

GATE CARD QUESTIONS

Q. "The gate was broken again. Why isn't something done to keep people from crashing through? I am tired of my dues going to pay for damages to the gate, and then anyone can come through while it is broken."

A. From time to time, someone runs into one of the gates, and it is temporarily disabled. The gate arm, that swings up-and-down, is intended to break away from the motor so that permanent damage is not done when the arm is hit. If staff are notified, they can usually make the repair in a short time. The cost is minimal: about \$5 TO \$10, counting parts and labor. But they are not always immediately aware when it breaks. If you see the gate out of commission, please call the Clearwood Emergency Line at (360) 894-6044 to report it. Please include the time it happened if you witnessed it.

Q. "Why, when the gate arm is hit, does the iron gate sometimes still close, and sometimes it stays open?"

A. There are various sensors in the system, and if one is out-of-whack then the iron gate will remain open as well. This is less common, and the iron gate will typically continue to operate even with the arm non-functioning.

Q. "It would be nice if we had some kind of gate automation, so that when the gate fails it sends a text or email indicating a problem."

A. There is an item in the Reserve Study for 2020 to improve the security system. The gate issues will most likely be addressed as part of that project. Thanks for your suggestion. It will be considered as part of that project.

Q. "Is anything done about people who break through the gate? Shouldn't they be arrested or something?"

A. When the offender can be identified, and if they are a resident, they are fined. We can (and often do) file a report with the sheriff. Currently, the fine for forced entry is \$50, plus the cost to repair the damages. The cost of damages is typically about \$5 to \$10 for parts and labor to replace the bolts.

Q. "What can be done about people who do not live here?"

A. There is less that can be done about non-residents. The sheriff will not act on a report of property damage for \$5 to \$10 in parts and labor, which is what it costs to fix the gate. A trespass complaint will not stick against someone that has a right to be here (resident or guest), and unless we can prove they do not belong here then there is no point wasting time filing that complaint. The Board passed a policy last year about reporting on those who damage the gate when they did not scan a card; that demonstrates intent to break-and-enter without being authorized to enter. Those situations are being reported to the Sheriff.

Q. "Don't we have cameras? Why can't we identify everyone who damages the gate?"

A. Our cameras are working, and we can find out who did what, if they are a resident. The biggest problem is not knowing when something happened. Unless someone reports the time that the gate was broken through, it takes searching through potentially hours of video to find that out.

Q. "What about the license plate reading system we were told we were getting?"

A. A system was purchased, but it was not compatible with the community's computer system, and some additional expense would have been required to make it function. Before that could be pursued, the Board was informed by their attorney that it would be illegal to obtain and use the information, so no additional costs were incurred, and the system was never activated.

Q. "What was the total cost for the gate system we now have?"

A. The decisions about the gate took place while the association was still self-managed. It is difficult to pin down exact numbers without significant research to track down purchase orders and payments, due to accounting issues at the time. This information is based on the minutes of Board meetings: At their April 13, 2018, meeting the Board authorized up to \$120,000 for the gate system. At their May 18, 2018, meeting, that was increased by \$10,000, to cover the cost of the license plate reading system, which they discovered was not included in the initial estimate. It is uncertain how much was expended May 2018 to May 2019, but based on some information in the 2018 Voter Pamphlet, it appears it might have been around \$40,000. After nearly a year of repairs and fine-tuning, at the May 8, 2019, meeting the Board was told the server was overloading due to the license plate reading system. A new camera system was recommended at a cost of \$7399.99 and an additional \$30,000 to get the license plate reader working. In the meantime, the Board's attorney notified them that a law was being passed that would make it illegal to collect the type of data the system was designed to collect. No further funds were expended on the license plate reader. We can be certain that at least \$130,000 was spent, and it appears that it might have been closer to \$170,000.

Q. "Can't we make gate crashers pay for the damages?"

A. As for pursuing damages — there are rarely damages sustained that make it worth the time to find out who did it and file a report. As noted above, the damage usually is in the range of \$5 to \$10. We could always put stronger bolts on the arm so that it does not break-away, and it would create quite the scene when it gets hit, and a lot of additional expense. However, the gate would be out of commission for a much longer time, until a technician could come repair it, potentially allowing others free access in the meantime. And there's risk in doing that... it is rare, but the arm sometimes prematurely closes on trailers and high-top vehicles; if it does

not break away the gate could damage those vehicles and trailers, and it would be our fault.

Q. "There must be something we can do!"

A. There does not appear to be a clear solution to keep out people who do not have a legitimate reason for entering the community. Short of hiring guards to be at the gates 24/7, if someone wants in, they are coming in. The gates deter some, but obviously not all. It is understandable that some people feel a sense of outrage at the injustice, but the bigger issue is security in our community. It may be difficult to keep people out, but the sheriff can be called if they are breaking any laws. That is something any member of the community can do – dial 911 if you see problematic behavior going on. Also, we are currently working on contracting with a private security firm to patrol Clearwood.

Q. "Can you put a sign on the gates telling people who to call if they see that it is broken?"

A. There is a sign on the bulletin boards inside both gates and on the bulletin board outside the office. Signs are not being placed on the gate card reader pedestals at this time, because they are almost immediately torn down. Management is considering ways to place a more permanent sign at the gates.