Trail Vote by the Hiddenbrook Community Association

Over the last 2 or more years, there has been much discussion of a trail through some green space owned by Hiddenbrook Community Association (HCA). This trail would have connected to a trail proposed by Nelson Development. The completed trail would have given the entire Fisher's Creek neighborhood access to an area known as the Grotto (Nelson Development is building town homes there).

As most of you are probably aware by now, the HCA Board has been trying to determine if HCA homeowners support the building of this trail. There were petitions both in support of and in opposition to the trail. This created some confusion. So the HCA Board set out to gather as much information about the proposed trail as was possible. The board then put together a voter's guide and a ballot for the HCA Annual Meeting, held in November of 2004. Unfortunately, this ballot included an option for homeowners to grant the board a proxy, if they did not vote "for" or "against" the trail. (A proxy is a way for someone to grant his or her voting power to the board.) Since the board was split on the trail issue, we were also split on how to handle any proxy votes. As a side note, there were 50 votes received prior to the Annual Meeting and they were split evenly (25 for and 25 opposed to the trail).

So, in December, the HCA Board made a final attempt to determine the will of our homeowners regarding the Grotto Trail. We sent the voter's guide and a revised ballot to all homeowners with their 1st quarter dues notice. This provided all HCA homeowners the opportunity to submit a vote regarding the trail and send it back with their dues payment.

Unfortunately, only 57 trail votes were received out of 138 homes. There were 35 votes "against" the trail and 22 votes "for" the trail. Even if it were assumed that these were different people voting from the votes received prior to the Annual Meeting, there would still not be enough votes to allow the HCA Board to grant the easement required for the trail. Because of this, the HCA Board has determined that they will not continue to pursue the trail.

The HCA Board wishes to thank all those who have spent time on this issue over the past couple of years. It is hoped that parties from both sides of this divisive issue will be able to move forward and continue to work together to improve this great community of ours.