

Hello.

I am the Committee Chair for Legacy Park's Boy Scout Troop 2. There have been many conversations about how the Boy Scouts work and why the organization would request funding for various items from the HOA. I will address them here in hopes of clearing up the confusion and hopefully easing the minds of those who are concerned about it. I would always welcome a personal conversation about this, so please feel free to contact me directly. I'll start with our purpose and philosophy, and then address funding.

Legacy Park generously approved the chartering of the BSA Troop 2 in December of 2009 and a group of families founded the troop with the desire to give our youth an opportunity to grow in character, service, and responsibility as well as have the opportunity to learn, have fun and give back to the community. Additionally, because the Legacy Park Cub Scout Pack had no troop to feed into, those families were spreading out into other communities to find a troop and losing the continuity that comes with being in the program with their neighbors and long-time friends. As the troop has grown and developed, we are finding that many of those boys have transferred into the Legacy Park troop to continue their experience here with their friends and neighbors. Not only does this speak to the quality of the program that Legacy Park is building, but this is a huge "amenity" for the neighborhood to promote when marketing to future homebuyers.

The entire troop is grateful for the support that has been given over the last two years. We started with 12 boys and have now grown to 35, and expect another 8 or so to join us in the next month. Boy Scouts of America structures its organizations in a different way than some other organizations that have been discussed in that each troop has an official "chartering organization" that essentially owns the troop. There are agreements between the chartering organization and the BSA as part of that charter, including providing a place to meet and to include Scouting as part of the overall program offerings for youth and families. The Legacy Park Board and HOA have supported us as we worked to build a program that would give our families and our young boys (and soon-to-be men) a sense of purpose, service, and personal growth. I would submit that this should be the goal of any youth organization, and I can promise you that the LP Troop has been successful to date with this mission.

In the 2 years since the troop was founded and chartered by the HOA, the boys have earned well more than 200 merit badges (in subjects ranging from First Aid, Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Communication, Citizenship and many, many others), have advanced in their knowledge, independence, commitment to their neighbors, and in their desire to serve their community. They are developing leadership skills to take into the world; they have participated in projects for the improvement of our community at an impressive rate. These experiences are building valuable skills that will serve them, our community, and the larger world for many years to come. Any person I've ever met that was exposed to scouting has told me either that it was one of the most influential experiences of his life, or if he did not participate, that he wishes he had had the chance to experience it. These are

formative experiences that will only continue to reap benefits for our children and the community.

The Scouts are very oriented toward community service and giving back, and in the spirit of scouting, we don't always publicize what we are doing. But, I'm happy to share just some of the things that the boys do for Legacy Park and the outer community here.

In the two years since the troop was founded, we have done work for the neighborhood and surrounding community in ways too long to mention, but here's a start.

Within and for Legacy Park:

- Provided support at LP events including Eggstravaganza, July 4th celebration, the "Get out the Vote" campaign organized by the Education Committee, among many others
- Install and remove the American flags on LP Boulevard for all appropriate events, including Veteran's Day, Flag Day, Memorial and Labor Days, the 4th of July, etc. (and replace damaged ones)
- Regular lake and stream clean up
- Participated in the 9/11 Anniversary Memorial event and held a flag retirement ceremony for the many flags donated that deserved to be retired in the appropriate way
- Support the Cub Scout Pack with scout-led leadership (called Den Chief), with their events (Pinewood Derby, Blue & Gold Banquet, and the Webelos Arrow of Light and Crossover Ceremony), and with a place to go when they are ready to move up to Boy Scouts

In the outer community, our scouts have also presented a positive image of Legacy Park to those that encounter us by providing service to other organizations and where needed, including:

- Food donation drives to benefit the local homeless
- Placement of Historic Plaques throughout downtown Kennesaw
- Serving at the Foundation Fighting Blindness fundraiser annually
- Toy drives to benefit Toys for Tots
- Serving as instructors and mentors to younger children via Cub Scout Day Camp
- Providing support for the Kennesaw Elementary Talent Show
- Hosting, organizing and teaching younger children fun and important knowledge via the BSA "Belt Loop Bonanza"

Additionally, there will be many boys who will use the opportunity of their Eagle Scout Project to give back to Legacy Park. Our first one (Will O'Rourke) is moving forward in February with the building of 8 fitness stations situated throughout the running trails that will be a permanent addition to our amenities to give people the opportunity to add to their training regimen. These projects are paid for via fundraising by the individual scout who is working toward his Eagle rank. There will be many more boys coming up in the next several months and years who will

be choosing a project, and Legacy Park is obvious an place to demonstrate their leadership and planning skills by executing a project to benefit the entire neighborhood. There have been benches built for Eagle projects in the past around the Town Green before the LP troop was formed - imagine what will come from the boys who are part of the LP troop!

