



HICKORY RIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Village Board Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2025, at 7:30 pm

MEETING RECORDING: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ygXJILip->

[YOjUkAid4MRXPnqvjFduGlmhU4rQTqwSO1PRNlcBJ3YjNoEhGX6GDC.TfkO50sWhCXoJAr8?startTime=1736814815000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ygXJILip-YOjUkAid4MRXPnqvjFduGlmhU4rQTqwSO1PRNlcBJ3YjNoEhGX6GDC.TfkO50sWhCXoJAr8?startTime=1736814815000)

Members Present: Kristine Amari, Michael Campbell, Samantha Link, Steve Hannan and Skye Anderson. Jared Ball was absent.

Staff Present: Laura Mayton and Emily Rieger

Guests: Approximately eighteen virtual guests

Call to Order: 7:30pm

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Link seconded. Ms. Amari made a motion to add Village Center Update to Old Business, B. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The amendment was approved unanimously. Ms. Amari made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Campbell seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously, as amended.
2. **Approval of December 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes:** Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the December 9, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Hannan seconded. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Board Update:** No comments were made.
4. **Resident Speak-Out:** Mr. Warner thanked the Village staff for the delicious holiday treats for volunteers. Mr. Covington thanked the Board for the work that they do. Ms. Heinz, an outparcel resident, expressed her satisfaction with the Village Center maintenance updates but stressed the importance of enhancing accessibility.
5. **CA Board of Directors Report—Skye Anderson:** Ms. Anderson reported on the CA Board's activities, including a preliminary vote on the mission and vision statement and a discussion on the five-year strategic plan. Ms. Anderson mentioned the importance of four environmental bills in Annapolis, including a bottle bill. Both Ms. Amari and Mr. Campbell expressed support for the environmental bills.
6. **New Business:**
 - a. **Election Committee Appointee:** Ms. Mayton requested that the Board appoint Wendy Steward to the Election Committee. Ms. Amari made a motion to appoint Ms. Steward. Ms. Link seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - b. **Electronic Voting for April 2025 Village Election/Annual Meeting as Required by the Election Procedures:** The members discussed electronic voting for the April 2025 elections, with concerns about security and accessibility. Ms. Mayton discussed the pros and cons of electronic voting. Ms. Lancos expressed her support for electronic voting, citing her experience managing it in the past. Ms. Grier emphasized the convenience of electronic voting and its benefits for senior citizens. Ms. Amari expressed concerns about the security of electronic voting. Ms. Amari made a motion to table the decision for a future Board meeting. Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Old Business:

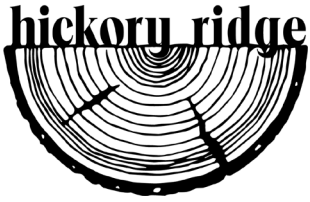
- a. **CA Management Agreements:** No updates at this time.
- b. **Village Center Updates:** Ms. Amari suggested engaging the community in the Village Center update and updating the current Village Center Community Plan (VCCP). Ms. Mayton suggested a review of the current plan.

8. Manager Report-Laura Mayton: Ms. Mayton announced the rescheduling of the book swap event and the full participation in the puzzle competition. Ms. Mayton mentioned an upcoming event scheduled for February 6th with a representative from Howard County's Emergency Management Office to discuss Hickory Ridge properties now in the floodplain.

9. Action Items:

- a. Ms. Mayton will send the Village Center Community Plan to the Board members for review.
- b. Ms. Mayton will send pros/cons assessment of electronic voting to Board members.
- c. Ms. Amari will send her presentation regarding concerns with electronic voting.

10. Adjournment: Ms. Amari made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.



Hickory Ridge Community Association

6175 Sunny Spring, Columbia, Maryland 21044 • 410 730-7327
hickoryridgevillage.org • thehawthorncenter.org

Application for Volunteers

Please email the completed application to manager@hickoryridgevillage.org.

Name: Wendy Steward _____

Address: 6332 Sunny Spring _____

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____

How long have you lived in Hickory Ridge? 11 years _____

Tell us about your interests or experience that you would like us to consider in evaluating your application to join the committee.

For your purposes, it just matters that I'm interested in keeping Hickory Ridge a pleasant and dynamic community in which to live.

Member of Hickory Ridge Village Board, 2015.

Retired DoD analyst; strong verbal skills, good math skills.

Do you have a Linked In bio or resume that you would like to share? This is not required.

