

Candidate's Handbook

All candidates for the Columbia Council and RHCA Board of Directors will receive a copy of this handbook.

To run for either the River Hill Community Association (RHCA) Board of Directors or Columbia Council Representative, candidates must submit the following by **Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.:**

1. A statement of no more than 150 words, as counted in the Microsoft Word software program. If a candidate's statement is greater than 150 words, the statement will be cut-off at 150 words.
2. Optional headshot (.jpeg, 300dpi)
3. Completed *River Hill Community Association Nomination Petition 2023*.

Information Candidates should know:

- RHCA staff will verify that candidates are members of the Association. If residency cannot be verified using state information, adequate documentation shall be provided, such as a valid lease, driver's license, or passport.
- Signs may not be placed on Columbia Association property or public property. Candidate signs may be placed on private property, with permission. On Election Day, please follow the Election Day Sign map for sign placement and electioneering at Claret Hall. See Election Day Sign Map.

Also included in this Handbook are the following documents that Candidates should review:

- Election Calendar 2023
- Who Can Run
- Election Day Sign Map
- Notice of RHCA Election of Board of Directors and Columbia Council Representative (App.05/24/22)
- Election Procedures and Guidelines

RIVER HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION 2023 ELECTION SCHEDULE

March 1: Candidate Handbook and Petition for Village Board (3 open seats) and Columbia Council Representative (1 open seat) seats available on the website. The River Hill Community Association Nomination Petition 2023, Candidate Statement, and Head shot deadline is Tuesday, March 21 at 12:00 p.m. at Claret Hall.

March 1-April 12: Residents may send questions to manager@villageofriverhill.org to be used for the Candidates Forum.

March 21: Deadline for submission of RHCA Nomination Petition 2023, Candidate Statement and Headshot by electronic transmission at manager@villageofriverhill.org and newsletter@villageofriverhill.org at **12:00 p.m.**

March 22: Lottery to determine ballot placement via ZOOM at **7:00 p.m.**

April 3: Election information included in *The Villager* and available on the village website and Village Election supplement printed in the Columbia Flier (later date).

April 12: Candidates Forum, 7:00-9:00 p.m. ZOOM only, residents may submit questions.

April 2-12: Period to receive written and in-person requests for Absentee Ballots.

April 12: Deadline to request Absentee Ballots is **5:00 p.m.**

April 2-21: Period to return Absentee Ballots in-person or by mail to Claret Hall.

April 21: The deadline to receive Absentee Ballots at Claret Hall is **midnight.**

April 22: Election Day, **9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

April 22-27: Period to challenge election results. Deadline is April 27 2023, at **5:00 p.m.**

May 9: Second Election or Runoff Election, if required, to be held **9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** at Claret Hall.

RIVER HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NOMINATION PETITION 2023

Please indicate the position for which you are seeking nomination (one only):

River Hill Community Association’s Board of Directors
(RHCA Board Member position)

- - - **OR** - - - - -

River Hill Columbia Council Representative
(Columbia Association Representative position)

Name of Nominee: _____

Address of Nominee: _____

Daytime Phone#: _____ Evening Phone#: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature of Nominee: _____

The undersigned residents (age 18 years and older) of the Village of River Hill, Columbia, Maryland, hereby nominate the person named above for the office stated above.

⊗ **Note – At least ten (10) signatures from River Hill residents are required. Proof of residency and age required if not listed on the property assessment lists provided by the Columbia Association.**

	Print Name	Signature	Address
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____

RETURN TO: River Hill Community Association, 6020 Daybreak Circle, Clarksville, MD 21029 or as a pdf via email to manager@villageofriverhill.org.

DATE DUE: March 21, 2023 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)

INCLUDE: 150 Words (max.) Candidate Statement and a high resolution (300+ dpi) digital photograph for publication purposes. Electronic files preferred and should be emailed to newsletter@villageofriverhill.org.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Documents

RIVER HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC,

Candidate’s Acknowledgement

To be *completed by each applicant* for candidacy.

To be submitted *at the time of Candidate’s Statement submission*.

