

Hampton City Council,

After a careful review of our services to Elizabeth Lake Estates (ELE) and the city of Hampton, the Elizabeth Lake Estates Civic Association (ELECA) requests that the Service District Tax imposed, be increased from six cents (\$0.06) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to ten cents (\$0.10) of assessed value of real property located in Elizabeth Lake Estates Service District.

In accordance with Sec. 37-140 (2), Elizabeth Lake Estates Service District, the City of Hampton’s aim was for ELE to be an open community where the public could have access and enjoy what ELE has to offer. In that respect, ELECA’s desire is to sustain and make improvements that will enhance the beautification, as well as provide necessary maintenance and improvements to this well desired community.

Our challenge is that Elizabeth Lakes Estates has been working with a dated budget due to a Service Tax that was implemented twenty-three years ago, in 2001. The Service District Tax increase is necessitated by rising costs of both goods and services beyond the increase in property values, and an ever-aging infrastructure.

The below chart shows the rising costs of expenses in comparison to the Service District Tax revenue. ELECA has operated on a deficit budget since 2020 due to the increased expenses resulting in a reduction in services and any rainy-day savings.

**ELECA Budgets showing Service District Tax Income and Actual Expenses**

Year	Tax Income	Budget	Actual Expenses
2007	49K	42K	34K
2013	51.6K	51K	36K
2014	50.6	51K	47K
2015	48K	48K	40K
2016	46.7K	48K	43K
2017	47K	47K	45K
2018	46K	46K	44K
2019	47.6K	47K	44K
2020	46.1K	46K	55K
2021	47.7K	48K	53K
2022	49K	50K	61K
2023	52K	52K	65K
2024	57.6K	57K	68K

Current budgeting allows for:

1. **Ground Maintenance:** (accounts for about \$40K of the annual budget.)
  - Grass cutting throughout the common areas, in accordance with City of Hampton ordinances.
  - Trimming of trees and bushes within islands in the roadways to allow safe vision and passage of vehicles.
2. **Elizabeth Lake Estates Pool.** One of 5 remaining community pools that supports over 140 members from both residents of Elizabeth Lake as well as non-residents. Time critical infrastructure repairs to the pool and associated facilities to include capital improvements and emergent maintenance. Approximately \$5K per year.
3. **Administrative costs.**

- General Liability Insurance (\$4k per year)
- Utilities (\$6K per year)
- Legal services (as needed, \$4K per year)
- Professional Fees and Accounting services for required Annual Audit (\$5K per year)
- Printing and reproduction of Bi-monthly newsletter and Resident Directory (\$2K per year)
- Expenses for ELECA Website, ELECA Social Media account, Support of Adult and Children Social events, various funds to support the work of ELECA Committees (\$2K per year)

**Deferred items and projected 2025 costs include:**

**1. Grounds Maintenance.**

- Expected increase in ground maintenance landscaping contract (\$10K)
- Grass fertilization, disease control, thatching/aerating, seeding (\$5K)
- Tree trimming. Tree maintenance, replacement, and expansion in common areas. (\$2K)
- Serpentine wall and entrance signs cleaning and repair (\$24K)
- Sidewalk repair, including handicap accessible ramp (\$7.5K)
- Light repairs (\$1K)
- Re-paint multi-purpose pool parking lot (\$5K)
- Fall leaf collection to protect water way runoff.
- Maintenance and improvements of Common area waterway retention wall and/or establishment of a Living Shoreline (\$20K).

**2. Elizabeth Lake Pool.**

- Replace flat roof on Pool House (\$12K)
- Repair Leak in Dive Pool return line (\$6K)
- Replace Dive Pool Pump and Roto Chem (\$7K)
- Replace Lifeguard chairs (\$4K)
- Update security system and WIFI (\$1K)
- Replace Public Address system (\$1K)
- Upgrade bathroom facilities (\$2K)
- Replace Pool House siding (\$2K)
- Epoxy paint baby pool (\$2K)

**Desired community upgrades include:**

**1. Improvements to Common Areas and Waterways.**

- Kid's playground (\$25K). Our community is continuing to become more diverse with younger families. Having a playground in our common area for families would enhance our services and increase the desirability for many families to enjoy.

- Dog park (\$2K) to allow for an open and safe place for our dogs to run and play. A fence for the Dog Play area can be installed by volunteers with a material cost of \$2K.
- Pet Waste Stations. Add four additional Pet Waste Stations. These stations will reduce the waste flowing into our waterways which will increase the overall health of our waterways. Equipment Cost for the (4) additional stations (\$1K). Annual Maintenance Cost: (6) stations bimonthly 26 weeks @ \$16 each (\$1K). Bag replacement: 26 weekly refills @ \$10 each (\$1K annually).
- Water Access Enhancement (Kayak Ramp/Pier (\$32K)). The kayak ramp/pier would increase our ability to serve our residents who do not have access to the waterways. This service would directly support ELECA residents as well as ELECA sponsored events such as environmental kayak tours, Bay cleanups, and general fishing and recreational access that support residents, family, friends, and non-residents. The costs include a pier, ramp, and gate.
- Serenity space (\$10K). ELECA has over 234,000 square feet (over 5 acres) of common areas that we would like to enhance, maintain/create walking paths, establish a nature trail, plant trees, and provide bench seating.