Sorry, no.



HICKORY RIDGE ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Village Annual Meeting/Election procedures are officially covered by Article II of the By-Laws. Requirements for being a Member of the Association are detailed in Article Sixth of the Hickory Ridge Community Association, Inc. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION. Copies of both documents are available from the Village Office and on the website, hickoryridgevillage.org.

The procedures presented here draw from the By-Laws and past Annual Meeting/Election experiences and are intended to serve as guidelines for the Village Board, the staff and the Election Committee before, during and after the Village Elections.

The Election Committee is appointed by the Village Board and the Committee members appoint the Chair and Vice Chair. The primary responsibilities of the Committee are to ensure that election procedures are followed, and the process is fair, inclusive and unbiased.

- I. **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A CANDIDATE?** All candidates for the Village Board and the Columbia Association Board of Directors (the Columbia Council) must be Members of the Association. They must submit a candidate statement and documents, as outlined below, to the Village Office by the announced deadline. They must not have any unresolved covenant violations at the Architectural Resource Committee (ARC) or violations/delinquencies with any other Columbia Association entity.
- II. **WHO IS PERMITTED TO VOTE?** Individuals who are Members of the Association on the day of the election may vote provided they have no unresolved covenant violations at the ARC or violations/delinquencies with any other Columbia Association entity. See attached memos dated 4/22/1988 and 3/21/2012 for more information.
- III. **BEFORE THE ELECTION**
 - A. The Village Board appoints Election Committee members, and the members select a Chair and Vice Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall act as Chair.
 1. The members must be a Member of the Association.
 2. The members must not have any unresolved covenant violations at the ARC or violations / delinquencies with any other Columbia Association entity.
 - B. The Election Committee Chair or Vice Chair and Village Manager may enlist additional Members to serve as additional volunteers.
 - C. The Village staff and the Election Committee will work together to establish a timeline for determining eligibility for each candidate for the Village Board and each candidate for the Columbia Council and other Annual Meeting/Election activities.
 - D. The Village Manager shall advertise the following Annual Meeting/Election details at least six weeks before the Annual Meeting/Election Day:

1. Available Board and Council positions
 2. The deadline for candidates' submissions
 3. Candidate requirements:
 - a. Completed Application for Candidates.
 - b. A Personal Campaign Statement of 150 words or less, as counted in Microsoft Word. The Village staff will notify the candidate via email and give the candidate 24 hours to revise the Personal Campaign Statement to 150 words. If the candidate does not respond within 24 hours, the Personal Campaign Statement will be cut to 150 words.
 - c. Signed Candidate's Acknowledgement, Candidate Disclosure Statement and Campaign Pledge.
 - d. Personal Campaign Statements will be available for view at the Village Office and posted on the Village website and on the absentee ballot.
 - e. Annual Meeting/Election day date, place and times.
- E. The Village Manager shall provide the following to candidates:
1. Columbia Council candidates shall receive the following:
 - a. CA Articles of Incorporation
 - b. CA By-Laws
 - c. HRCA Candidate's Handbook
 - d. Calendar for Annual Meeting/Election activities
 2. All Village Board candidates shall receive the following:
 - a. HRCA Candidate Handbook
 - b. HRCA Articles of Incorporation
 - c. HRCA By-Laws
 - d. Calendar for Annual Meeting/Election activities
- F. Candidates may not run for both the Columbia Council seat and a Village Board seat in the same election.
- G. If the number of candidates for the Village Board is less than or equal to the number of available positions, the qualified nominees shall be deemed to have been elected by the members and the Board of Directors shall appoint such nominees to the available director positions for the term provided for in Article 8 of the Association's Articles of Incorporation.

- H. The Election Committee or Village Manager may recruit additional volunteers to serve as Election Day poll workers.
- I. Prior to the Annual Meeting/Election, the Village Manager will request the following address lists from the Columbia Association:
 - 1. Properties by Street Address
 - 2. List of Absentee Owners
 - 3. Alphabetical Order of Property Owners (for internal use only)
 - 4. List of apartment community addresses

