

**Karen Giroux**  
**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'm probably biased because I walk around Morehead and Wilkinson Park nearly every day and I witness cars having to negotiate space with walkers all the time. I would give preference to that sidewalk.

*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 believe in the democratic process and think that community input is important. I think the current board has implemented a new process for community voting that will be used more in the future and makes sense for community enhancement expenditures.

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 see no compelling reason to spend money on extending the sidewalk to Mt Carmel Church Rd. I doubt if many GC residents would use it and as a single woman who has spent too much time in the NY metropolitan area, I like not looking over my shoulder as I walk around Governors Club and think this atmosphere of safety enhances homeowner value.

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?*

I believe the blue grass band playing at the tobacco barn was a success and very cost effective at less than 30 cents per lot. Although I have a family reunion every 4<sup>th</sup> of July elsewhere, I understand that the joint Club/POA fireworks are very popular and has been jointly sponsored for several years. I think the Board should consider other good ideas on a case-by-case basis based on cost and participation levels.

It would be great to have voluntary donations supplement POA funding but I think property values benefit from having some POA sponsored events and the joint POA/Club newsletter, which show a vibrant community in which it is not absolutely essential to spend the additional money to be a Club member to participate in community 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 think it is important to enhance our relationships with local realtors. I'm not familiar with the way the \$25k is spent but I think it is especially important to showcase the improvements that are being made to our roads and Club in order to compete with newer developments.

*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?*

Governors Club Realty used to market the community heavily in the Wall St Journal and other national media. Since this is no longer the case, I believe it would benefit homeowner values to fill this void in some way. I know nearly everyone I met in NJ wondered why I had moved there from NC since they all looked forward to living in NC some day. I believe this is true throughout the snowbelt. It makes sense to market in these areas since most of them cannot believe the low tax rate and quality of life we enjoy in Chatham County. That said, there are numerous ways that many of the marketing experts in Governors Club are aware of for us to enhance our national image without necessarily paying for large ads in national media. Tapping into that expertise within the POA is already underway and should be encouraged further.

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 think there are other more pressing priorities and am concerned that the incentive to join the Club could be compromised by having too many competing 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?*

Most Boards have the right to meet privately. Having managed a Board as a CEO, I think they serve a useful purpose of giving Board members a safe place to express themselves fully without fear of attack. In my experience, those open expressions between Board members do not usually result in bad policies but they do allow more ideas to be considered before holding a less private meeting in which additional ideas from the floor can be considered before voting. I am not in favor of “closed meetings” in which Board votes take place in private.

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 am in favor of letting every buyer decide on their own whether they want to live here. I think the new road program undertaken by the current Board will help to encourage a broader demographic in Governors Club. If I had not been misinformed by my realtor about how quickly the roads were going to be repaired, I probably would have bought elsewhere. I think it is important for us to counter any notion that we are an aging community both with regard to our infrastructure and our demographics.

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

Yes, although I would probably still cry during the movie “Bambi”, I believe our deer culling program has been very successful in solving a problem that is created by having fewer predators of deer in the ecosystem. The ultimate outcome of having an over population of deer where there are no predators is starvation. If there were more wolves and bobcats still around, the endgame for the deer would probably also be less pleasant than that of the skilled bow-hunters in the culling program killing adult deer. Finally, having had Lyme Disease twice from NJ and NY ticks and hearing that several others have already had it from Governors Club ticks, and, knowing that more Lyme Disease bacteria are on their way from the Northeast traveling with ticks on birds, and, knowing that there are even worse disease organisms in the North Carolina population of deer ticks that can cause death from encephalitis, etc., I think it is a prudent public health measure to cull over populated deer.

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 would encourage community wide votes for all special assessments over a certain limit, measures that add to the community indebtedness, public access issues and other issues related to community security, as was done for the issue related to having 24/7 guards at the Lystra gate.

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 think the approach taken by the current Board of asking for the full assessment to fix the roads and getting a loan in lieu of the full assessment was appropriate. Good roads are essential to maintaining property values and the amount of the assessment was far less than having to pay Chapel Hill taxes every year.

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?*

In an ideal world, the artists of the community could rent the Governors Club Realty building or another venue for public showings. However, I think having pre-registration (with name lists for gate attendants) for events that are held in private homes akin to those held by the Club is a good compromise.

*Do you want to encourage having more public access events?*

No, unless someone comes up with a good idea I haven't thought of.

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

Yes and it should be voted on by the POA association.

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?*

Like most people I am in between these two extreme positions. I think it is essential to spend money on things like putting tar in the cracks of our roads to avoid extraordinary costs to replace frost heaved roads in the future but I also think it is important to avoid frivolous expenditures that do not enhance homeowner value.