When our scouts participate in these types of activities, the benefit is multi-fold. First, they are obviously learning to give service to others. Additionally, there is an advantage to their family and the families in our community that they come into contact with. The benefit of what they are doing lasts far beyond the actual event - it teaches them on a larger scale to have a good attitude, to do their best, to reach out and be engaged. I see the benefits daily of having my child involved in the Legacy Park scouting program from 1st grade forward, and I can tell you that the positive impact is clear. Both the Cub and Boy Scout programs have given us the opportunity as a family to volunteer, work with both boys and girls (because the BSA is a family-oriented organization, not just for the boys for many events) on various projects, and to make friends with many people we would not have otherwise met.

There has been a lot of conversation about how our organization is funded and whether the HOA should fund these activities. The Board and the Finance Committee carefully reviewed all of the requests made by various organizations, and approved what they believed were good investments in our community. The amount given to the Boy Scouts breaks down to approximately \$1.26 per household out of our total dues. It is the responsibility of the Board and the HOA to review what is a reasonable investment to make in an organization like this in our community - in one that provides service and growth opportunities to Legacy Park youth. It is never wrong to ask the question of whether any expenditure is appropriate, but I believe that the questions should be put to the Board and the community with all the facts.

In 2010, our first year, the troop chartered after the HOA budget was already set. All start up costs were handled by the founding scouts and their families, which we were happy to contribute to. In 2011, the troop was growing and needed some help with funding to get supplies and training. The HOA board unanimously supported our request and allocated \$1340, of which we were actually given \$1219.

For 2012, the Board and Finance Committee allocated the Boy Scout troop \$2,220. This amount is based on the expected expenses below, and just like in 2011, it is possible that there will not be need for the full amount in each category to be actually paid out to the scouts. The HOA doesn't write a check for the full amount to the organizations at the beginning of the year for the amount allocated. The organizations submit receipts as the expenses are incurred.

Here are the line items for the 2012 allocation and the thought process behind them:

- Cooking/Camping Equipment (\$500) - although each scout provides his own gear (or shares with a friend), the troop has some common equipment that is used for specific

advancement requirements or camping needs (water filtration on a backpacking trip, cook kits/stoves for younger scouts to cook for larger groups, etc). When the troop started, the founding families donated much of our "getting started hope chest" and that equipment was not all of the quality that would last through several years and many, many uses. We will be replenishing some equipment this year, but only on an as-needed basis, so this entire amount may not even be fully needed.

- Scholarship Fund (\$500) - it is the position of the troop that we would never want to have a youth unable to participate due to a family financial limitation. This fund was requested to allow the troop to help out one or more families if needed to participate in camping trips, summer camp, or other events that have a fixed cost.
- Youth Leadership Training (\$600) - there are opportunities to attend formal, structured youth leadership training programs, but they cost several hundred dollars each; this fund was requested to help assist in the cost - not to fully fund it, but to help defray the cost for youth who could bring back what he learned and share it with the other youth as well as the outer community
- Adult Leadership Training (\$300) - an organization is only as good as the leaders who provide mentoring, time and wisdom. BSA has many requirements for leader training that ensure the safety of the youth. There is a cost to that, and given the amount of hours that these volunteers give to the youth (in the hundreds of hours per year for many), it is the troop's hope to not have to require them to pay for their own training. The cost ranges from \$25 to \$150 per event, and we must constantly train new leaders to provide for what is required and needed. Youth need trained leaders and the BSA requires it. This fee would not be unlike the need to pay "coaches" who teach another activity - leaders are coaches and they need to be properly trained. The amount requested doesn't cover the total expected for this year.
- Badges/Pins (\$300) - Advancement and recognition are a part of scouting. The scout's dues cover much of this throughout the year, but with help from the HOA/LP, it frees up other funds to allow the troop to address other financial needs.
- Charter Fee (\$20) - this is an annual fee that is typically paid by the Charter organization to re-charter the troop annually. The troop also paid approximately \$1250 (not from the HOA) for the individual scout and leader re-charter that is required

Scouts pay dues to the troop to cover the cost of their individual recharter, to offset the cost of leader training and leader re-charter fees, and to help pay for advancement and recognition costs. They also fundraise very regularly to pay for their camping trips, events and summer camp activities. Just like everything else in our world has gotten more expensive, so has running a program that offers a world of opportunity right here in our own backyard. The scouts and their

families pay for the bulk of the costs. The HOA Board and Finance Committee have generously supported us as we have worked to get this troop up, running and strong for the long haul. Our troop committee has had ongoing conversation for many months that we don't expect the HOA to continuously support us financially as we build and grow, but we are grateful for their support for the last 2 years and we are grateful for their support in the coming year.

I would welcome any questions about this to be sent to me directly or via a phone call. We believe that there is nothing gained by sharing anything but the facts.

Thank you.

Craig Dimmett
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Troop 2 Committee Chair