

Mary Alexion
2013 Candidate Questions and Answers

1. *To which of the following two sidewalk projects would you give first priority in terms of being built within our community: A sidewalk from Morehead Lake to Wilkinson Park or a sidewalk from Governors Square to some point short of the front gate?*

I do not have an informed opinion on this as it is not clear to me

- what the costs will be for building and maintaining each alternative,
- what benefits the entire community will accrue for each alternative, and
- what additional considerations, including impacts on other capital improvement projects, should be taken into account in determining priorities.

In terms of deciding the next sidewalk project, are you in favor of soliciting community input to help make the decision? If so, how would you propose to obtain that input?

The community should have a voice in determining what new capital improvements we undertake, not just 'what sidewalk next'. The community should have the benefit of well formulated proposals to enable us to be informed customers. It may make sense to solicit input through a variety of vehicles, such as presentations with Q&A, focus groups, and surveys or other vehicles that foster dialogue. Using multiple formats enable community members to participate in a manner that is flexible and meets their needs.

2. *Assuming the Board decided at some point in time to move forward with building a sidewalk from Governors Square to the front gate, would you be in favor of extending that sidewalk out to Mt. Carmel Church Road; thus allowing non-resident pedestrians and cyclists to bypass the security gates and enter the community at any time?*

No, I do not favor extending any sidewalk outside our community. From my perspective there are several concerns that would need to be resolved before I would be comfortable with creating access paths that go beyond our gates.

First, I would be concerned that a non-resident who decides to use that path into our community may wander off into areas, such as the golf course that can create a safety issue for the pedestrian and the pedestrian could potentially invade the privacy and adherence to golf etiquette golfers expect. A non-resident pedestrian may not stay with the sidewalk and walk in our roadways. This potentially can create safety issues for them as well as drivers.

Second, I would be concerned that public access paths enable unknown, unregistered non-residents to wander our community and potentially disrupt the privacy our gated community offers.

Third, what is the significant benefit, if any, to a major portion of our community to create that access path?

3. Until this year, all community wide social events (in other words, not related to the country club) were participant funded. Last year, the Board decided to create a Community Activities Committee to run community wide activities and, for the first time, to fund those events with money from our annual assessments (dues).

Are you in favor of using POA funds to pay for community wide events run by the Community Activities Committee; or, alternatively, would you be in favor of requiring this committee's activities to be participant funded or funded through voluntary donations?

If promoting community-wide social events is part of the stated mission of the POA, I think I it is appropriate that a small line item be budgeted for this type of activity or that board discretionary funds be used to support a limited number of activities.

4. Currently, our budget allocates \$25,000 to the Realtor Relations Committee. Its purpose is to improve our relations with all realtors, to improve their awareness of our community, to make them feel welcome in terms of bringing prospects into the community to view homes for sale, and to make it as easy as possible to obtain information on homes for sale as well as information about our community.

We are currently not undertaking any marketing programs to increase awareness of our community in areas outside of the triangle (for example, national marketing programs).

Are you in favor of continuing to fund the Realtor Relations Committee as is currently being done?

I understand that the Realtor Relations Committee has worked very hard to attract local realtors and has developed a plan (in concert with the ARB and other POA stakeholders) to enable QRC codes for easier linkage to property information. I believe they would like to develop what Marketing Plan to promote Governor's Club to a potentially broader audience. I think such a plan could potentially yield significant benefits and merits reasonable funding provided that the plan

- ties directly to a vision and a POA strategic plan that is developed collaboratively with the community and the Country Club
- has defined, measurable goals
- identifies the tangible and intangible benefits that would be realized
- includes a management process for
 - overseeing the implementation of the plan
 - adjusting it appropriately if assumptions or conditions change
 - monitoring goals' achievement by the board.

On a long term basis, would you be in favor of pursuing some type of national marketing effort or program? If so, how would you suggest funding such a program?

Marketing locally, regionally, or nationally is a decision that should be based on reliable market research data and our vision for the future of Governors Club.

It appears to me that we may wish to attract residents from a variety of market segments, not just retirees seeking to relocate from other areas. I also think that the planned development in Chatham County and the growth in Chapel Hill would factor into a decision where to focus marketing resources and maintaining the perception of Governor's Club as a premier community. This growth could drive housing needs for people who may be attracted more effectively through local resources.

