

Bill Colton
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?*

In the absence of any information supporting either option my preference would be to first construct the sidewalk from Morehead Square to Wilkinson Park This preference is based on several assumptions:

- I) More home owners live in this area and therefore the sidewalk would get more use.
- II) More residents walk on the road in this area creating a safety concern that could be alleviated.
- III) The cost of construction would be approximately the same for the two options being suggested.

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?

I would like the ability to review additional information and to solicit input from property owners as to their preference prior to reaching a final decision. There are several on-line applications that could be utilized to conduct informal surveys that would allow property owners to provide input on their preferences. If the project's scope and cost is large enough that it requires a member vote, these on-line applications may not be valid and we would have to revert to the more traditional methods previously used.

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?*

I am not in favor of extending the sidewalk to Mt Carmel Church Road without specific input and approval by property owners. We currently provide gates and attendants in order to restrict access to the property. I believe that extending the sidewalk would tend to encourage non property owners to seek entrance only to have them turned away by the attendant. This creates extra work on the attendant, sends a mixed message to those outside the gates, generates potential bad feelings from the person "invited in" then denied entrance, and creates a slightly increased risk that someone could gain admittance while the attendant was busy with other traffic.

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?

The term "community wide social events" can mean many things to different people; however, assuming these are in fact social events I do not believe that POA funds should be used to fund or subsidize these events. The POA and its staff should focus on the safety, appearance, and infrastructure within the community and not on organizing social events.

Small social events that are organized by volunteers and funded by the participants or community wide events that are intended to educate property owners on subjects related to the POA's various areas of responsibility should be permitted to utilize POA facilities.

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? 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?

Improving relations with realtors and increasing their awareness of Governors Club is important to improving home values within the Governors Club Community. I am in favor of continuing to provide some amount of funding for the Realtor Relations Committee. I believe the local programs and advertising should be continued; however, national marketing should only be pursued if there is an affordable plan with specific objectives and metrics that can be evaluated against the cost.

5. *Are you in favor of the POA building community wide amenities such playgrounds, picnic grounds and concert arenas? If so, how would you propose to fund those expenditures?*

I believe the range of amenities suggested is too broad for a simple yes or no response.

Amenities such as a children's playground or picnic area that may be necessary to remain competitive with other communities should be considered. Assuming that a "concert arena" implies some form of permanent structure, would make it costly and its use would compete with the Country Club. I do not believe that such an amenity is in the best interest of the community.

Amenities should be approved by property owners and funded through assessments. I believe there are higher priority items such as road construction and infrastructure repairs that need to be completed prior to funding significant amenities. Once these items have been completed to an acceptable level, funding from the replacement fund could be utilized for additional amenities.

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 do not agree with all the statements made in the text of the question and therefore I do not wish to debate the real or implied differences between the two resolutions. I would prefer to describe my position on open versus closed meetings without trying to ascertain which resolution is better. My reasons for disagreeing with the statements in the question are contained in the last part of the response to this question should the reader desire additional information.

As a general rule I prefer open meetings and believe that as much business as possible should be done in open sessions. However, having served on several Boards I know there are times when

closed sessions are appropriate and required in order to act in the best interest of the community. These sessions should be infrequent and generally limited to legal discussions with an attorney, issues under negotiation and other reasons cited in the resolutions.

This issue appears to be a matter of trust. If you trust the people you are electing then a simple explanation and majority vote is sufficient to justify their action, if you do not trust them then no explanation or vote will be sufficient to justify their action.

Background: I have reviewed both resolutions and I do not believe that Resolution #3 limited the Boards ability to enter an Executive (Closed) Session as stated in the question or that Resolution #7 allowed the Board to operate in private sessions without giving any reason. Resolution #3 states that “**legitimate**” reasons for closed meetings “**generally concern**” issues that if discussed in public could violate privacy laws etc., it then goes on to list a number of “**valid**” reasons for entering a closed session such as consulting with legal counsel and conferring about contracts. It also states that a majority vote and a statement of the general topic to be discussed by the presiding officer is all that is required to enter the closed session. In my interpretation the valid reasons listed as examples do not preclude other reasons from being used if they are deemed appropriate by the majority of the voting members.

Resolution #7 does explicitly allow the Board to go into closed session for any reason agreed to and supported by a majority vote. I believe this is essentially the same requirement for the Board to enter an Executive (Closed) Session since I do not believe the prior resolution restricted the reason for the closed session to those examples listed in the resolution. I believe the major difference between the two resolutions is the ability to have discussions only in an Executive Session versus taking action on issues or voting in a Regular Closed session. The discussions are considered confidential in an Executive Session and no minutes are taken or published, while any business conducted or votes taken must be recorded in the minutes and available for review by property owners. I believe the requirement to record and publish minutes should minimize any concern for business being conducted in secret.

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?

I favor trying to appeal to as many people as possible and not limiting our focus to one type of prospective buyer. Marketing to specific demographic group can be beneficial; however, marketing should not be limited to only one demographic group.

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

I do not understand all aspects of the program well enough to say unequivocally that there should not be any changes; however, I am in favor of continuing the deer culling program in something very close to its current form.

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, I am in favor of soliciting community input before making major decisions. As I mentioned previously there are numerous on-line tools available to assist in conducting informal surveys on a variety of topics. I would seek input on issues such as major new capital expenditures and the content and priorities in the Long Range Plan.

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.*

I prefer to accumulate reserves in order to have funding available before embarking on new projects; however, unexpected breakdowns in the current infrastructure, timing of construction and unpredictable costs may not always make this possible. In these cases special assessments or borrowing may be unavoidable in order to complete the project on time and in a cost effective way.

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?

I am not in support of “public access events” as defined in the question. We all decided to reside within a gated community and we choose to spend a considerable amount of money each year in order to maintain a level of privacy and safety. Permitting anyone to enter the community without some concern for privacy and safety is inconsistent with those decisions.

Do you want to encourage having more public access events?

I do not believe we should encourage “public access events” as defined; however, the public could be permitted access to the community on a limited number of occasions, provided the Board deems the event will provide a benefit to the Governors Club Community and that instruction to the gate attendants is sufficient to maintain the privacy and safety of the property owners.

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

I do not support a “public access policy” if that policy permits unlimited access as defined in this question. I think that any event where nonresidents are allowed special access to the community should be approved on case by case basis. I would support a policy that clearly defines a “special access event”, and the requirements for approving 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 believe the condition and appearance of the community is critical to improving property value, and delaying repairs often results in higher costs or additional expense to replace temporary repairs with more permanent solutions. While I tend to lean toward making repairs sooner rather than later, I believe we need to proceed prudently in order to keep the annual cost to members at a reasonable level and competitive with other communities. Major improvements and new additions should only be done with the input and support of the property owners.