1. Candidate’s Statement Acknowledgment

I agree and acknowledge that to qualify as a candidate in the 2023 River Hill Community Association (“Association”) election, I am required to:

- (a) Be a member of the Association, submit proof of residency, and
- (b) Submit a signed RHCA Nomination Petition 2023, and
- (c) Submit a *Candidate’s Statement* consisting of the following two parts, each of which must be completed and submitted together no later than 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, , March 21, 2023, via electronic delivery to manager@villageofriverhill.org:
 - 150-word Personal Campaign Statement (.docx)
 - Optional headshot (.jpeg, 300dpi)

2. Candidate’s Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Association’s:

- *Candidate’s Handbook* setting forth information and requirements related to applying for candidacy, the election process, the governing election guidelines and procedures, and the certification of the election. The Candidate’s Handbook includes the current *Election Guidelines and Procedures*.

Print first and last name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Candidate for: RHCA Board of Directors Columbia Council Representative

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

FOR USE BY VILLAGE OFFICE ONLY:

Received Date: _____

Village Manager/Staff: _____

Who Can Run?

What River Hill Community Association Legal Documents Say about Membership and Candidacy for the Village Board From our Articles of Incorporation:

SIXTH: Every resident of the Property, aged 18 or older; shall be a member of the Association. Proof of eligibility for membership shall be as provided in the By-Laws.

EIGHTH: The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of five (5) directors, all of whom shall be members of the Association except as herein provided with regard to the initial Board of Directors until the election of their successors.

NINTH: (9) The members of the Association shall in each year, elect from among the members thereof a representative to serve a two-year term as a member of the Columbia Council.

From our By-Laws:

Section 1.08. **Members.** The qualification for membership shall be that stated in the Charter of the Association.

Section 2.03. **Election of Directors.** Until the first annual meeting of members or until successors are duly elected and qualify, the Board shall consist of the persons named as such in the charter. At the first annual meeting of members and at each annual meeting thereafter, the members shall elect directors to hold office until their term of office expires or until their successors are elected and qualify.

From the River Hill Community Association Election Procedures & Guidelines (not a legal document, but the guiding document for our Election process):

I. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A CANDIDATE?

All candidates for the RHCA Board of Directors and Columbia Council must be members of the Association. They must submit a completed River Hill Community Association Nomination Petition 2023 and a Candidate's Statement to the Village Office by the announced deadline.

2. ELECTION COMMITTEE CHAIR

If an issue arises during the election process that is not covered by these guidelines, the Election Committee Chair is authorized to use discretion to address the issue.

Map image of River Hill Village Center



 No Campaigning Zone

River Hill Community Association

April 22, 2023

Election of Board of Directors and Columbia Council Representative

Notice of Open Positions

April 23, 2022, the members of the River Hill Community Association (RHCA) held an annual meeting to elect candidates to fill two open positions on the Board of Directors. Pursuant to the RHCA Articles of Incorporation, the Eighth Article, "in alternate years, either three directors or two directors, each for a term of two years" shall be elected. Therefore, notice is given that there are three (3) open seats on the Board of Directors to be filled by a vote of the members during the Annual meeting of RHCA. Further, on April 24, 2021, the representative to serve as a member of the Columbia Council was elected for a two-year term from May 1, 2021, until April 30, 2023. To comply with the Ninth Article, Section Nine, "Elect from among the members thereof a representative to serve a two-year term as a member of the Columbia Council" notice is hereby given of one (1) open seat to be elected at the annual meeting.

Notice of Quorum

Calculation:

2020 Election	78 Valid Ballots Cast
2021 Election	250 Valid Ballots Cast
2022 Election	<u>131 Valid Ballots Cast</u>
Total Ballots Cast	459 Valid Ballots Cast
/3=Average	153
50% of Average	77

Confirmation Vote of Annual Meeting Dates

- Date of Annual Meeting: April 22, 2023
Time of Annual Meeting: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Place of Annual Meeting: Claret Hall
- Second Annual Meeting Date (if necessary due to lack of quorum):
Date: May 9, 2023
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Place: Claret Hall

The dates, times, and place have been published in the *Columbia Flier/Howard County Times* and *The Villager* to be delivered to each home to fulfill the RHCA By-laws Section 1.04 Notice of Meetings.

