

Streetlight Talking Paper  
Heritage Plantation HOA  
Pawleys Island, SC  
January 8, 2021

We want to thank Santee Cooper for arranging the two prior HOA Street Lighting Meetings. These meetings have been productive. We would like to focus on some specific situations at the Heritage Plantation HOA and believe many HOAs would have similar concerns.

**Heritage Plantation has been subject to the Santee Cooper Outdoor Lighting agreement for over 25 years.** The original developer contracted with Santee Cooper for several years before the Heritage Owners Association members assumed control. The Homeowners Association members, who were not involved in the original decision, now bear the costs.

**We believe that the HOA has been overcharged.** It is our position that the initial outdoor lighting installation at Heritage Plantation was paid for after three years, based on the Period of Contract. However, rental fees have not decreased. A more equitable arrangement of reducing the fixed fees should be instituted for lighting rental once the initial equipment and installation costs are satisfied. At that point, we propose the rental cost would reflect a maintenance fee for the service of the lights.

Santee Cooper is now installing LED lights when the existing HPS lights need to be replaced. The Homeowners Association has no choice other than to move to LED lighting.

Though the conversion of HPS streetlights to LED lighting provides a reduction in energy consumption, it significantly increases our HOA's utility costs. **While the HOA's annual energy use charges would decrease by nearly two-thirds, the total utility charges increase due to the cost of the more expensive LED fixtures.**

If Heritage Plantation were to convert to all LED streetlights, there is a \$30 per light installation charge and a seven-year contractual commitment at the higher rental fee. **The cost of the LED fixture is never amortized. Santee Cooper continues to charge the higher rental rate in years eight and beyond. A community's conversion to an energy efficient and environmentally conscious option such as LED lights should not cost it more money in perpetuity.**

**We would propose that once Santee Cooper has recouped the cost for the LED lighting hardware and installation (seemingly after seven years based on the Outdoor Lighting Agreement) there should be an option for HOAs to transition into a maintenance-based agreement whereby the monthly rental rate is significantly reduced or even eliminated.** If eliminated, a fixed charge schedule for maintenance and repair should be established for ongoing needs past the initial term or "warranty period." The LED lights' 100,000-hour life span should be a factor when calculating the maintenance cost.

We also note that Santee Cooper limits the LED conversion to 50 lights per customer per year. Internet research shows other utility companies are installing up to 2,000 lights per subdivision. At Heritage Plantation there are currently a mixture of LED lights and HPS lights which causes a distorted view of the roadways. **This limitation set by Santee Cooper appears to be self-imposed and should, through adequate planning of resources, be modified.**

Finally, the current LED replacement lights produce significantly brighter light than the sodium lights, even casting light inside homes. At my home, two outdoor LED lights illuminate my living room and bathroom. **We appreciate Santee Cooper exploring the costs of lower wattage LED lighting and would like to know the results of the analysis once available.**

We want to maintain a positive win-win relationship with Santee Cooper. In summary,

- 1) Once the cost of installing the LED lights is recovered, rental charges should be reduced to cover only maintenance costs. With LED lights having a life span of 100,000 hours, the service costs should be significantly less.
- 2) With proper pre-planning LED lights should be installed uniformly throughout the community within a shorter time-period (than 50 lights per year).
- 3) The selected LED lights should be reduced in intensity. This would also support the Santee Cooper goal of reducing light pollution.

These recommendations apply to Heritage Plantation, and we believe that many of the other HOAs would benefit from this approach.

Regards,

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