

# Skye Anderson Questionnaire

## Columbia Council Candidate

***What would you like to tell the residents about your experience living in Hickory Ridge Village and Columbia that will help them evaluate you as a candidate for the Columbia Council?***

I have lived in Clarys Forest, Hickory Ridge for 36 years but it took about 15 years to understand its complexity since I worked on Ft. Meade or in DC and did my shopping there as well. But once I understood villages and neighborhoods, I was so glad I chose to live here. Actually, I moved here to be close to HCC where I was teaching and to the hospital where I was a crisis volunteer and when I was in Afghanistan, I read The LOG voraciously.

I understand that CA appeals to people at different times in their life: I have been a member off and on but every year I learn more about its amenities, and will continue as a member. I have met with most of the facility managers, such as the Columbia Horse Center (see my CA Rep report to the village of September 2024), the ice rink, the Sports Park, the dog park, and more.

Even those who live on non-CA assessed property benefit from CA: the pathways, of course, but also events at the Lakefront, free. Plus with a Columbia Card, they can sample the pools and other amenities.

I instituted Office Hours weekly when I first became your CA Rep, at Mad City, Starbucks and the Hawthorn Center (now, after 3 terms on the CA Board, people know how to reach me) and you may even have my business card. As a result I met with residents in Clemens about cul de sac issues, with residents of Clemens Crossing West about the proposed senior townhouses (Cedar Overlook) and trash at a tot lot, e.g.. In addition, I attend most village events from Storytime to Bingo. However, I'd like to emphasize that the CA Rep does not primarily handle constituent services like our county council members do or the village staff does (who are the residents' first people to ask). Instead, the CA Rep represents Columbia as a whole and focuses on policy rather than day-to-day operations.

***What is/are your career area(s) and any other professional experience, and how will that assist you in Columbia Council actions and activities?***

I have been on my condominium HOA board of directors for the past several years and got my start in graduate school when I served on my housing board. I was also on the board of a crisis center here in Columbia.

This will be my 4<sup>th</sup> term on the CA Board and I have found that “Experience Counts.” It can be helpful to serve on more than one board since some issues are universal. Just a couple of days ago, in talking with someone from another village, I learned they also have some of the same problems: inoperable vehicles (flat tire, no license plate) and outsiders using their dumpsters for bulk items.

It is very helpful to know what was tried in the past, what worked and what didn’t, so I am able to offer insights as to what might work in current situations. Also, experience has shown me that I know a lot of people in CA, in different roles, though I do have my favorite events!

I received the Hickory Ridge Village Volunteer of the Year award for helping at most events and being approachable. I have walked many of the pathways with dogs and love seeing seasonal changes.

Although this election is for the Columbia Council, the Council basically meets once a year – to ‘elect’ themselves to the CA Board of Directors which meets a couple of times a month and sets policy among other responsibilities. So, Hickory Ridge elects a representative to the Council who represents the village, but later that person represents all of Columbia. It’s hard to parse out since the CA Rep is also on the village board and acts as a conduit of information between CA and the village.

***Based on your knowledge of Columbia Council responsibilities, what issues concern you and what ideas would you contribute to Board discussions to address those issues?***

The Board (rather than the Council) has three primary responsibilities: to hire and oversee the CEO, to ensure CA remains successful financially, and to think ahead several years to anticipate what might be needed. I have served on both committees (the Audit Committee and the Risk Management Committee) as well as the selection of the new CEO and the 5-year modification of the Strategic Plan, including the Vision and Mission. When we had a board presence on the CA staff committees, I was on the Art Center and the Climate Change/Sustainability committees. I still participate when I can to serve as a cheerleader and liaison.

One issue being raised this year is that of a splashpad. To that end, I call it a “splashpad park” because it would be more than a mere splashpad – it would also include other amenities to be decided on later - perhaps picnic areas, pavilions, basketball hoops and more.

It is so much easier to listen to someone rather than go to the source so word is spreading that all the outdoor pools will go away, that splashpads are dangerous and expensive, that the decision as to which pools will be eliminated has already been made – none of which is correct. I try to engage people in this discussion so I can see if they have the facts right. I am also writing an article on the pro's and con's.

Another issue I raise every year is whether or not CA can go to a biennial rather than an annual budget process, thus saving months of discussion and planning. At first, it was not a good idea since we were still recovering financially from COVID and then we couldn't do it due to the volatility of the political situation. I will continue to raise this issue, however, so it doesn't slip through the cracks.

I have proposed that the board evaluate what we do (AARs – After Action Reviews) which did not pass. I also suggested town halls which have come to fruition although not the in form I suggested. And I suggested policy clarification on donations and grants, partially completed.

***Are there any other ideas you would like to express to the residents of Hickory Ridge Village?***

I'd like board members to interact more and exchange ideas about their villages (partially done by the village managers and events staff). And I recently suggested a session on how people come to a decision and what can change someone's mind.

I post a monthly CA Rep report on our village website focusing on various parts of CA (the horse center in one month, e.g.) and the CA Rep's commitment (some weeks we have 4 events and meetings while other weeks we have none). I think I'd like to create a question of the month next year and of course I am always open to suggestions. In May, I will be giving a session at the Hawthorn Center on "Service Dogs, Therapy Dogs, and Emotional Support Dogs – The Laws, Their Training and Public Access."

Experience counts! And that means your experience, too!