

Paul Elstro
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?*

Morehead Lake to Wilkinson Park. The 2nd option would not be a good investment, in my opinion, as I feel it will be very lightly utilized. Plus there are many other sidewalk options of higher priority that will be more effective in getting pedestrians off our roads.

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 be in favor of polling the community to obtain feedback on which sidewalks are desired by the community and using that input to help make decisions.

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. This is a gated community and we should do all we can to maintain it as such. Security is very important and one of the reasons people paid high dollars to be here. We should not do anything that jeopardizes our security and/or the intent of our gated community. I also see the extension as a severe safety issue with walkers in the area of “in and out lanes” and then crossing Mt. Carmel Church Road.

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?

No. I believe these events should be funded by participants.

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?

Yes. But we need to monitor the activities to ensure that results are achieved to justify the money spent.

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?

Yes. I think it should be a joint effort with the country club. Funding for our share should be included in the POA budget and carefully monitored to make sure that we get good results for the money spent. I would like to see Governors Club as the #1 gated community on the web/internet and not much further down.

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?*

No. I do not believe POA funds should be spent in this manner.

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?

The Board needs the flexibility to go to closed/executive sessions; but only for the proper reasons. The language of #7 should be tightened, and if done, I could live with either one of the two.

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?

We should be marketing the attractiveness of all we have to offer in our community and then letting every potential buyer decide whether they want to move here based on that; whether it is a family with children or retirees or anybody else.

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

Yes. Too many deer are dangerous to humans and property.

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.*

In order to get community feedback, I am in favor of using community wide polls for major changes or decisions. Possible examples would be capital expenditures, sidewalks and maybe safety and security issues.

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.

Accumulating reserves coupled with short term borrowings but only if absolutely necessary.

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?

No. I don’t think these events are consistent with the fact that we are a gated community.

Do you want to encourage having more public access events?

No. To do so breaks down security. The community in general should not be open to the general public.

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

No. I am not in favor of adopting a policy to allow for public access due to security concerns and the intent of a gated community.

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?

The appearance and condition of the community is very important and we should prudently spend accordingly. In other words, we should spend what it takes to maintain our position as a nice, upscale community without wasting money.