IV. ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESS

- A. The Village Manager shall prepare absentee ballots and candidate statements for distribution to residents.
 - 1. The order of the candidates' names will be determined by random drawing conducted by the Election Committee.
 - 2. A notice regarding the possible need to call a second Annual Meeting/Election and the inclusion of already-cast ballots will appear on the ballot.
 - 3. Absentee ballots will have a signature line.
 - 4. The method of their distribution will be determined by the Village Board.
 - 5. Absentee ballots may be delivered to the Village Office in person to a Village Office staff member or by U.S. mail.
 - 6. All absentee ballots must arrive at the Village Office by the closing of the polls.
 - 7. Only the voting Member may deliver that Member's respective absentee ballot.
 - 8. As absentee ballots are returned to the Association Office, the Village Manager shall validate ballots, mark the official list of property owners with an "A", count the ballots and place the ballots in the locked ballot box.
- B. Members may cast a secret absentee ballot.
 - 1. The Member should insert the ballot in a separate envelope marked "Secret Ballot."
 - 2. Member's full name and address should be written on the front of the outside envelope.
 - 3. The Member must sign across the flap of the outside envelope.
 - 4. ONLY the voting Member may deliver the Member's respective secret absentee ballot in person.

V. ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTION DAY

- A. Annual Meeting/Election Day ballots:
 - 1. The order of the candidates' names on the official ballot shall be the same as that on the absentee ballot.
 - 2. For the purpose of determining if the quorum requirement has been met, all ballots shall be numbered sequentially.
 - 3. A notice regarding the possible need to call a second election and the inclusion of already-cast ballots will appear on the official ballot.
- B. At polling site, the Village Manager sets out an official list of current property owners and CA assessed addresses obtained from Columbia Association and a locked ballot box.
- C. Electioneering is not permitted within a posted area established by the Election Committee (See Election Day Sign Map).
- D. Poll workers shall check off each voter's name on the official list of current property owners. If the voter's name is not included in the list, the poll worker asks for identification that clearly shows the voter resides on CA assessed property in Hickory Ridge.
- E. Members vote by secret ballot at the Annual Meeting/Election. Each voter places his/her ballot in the ballot box. As stated in the Association's legal documents, each property owner and/or leaseholder is permitted one vote per property.
- F. The advertised closing time of the polls is firm. If, however, an eligible voter is in the voting line at poll closing time, that voter may cast a ballot.
- G. At the closing of the polls, the Election Committee Chair shall tally the number of absentee and in-person ballots to determine if the required number of ballots have been cast to constitute a quorum (quorum is 10% of the membership, or 330). If there are insufficient ballots to constitute a quorum, the procedures in Section VI. will be followed, otherwise follow Section VII.

VI. CALLING A SECOND ELECTION WHEN INSUFFICIENT BALLOTS HAVE BEEN CAST TO CONSTITUTE A QUORUM OR IN THE EVENT OF A TIE VOTE FOR THE CA BOARD OF DIRECTORS OR FOR THE LAST SEAT ON THE VILLAGE BOARD

- A. If quorum has not been met at the end of voting, a second Annual Meeting/Election is called. The Election Committee shall not count the first set of votes cast. The Election Committee Chair shall place the ballots in the ballot box, lock it and give the key to the Village Manager.
- B. The Election Committee Chair shall announce the date for the second Annual Meeting/Election that was listed on the absentee ballot.
 - 1. The second election shall be at least two weeks after the first election.

2. The same ballots will be used for the second election as were used for the first.
- C. Those who voted in the first election are not permitted to vote again in the second election.
- D. The same rules for absentee balloting will apply.
- E. All the ballots cast in the first and second Annual Meetings/Elections shall constitute a Quorum, even if the numerical Village Quorum has not been met.

VII. COUNTING THE VOTES AFTER A QUORUM IS VERIFIED

- A. Members of the Election Committee and other volunteers shall count the votes. Before counting of votes begins, two individuals are chosen as tally partners to record the count for candidates. Depending on the number of candidates, each set of tally partners may tally votes for two or three candidates.

Each ballot is inspected and candidates receiving votes are read out. Tally partners, counting for their assigned candidates, mark their tally sheet, increasing their candidate's vote count by one when his/her name is read out.

After each fifty ballot group has been read out, tally partners compare their results. If there is a discrepancy in the tally for a candidate, the Election Committee Chair records the tally group in which the discrepancy occurs. If the discrepancies become large enough to affect the outcome, the Election Committee Chair shall direct a recount of the fifty ballot groups that could affect the final outcome.

Members of Hickory Ridge may attend the counting.