## 2. Elizabeth Lake Pool

- New Storage Shed to accommodate pool equipment and pool covers (\$12k)

The following paragraphs address the current and future benefits of the Elizabeth Lake Estates Service District:

### Benefits to community:

- **234,000 square feet of common area** (over 5 acres) **open to the public**. Most is manicured grass with walking paths, and scenic vistas of Elizabeth Lake.
- **Health and wellbeing**. With miles of quiet streets with safe sidewalks, walking paths, and dedicated swim lanes in the pool, residents from all over Hampton visit Elizabeth Lake Estates on a daily basis to walk, bike, and swim
- **Educational Programs and Environmental Stewardship.**
  - **Educational Programs:** Since installing the Hampton River-Elizabeth Lake Oyster Sanctuary Reef in 2016, Hampton City School students and teachers from grades K-12 have come annually to Elizabeth Lake Estates for an environment education program that includes:
    - Planting oysters grown by the students as part of their STEM education.
    - Learning about stormwater runoff
    - Touring the salt marsh shoreline to raise awareness of the importance of this critical and unique habitat.
    - Observing the Osprey Nest Platform for nesting birds and reading accompanying signage.
    - Gathering around the Stewardship Oak, an offspring of the Emancipation Oak to learn about the importance of trees, especially “Heritage Trees” like the Emancipation Oak and the Stewardship Oak. The area around the Stewardship Oak is also planted with pollinator flowers in the summer to provide a teaching opportunity as well as more habitat for pollinators.
    - Interacting and learning with “near peers” from Hampton University (HU) and Norfolk State University (NSU).
    - Hampton City Schools Oyster Restoration program, in partnership with ELECA and ELESC, won the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for 2023. Subsequently, the Hampton City School Board gave a Certificate of Achievement to ELESC for their

- partnership in this program that provides students with a Meaningful Watershed Experience (MWEE) as mandated by the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement for environmental literacy.
  - This area has also hosted environmental programs for Gloria Dei Lutheran School.
  - Along with these student-involved activities we also host Hampton City School staff, Elected City Leaders and City Staff and media.
- **Environmental Stewardship.** The Elizabeth Lake Environmental Stewardship Committee (ELESC) has used its common area to host an environmental festival for the neighborhood, as well as a several tree tours that were open to the public.
  - The ELESC also conducts shoreline and waterway clean-ups which help the health of the waterways and watershed.
  - Furthermore, Elizabeth Lake and the oyster reef have been targeted as an area of study by Hampton University and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to better understand the oysters and ecology of the Hampton River and beyond.
  - ELESC conducts a “Pansy Flower Sale” in the Fall. This sale encourages neighborhood beautification, as well as providing a wreath of pansies to surround the Stewardship Oak. Children are also given a free pansy if they come out to plant.
  - Paddling tours showcasing the neighborhood and its environmental gems let this Hampton neighborhood shine.
- **Safety.** In addition to maintaining safe streets and sidewalks, all Hampton Residents are welcomed to join the Elizabeth Lake Pool where they will enjoy well-maintained pools with trained lifeguards. Additionally, youth swim lessons are offered, which are not only essential in the pool environment, but throughout the miles of waterways within Hampton.
- **Community Events.** All Hampton residents are welcomed to attend multiple Movie Night events at the pool. All youth are welcomed to join the Elizabeth Lake Tideriders Swim Team. Additionally, hundreds of Hampton residents participate in various Holiday celebrations within Elizabeth Lake Estates each year.
- **Children and Adult Social Events.** A strong community gives children access to new experiences and opportunities. Getting to know your neighbors helps build positive community connections, a sense of belonging, and contribution. A connection to their community is a priority to create lifelong learners and global citizens developing a love for Hampton.
- ELECA provides annual activities where children of all ages can meet and interact with each other. Activities offered include **gardening/planting, yard games, an annual egg hunt, holiday parades for Saint Patrick’s Day, Fourth of July and Halloween, summer movie nights, trick-or-treating, singing/holiday caroling, fishing clinics, shoreline learning, physical play, and social gatherings.** Children’s health and well-being are improved, they develop skills, incur knowledge, and have opportunities to learn to get along with a variety of different people.

The residents of Elizabeth Lake Estates are happy to volunteer their time and expertise to support all the above events and activities, but there are material costs associated with them. The inflation of these costs, as well as the discontinuance of community grants, has outpaced the increase in property values in the past four years, causing a financial deficit from the historic six cents per hundred dollars tax rate.

With a collective assessed value of \$101,667,000 for the 317 homes and 1 vacant lot within the ELES D, the ELES D funds for FY 2023 are ~\$57,600. The ELECA operating budget from FY 2023 (2023/2024) is \$57,804 (not including utilities and insurance) and we expect expenses to be about \$68,000. The operating budget only covered the minimum legal requirements of maintenance, with \$49,150 of deferred maintenance not addressed. In addition, there is another \$16,000 of desired facilities upgrades that are

not addressed. An assessment increase to \$.10/\$100 would generate \$101,667 per year. This increase will cover the minimum budget, as well as a phased approach to address previously deferred maintenance, as well as provide the required periodic maintenance in the years to come.

**The increase in the Service District tax income would allow ELECA to continue to provide services that generally enhance the public use and enjoyment of the area and enhance the public safety, public convenience, and public well-being within the service district. The overall benefit would allow ELECA to continue to address common issues of promoting a positive image of Hampton as a desirable and outstanding place to live, protect the waterfront to maintain its viability, improve the security of the neighborhood and residents, and protect and increase property values.**

Thank you for your consideration and eventual approval of the proposed Service District Tax Increase.

Signed on the behalf of the ELECA Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DE Neubert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Don Neubert

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