Funding for marketing that promotes Governors Club should be jointly developed and funded by the POA and the Club. Both entities would benefit, and marketing one without the other doesn't seem to me to tell the story of Governors Club.

5. Are you in favor of the POA building community wide amenities such playgrounds, picnic grounds and concert arenas?

No, because I don't understand the following:

- Do we have the physical and financial resources to do this?
- What are the investment and maintenance costs?
- What are the benefits to the community?
- Can we provide the staff and other resources required to support and maintain a proposed amenity?

I think any additions to amenities should be done based on what we can afford given what appears to be a need for significant investment in road improvements. Investments in amenities should complement what the Club offers, add clear value to a significant portion of our current residents, and be done without significantly increasing staff, on-going maintenance, and other overhead costs.

If so, how would you propose to fund those expenditures?

We need a long term financial plan, not just an annual budget, which balances how we build reserves, support non-discretionary operational expenses, and fund capital improvements such as these types of amenities. The plan needs to include alternative funding options and offer residents flexibility in how they choose to meet the obligations of special assessments if needed.

6. Last year, the Board passed Resolution # 3 allowing it to convene privately in Executive Session. It limited those sessions to discussion only and did not allow business to be conducted or resolutions to be passed. It limited reasons for convening an Executive Session to “issues that – if discussed in public – could violate privacy laws or harm or cause embarrassment to the association or another party.” The full text of that resolution can be found here: [Resolution # 3](#)

This year, the Board passed Resolution # 7 which superseded Resolution # 3. While this new resolution left the language regarding Executive Sessions essentially unchanged, it created a new category called “Closed Sessions”; which can be convened at any time without giving any reason. It also allows the Board to take actions, pass motions and conduct general business in Closed Sessions. The full text can be found here: [Resolution # 7](#)

Are you in favor of the new Resolution # 7 which allows the Board the unlimited ability to conduct community business in private sessions without giving any reason? Or are you more in favor of the old Resolution # 3 which limited private sessions to discussion only and required sufficient reason before convening a private session?

I think it is very unfortunate that open discussion appears to be an issue that impedes board members from speaking candidly and openly in an open session. Board discussion is critical to surfacing different points of view and considerations that should be reflected on before taking a course of action. Without open discussion there is the risk of board actions without the benefit of full reflection, and it prevents the community from understanding the issues as well as the thinking and reasoning behind actions or potential actions. While I feel ‘no discussion’ is worse than an open discussion ‘behind closed’ doors, transparency trumps that and calls for open discussion.

Resolution 7 introduces the concept of a ‘closed’ session which is different than an ‘executive session’; this is a distinction that I do not think is defined in Robert’s Rules of Orders. Executive session should cover those items where it is to the benefit of the community that confidentiality be preserved and I believe that is well spelled out in both resolutions.

As a result, it would appear that resolution 7 is not really required. If there are issues around open discussion, we should resolve them, not work around them.

7. Some directors claim that the future of our community is critically linked to getting more young families with children to move here. Others feel that the future of the community is linked to getting couples over the age of 50 (pre-retirees and retirees) to move here. Arguments exist to support both positions. There are also arguments to support the position that both groups are equally important and that we should not try to socially engineer the community or encourage any particular type of buyer. Rather, let every buyer decide on their own whether they want to live here.

Do you lean in any particular direction on this issue? Do you feel that the community should be spending money and/or taking actions to entice a particular demographic segment of buyers to move here?

This is very similar to Question 4 about marketing nationally, regionally, or locally. Whether you approach it from the perspective of a geographic segment or another demographic segment, the strategy needs to be based on reliable market research data and our vision for the future of Governors Club. Please see my answer to Question 4.

8. *Are you in favor of continuing the annual deer culling program without any changes to the way it is being conducted?*

Yes.

9. *Are you in favor of seeking community input before making major decisions or implementing changes to the community? If so, please comment the types of issues for which you would seek input. Also, please indicate how you would propose acquiring such input; for example, community wide polls, votes, etc.*

Yes, community input should be sought before making major decisions or changes to our community as we are the property owners and collectively we own the common property. Issues requiring new capital improvements or an atypical transaction (such as purchase of property or other large capital assets) should be brought to the community. The community should have the benefit of well formulated proposals to enable us to be informed customers. It may make sense to solicit input through a variety of vehicles, such as presentations with Q&A, focus groups, surveys, and 'blogs'. Using multiple formats enable community members to participate in a manner that is flexible and meets their needs and promotes dialogue.