- B. The Village Manager or designee will contact all candidates.
- C. The Election Committee Chair will announce the election results after the election is certified.
 1. If the winning candidate has adhered to all the requirements outlined in the Candidate Handbook, the candidate is elected. If a winning candidate has violated any of the requirements, the candidate with the next highest vote count who has met the requirements is elected. The Election Committee will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that no candidate is unduly disqualified.
 2. After the post-election requirements stated in the Candidate Handbook are met by the elected candidates, the Election Committee Chair will certify the results of the election.
 3. The Village Manager will send the results of the election, including the list of certified winners, to the Columbia Association, the other Villages and the local press.

- D. In the event of a tie for the Columbia Council Representative or for the last position available on the Village Board, the Election Committee Chair will announce the date for a second Annual Meeting/Election that was previously announced on the absentee ballots.
 - 1. A ballot will be prepared by the Village Manager, using the same ballot order.
 - 2. The Annual Meeting/Election Day procedures listed in Section V. of this document will be followed.
 - 3. The procedures listed in this section, VII. A. and VII. B. will be followed.
- E. A tie for the Columbia Council Representative or the final position for the Village Board shall not alter the results of the remainder of the election.
- F. The new Board will be officially seated at the next Board meeting date after the election is certified by the Election Committee Chair.
- G. In the event of a tie for the last remaining Board seat or for the Columbia Council Representative, the Election Committee Chair shall certify the result of the election except for the position involved in the tie. After the tie is broken, the Election Committee Chair will certify the results of the run-off election.

VIII. CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

- A. Disputes and process issues that arise prior to the election must be brought to the Election Committee for resolution at least five business days prior to the election date. The Committee's decision is final.
- B. Challenges to the election outcome must be made in writing and must be submitted to the Election Committee Chair within three days after the posting of the election results.
- C. The Election Committee is not required to consider any challenges, unless the challenge could affect the outcome of the election, and the Committee is not required to consider any challenges until after the election is certified. The Committee may then evaluate the election procedures and the complaint and make recommendations to the Village Board in the final report of the election.

IX. AFTER THE ELECTION

- A. The Village Manager shall destroy the ballots two weeks after the Village Board certifies the election. The Village Manager will retain the official list of property owners used on Election Day until it is replaced with a new list the following year.
- B. The Election Committee shall report to the Board no later than the second Board meeting in June, following the election.

X. ELECTION COMMITTEE CHAIR

In the event that an issue arises during the election process that is not covered by these guidelines, the Election Committee Chair is authorized to use discretion to address the issue.

XI. ONLINE VOTING

In 2022, it was determined that the risks of online voting outweighed the benefits. If online voting becomes more secure, the Board could again weigh the risks/benefits. This issue should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

XII. HANDBOOK REVIEW

This handbook will be reviewed by the Village Board each year before the announcement of the Village Election.

Updated 2009, 2013, 2022, 2023,2024
Approved by HRVB March 14, 2013
Approved by the HRVB April 11, 2022
Approved by the HRVB February 14, 2023
Approved by the HRVB January 22, 2024



Manager's Report

January 13, 2025

1. Dates to Note:

- **January 14 & 15**, 9:30am, Gingerbread Storytime
- **January 15**, 7:30pm, RAC meeting (virtual)
- **January 20**, Village office closed for Federal holiday
- **January 27**, 7:30pm, In-person Board meeting

2. Election Committee: The Committee has begun meeting and planning for the Village Annual Meeting/Election on April 26, 2025. More Committee volunteers are needed. Each April, the Village elects Village Board members and a Representative to the Columbia Council. Volunteers on the Election Committee will make recommendations to the Board, help plan and moderate Candidate Nights, check in voters and help with the vote count at the Annual Meeting/Election Day on April 26, 2025. They also ensure that the Election Rules and Procedures are followed. The Volunteer Application form is on the website.

To join the Election Committee, you must:

- i. Be a member of the Hickory Ridge Community Association, which means you must own or rent a Columbia Association assessed property in Hickory Ridge.
- ii. Be able to contribute about 15 hours of your time for several meetings, Candidates Night and Election Day.
- iii. Fill out the Volunteer Application form and return it to manager@hickoryridgevillage.org.

3. Follow Hickory Ridge: Find all the ways to connect with [Hickory Ridge here](#):



4. Committee Reports:

- **Resident Architectural Committee:** The RAC continues to review applications as usual.
- **Aging Well in Columbia Advisory Committee (AWCAC):** The AWCAC continues to meet but the committee has no report at this time.
- **Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC):** The WAC continues to meet but the committee has no report at this time.