



HICKORY RIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Special Committee on Elections
Meeting Minutes
November 22, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom meeting

Meeting Recording:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!Ag6UhTA4D56yhhyJBXBMZ8iVSK6q?e=euITDE>

Members Present: Marc Chaiken, Greg DesRoches, Bill Inglis, Jim Loesch, Iris Mars, Rhona Schwartz and Doug Steinel

Staff Present: Laura Parrish

Guests: About 15 guests

Call to Order: 7:05pm

1. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved unanimously.
2. **Approval of November 18, 2021, Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Village Voices:** Ms. Lancos' comments are attached, as requested. Mr. Dommu stated that while there is tremendous diversity of thought for the future of the Village Center, the community should acknowledge these perspectives and there should be conversations. Mr. Dommu also stated that he is concerned that changes to election policies and procedures may disenfranchise voters.
4. **New Business:** None.
5. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Present research on topics to review:** The committee members presented their research on the review topics. The committee members discussed the topics, but they did not make any specific decisions about any of the topics.
6. **Feedback Session:** Mr. Boyle stated that he does not understand the focus on The Rouse Project and developers' alleged interest in Village Elections. Mr. Boyle said that he is concerned about the way the committee is leaning on some issues. Ms. Lancos' comments are attached, as she requested.
7. **Action Items:**
 - a. The next meeting will be a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, November 30th at 7:00pm
8. **Adjournment:** 8:45pm

Joan Lancos, 11/22/2021

Comments to the Election Procedures Committee

Thanks to all of you for agreeing to review and update policies and procedures related to village elections. For 15 years part of my responsibilities as an employee of Hickory Ridge was to handle various aspects of the election process. I am happy to assist you with answering questions related to how previous elections were conducted from a village office standpoint.

Regarding item # 16 on your review list, it has been the policy for the 15 years I was on staff to do a post- election review and determine any issues that might require updates. Several issues have come up in previous years related to leases.

As you are aware, all candidates for Village Board must be Members of the Association. It is stated in the Articles of Incorporation that to be a Member of the Association, a person must either own property in the village or be a tenant who resides on the property under a written lease from an owner. If the person is a "lessee" then they must deliver an executed copy of the lease to the Board of Directors to be proven a Member of the Association. I hope that any changes to documents include the following clarifications:

1. Determine exactly how and when a lease must be provided to prove eligibility. Must it be provided with the Candidate Statement or can it be provided separately as long as it is received prior to the deadline?
2. Clarify the ability of spouses of owners to be a candidate without providing a lease. Currently, if only one spouse is on the deed, then the other spouse must provide a lease. That requirement seems onerous and odd. Typically, spouses can be assumed to be residing in the same home. Would a letter from a spouse be sufficient to prove residency?
3. Clarify whether adult children living in their parents' home are eligible for candidacy. Must they provide a lease?
4. Clarify that someone leasing space in a member's home must reside on the property as their primary residence and not just rent space for an office or some other purpose.

The goal of this committee should be to follow the lead of Jim Rouse and be as inclusive as possible in allowing residents of Hickory Ridge to participate and vote in village elections.

Finally, I ask that this committee be clear in its terminology when discussing the issues related to the election of members to guide the community process. Specifically, the By-Laws for Hickory Ridge refer to the "Board of Directors" which has always been colloquially known as the "Village Board." Additionally, the Members of the Hickory Ridge Community Association elect a representative to the "Columbia Council." The Columbia Council then elects itself to be the Columbia Association Board of Directors. It confuses the issue when speaking about the Village Board to refer to it as the "Village Council" since there is no such thing as the Village Council. Please be clear and precise as to which entity is referred to during discussions by this committee.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve.

Joan Lancos 11.22.21

Joan Lancos, 11/22/2021

Closing Remarks to Election Procedures Committee

There has been a lot of discussion and concern as to developer participation in village elections. Columbia is different from most HOAs. According to the Articles of Incorporation, Part Sixth, A, "Owners" include the owner of any unit within the property. A "unit" shall mean and include the fee simple title to any lot. Therefore, the Columbia Association, Howard Hughes Corporation and Kimco, among others, have the right to participate in village elections as property owners. CA has always voted its 85 votes with the majority cast. Over time, other entities have variously cast their own ballots (one for each lot owned), voted with the majority, or not voted at all. That is their right as property owners and Members of the Association. These "corporate" entities can support whomever they want.

I do not believe that Hickory Ridge Community Association has the ability under the Articles of Incorporation to prohibit any person or entity from supporting whatever candidate they want in any way they want.

Additionally, in a democratic society at any level of governance, whether or not someone runs on a slate, the winning candidates are elected to serve all their constituencies and not just the people who voted for them.

Joan Lancos

11.22.21