

Les Stuewer

2014 Candidate Questions and Answers

1. Are you in favor of continuing to build sidewalks within the community? If so, how would you propose to decide which sidewalk or sidewalks should be built first?

Yes, I am in favor of selective sidewalk building within the community. Two sidewalk projects have been executed in the past. These have been well-used by residents and are (according to realtors) an attractive feature to potential buyers.

I believe GC resident input could be obtained via an online survey on a few additional sidewalk options that have been discussed in the past. When provided cost estimates and expected usage (based, for example, on density of homes along the route and terrain) for each option, I believe residents would converge on a best plan forward.

2. Our community has restrictions against building fences and parking family cars in driveways. Realtors have commented that these two restrictions have caused some potential home buyers to look elsewhere. Are you in favor of modifying or eliminating either of these restrictions so that houses here might appeal to more buyers?

Just fewer than 900 homes have been purchased in GC by residents who were aware of these restrictions. Most residents, in fact, bought property in GC in part because of them. In my discussions with residents, virtually all believe these restrictions add to their quality of life in GC and should not be removed in order to facilitate a few incremental real estate transactions. I believe we should favor other methods of promoting the community (e.g., improved marketing program) before taking any steps that would undercut these restrictions. I would certainly respect residents' rights to make covenant changes via a community-wide election; however, I believe the two changes mentioned in this question are unlikely to be accepted.

3. Two years ago, 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 would only support POA funding for events with broad community involvement such as the yearly fireworks display. I am not in favor of using POA funds to pay for events which attract a small percentage of the community. I support making the POA facilities available for small resident groups to organize events which attract a subset of the community.

4. The primary task of the Marketing and Realtor Relations Committee (MRRC) is to improve our relations with local realtors; for example, 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. This committee is currently funded by the POA with a budget of around \$25,000 to be used for various realtor functions. Are you in favor of continuing to fund this committee?

Yes, I am in favor of funding this committee. However, I believe the role of the committee should be broadened to emphasize making the GC community visible to potential buyers on a national level in addition to facilitating interactions with local realtors. Hopefully the Immortology study will provide recommendations on this topic.

5. The POA is currently not funding any marketing programs to increase awareness of our community in areas outside of the triangle (for example, national marketing programs). 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?

I favor a national marketing program. The program would start slowly to prove the selected approach and assess benefits. It would be funded by the POA as it would have a positive effect on all GC residents' real estate values. The program should be coordinated with similar efforts by the country club to promote community/club synergies.

6. 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 would not favor the POA building community wide amenities of the type mentioned in the question at this time. I believe there are pressing issues (e.g., marketing program, road improvement) that are more important for attracting potential buyers and increasing real estate values. In the future, if we consider additional amenities, they should not compete with the club's facilities.

7. Are you in favor of allowing the Board to meet in Executive or Closed Session for any reason and without having to state that reason? (See [Resolution # 7](#))

Alternatively, are you in favor of a policy which limits going into Executive Session to “issues that – if discussed in public – could violate privacy laws or harm or cause embarrassment to the association or another party.” (See [Resolution # 3](#); which was rescinded in 2013 and replaced with Resolution # 7.)

(Note to Readers: The above links to the two resolutions are safe. If you happen to get a warning, please ignore it. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read both resolutions to decide for yourself what they say. If you wish background information and further explanations on these resolutions, I have provided it here: [Executive Sessions](#). Yes, it is my write-up, but I am quite comfortable that you will be able to read and interpret the resolutions and then judge my information accordingly.)

It is important that the Board have the flexibility to meet in executive session to address the types of issues (legal, private, personnel) named in Resolution 3. Moreover, I believe Board members need some opportunity for free and open communication. However, as a general principle (separate from the executive session issues listed above), I believe GC community residents should be able to (a) understand all issues being debated by the Board, (b) hear the views of each Board member on the issues, and (c) be present when a vote is taken. When the Board meets in regular (closed) sessions per Resolution 7, GC residents may be denied these principles. If Resolution 7 cannot be tightened to allow the above principles to be met, then I would favor reverting to Resolution 3.

8. 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? If so, why?

I believe a balanced national/local marketing program is essential to attracting home buyers to GC. That program would target any persons who desire the quality of life and ‘culture’ of the GC community. I do not believe we should discourage any potential home buyers. The country club is an important asset to the community, and the health of the club and the wellbeing of the community are inter-twined. Therefore, as properties turn over, we need to be sure we appeal to those types of potential buyers (be they young families with children, pre-retirees, retirees) who are positively disposed to living in a country club community and who can help maintain club membership at a healthy level.

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

Yes.

10. The most recent road reconstruction project was funded from reserves accumulated over a five year period plus a \$300 special assessment. For the next major road project, would you favor a similar funding method or, alternatively, having the POA borrowing money to accelerate the road rebuilding process?

I believe the condition of the unimproved section of Governors Drive is a defect of the community in the eyes of potential buyers and negatively affects GC real estate values. Two options exist:

- (1) The base case is to continue to accumulate reserves over about 3 years (with current level of assessments) and undertake a project to improve Governors Drive when all the funds are available
- (2) An alternative is to borrow funding at a current attractive rate of interest, undertake the project sooner, and pay off the loan with the same funds we would be placing in the reserve in option 1

Option 2 would offer the benefit of accelerating the needed improvements and avoiding paying higher future construction costs. I believe this may be a financially responsible step to improve real estate values and should be further evaluated.

11. 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). At one extreme 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. At the other extreme 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 extreme positions.

Assuming you are in between those two extremes, can you indicate toward which side of this balance you might lean?

I am in between these two extremes. On one hand, I support strong cost controls and pruning budgets where results are not being achieved. On the other hand, I am conscious that, unlike

other communities in the area, GC real estate values have not recovered during the period following the recession. As a consequence, all GC residents are failing to realize sizeable appreciation on their properties. I believe that we need to make plans to address this problem. I recognize, too, that GC dues are already higher than those of competing communities, and this is already a deterrent to new buyers. On the whole, I am a proponent of reducing POA costs in those areas that may not be adding real estate value and replacing them with efforts that will enhance our community worth.