10. *The current road reconstruction project is being funded primarily from reserves accumulated over a five year period plus a \$300 special assessment and loan proceeds. In the case of future, large, capital projects, how would you propose obtaining the necessary funding? For example, accumulating reserves and undertaking projects once funds are available or, alternatively, borrowing money from lending institutions.*

As the question suggests, there are three potential funding sources: reserves, assessments and loans. Building reserves is a need, not a choice. We need a long term financial plan, not just an annual budget, which balances how we build reserves, support non-discretionary operational expenses, and fund capital improvements. The plan needs to include alternative funding options

and offer residents flexibility in how they choose to meet special assessment obligations if needed. For example, when assessments are needed enable those who prefer to pay up front pay a one-time assessment and use a loan for those who prefer a planned payment approach where the costs of the loan are passed along to them. This type of financial decision is a point in time decision dependent on economic conditions, the health of our balance sheet, and other factors.

11. Please bear with the long introduction here. To understand this question, it is critically important to understand the definition of a “public access event”; which has the following characteristics:

- It is advertised to the general public outside the gates; and it encourages participation by as many people as possible from outside the community. In other words, there is no upper limit on the number of participants.
- There is no pre-registration required. Therefore, we will not know the number of participants in advance. Nor will we know who is attending.
- On the day or days of the event, any member of the general public who drives up to the gates can request access and gain entry for the event.

At this time, there is only one public access event approved for 2013; the Chatham Artist’s Guild Studio Tour. This takes place over four days in December and is advertised throughout four counties. During those four days, anybody can pass through the gates; without any pre-registration; to visit the homes of one or more of the five participating artists who live in the community; the purpose being to visit the studios and to view and buy the work of those artists.

Participation in the Studio Tour was approved by the Board for the first time last year. For that tour, which was last December, the Board chose not to implement any special security or record keeping procedures. Anybody driving up to the gates and requesting access during those four days was simply let into the community. For the event this coming December, the Board approved security procedures requiring our attendants to record the driver’s name, number of passengers and license plate number on the car.

Public access events are totally different from events held at the country club. With the club’s events, there is no advertising to the general public, participants are required to pre-register, the number of participants is both limited and known, the gate attendants have a list of names, and anyone requesting entry for the event is checked off against that list.

Several (and possibly more) current directors are in favor of having more public access events and wish to approve a “public event” policy or a “public access” policy. They would argue that such events are good for the community’s image and make us more welcoming to the world outside the gates. Having a “public access” policy would imply tacit approval of having such events; thus making it easier to have them approved.

Contrary views hold that “public access events” are not consistent with the nature of a gated community in that they allow general public access with no upper limit on attendance. Regardless of the nature of any “public access event” (artwork related or otherwise), such activities result in additional work for the gate attendants, unrestricted traffic on our roads, parking impacts and the ability of the general public to roam the community at will.

Are you in favor of allowing “public access events” in our community?

Yes, provided that these events

- are done on a very limited basis;
- meet the requirements established by our safety committee with a focus on safety for both public visitors and our residents and on preservation of our privacy;
- and it is clear who pays for any associated expenses.

Do you want to encourage having more public access events?

See my answer to the question above.

Are you in favor of adopting a policy to allow for “public access events”?

Yes a policy statement should be in place that either states no public access events or the constraints and regulations that govern public access events, the process for approving these types of events, and who bears any expenses or liabilities associated with such an event.

12. Running a community association is, in many respects, a balancing act between spending the money necessary to preserve and enhance overall property values within the community and maintaining a reasonable level of dues (or, put another way, not raising annual assessments or initiating special assessments). On one side would be those who say it is far more important to keep the level of annual assessments down than to worry about the condition of the community. On the other side would be those who say that the condition of the community (and resulting property values) are far more important than worrying about increases in annual assessments. It’s probably fair to say that most people are somewhere in between these two possibly extreme positions.

Can you indicate toward which side of this balance you might lean?

I do not favor allowing the appearance of our community to deteriorate. But, I also believe that we must continue to be diligent in managing our expenses and consider how a trend of escalating dues and assessments impact potential buyer’s decisions to choose Governors Club. Too large a trend will result in a decrease in the potential buyer pool and therefore a decrease in the value of our property.