Approved: May 24, 2022

River Hill Community Association RHCA Election Guidelines and Regulations

I. PRIOR TO ELECTION

A. Selection of Election Committee Chairperson and Election Committee Members

1. Appointment by River Hill Community Association Board of Directors (BOD)
 - a. The BOD is responsible for appointing the Election Committee (Committee) before the second week in February. The BOD shall fill any vacancies from time to time.
 - b. The BOD appoints the Chair of the Election Committee (Chair).
 - c. Any member of the RHCA eligible to vote in the next election of the BOD and Columbia Council Representative shall be eligible for membership on the Committee. But, in no event shall a member be a candidate for any BOD or Columbia Council office. (Section 8.02(b))
 - d. Election Committee members shall not actively campaign for or against any candidate or ballot question.
2. Duties and responsibilities of the Election Chair and Committee
 - a. The Chair must be completely familiar with the rules and regulations of the election. The Chair works very closely with the Village Manager to ensure the laws of the State of Maryland and RHCA Covenants, Articles of Incorporation, and By-law (Legal Documents) requirements are met and that all duties are performed. However, it is the Chair's ultimate responsibility to the BOD to ensure that the elections conform to the Legal Requirements and that all deadlines are met.
 - b. The Village Manager is responsible for explaining the rules and procedures of the election to all candidates and for distributing the candidate packets that are prepared by RHCA staff.
 - c. The Committee coordinates the Candidates Forum, and the Chair traditionally serves as moderator.
 - d. The Committee, with the assistance of the Village Manager, is responsible for training poll workers, who are recruited by RHCA staff. It is particularly important that all poll workers clearly understand how to determine voting eligibility, how to read the voters lists, and how to handle special problems.
 - e. The Chair prepares, prior to Election Day, the vote-count grid for people who will be counting ballots. The Chair is also responsible for validating all "irregular" and absentee ballots.
 - f. The Chair is spokesperson for the Committee and, after the election, is responsible for posting the official results, handling challenges to the election, and submitting an election report to the BOD.
3. Qualities of Election Committee Chair

- a. With the duties and responsibilities of this position, also comes the need to handle pressure and, sometimes, confrontations with people who have personal investments in the election results. The Chair's style of dealing fairly and authoritatively with candidates and volunteers is critical for the election to be perceived as fair.
- b. It is preferable that the Chair has previously worked on the Election Committee.

B. Schedule for Election

1. Set Election Day

- a. The Village Manager is responsible for setting the date of the election with other Village Managers so that elections are held simultaneously throughout Columbia Association.
- b. The elections will be held on a day in April, other than a Sunday or legal holiday.
- c. The Village Manager submits the election dates, time, and place to the BOD for a confirmation vote.

2. Set Election Schedule

- a. The Village Manager prepares an election timetable based on the By-law requirements after the Election Day is established. This should be distributed and publicized to the BOD, RHCA Members, and Election Committee. Important dates are outlined below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ● April | Required month for village elections. |
| ● 2nd week of February | Appointment of Election Committee and the Chair. |
| ● March 1 | Begin accepting nomination petitions. |
| ● 30 or more days prior to election | Eligibility date for members in good standing. |
| ● March 21 | Deadline for accepting nomination petitions, candidate statements, and headshots. |
| ● 20th to 10th day prior to election | Receive requests in writing and in-person for absentee ballots Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Claret Hall or via email. |
| ● 20th to one day prior to election | Period to receive absentee ballots. |
| ● Midnight of day prior to election | Deadline for absentee ballots to be received by midnight. |
| ● 5 days after posting of election results. | Deadline for written challenges to elections. |
| ● 5 days after election or until disposition | Ballots held for safe keeping. |
| ● At least two (2) days prior to the seating of the new Village Board/Council Rep | Election Committee will meet and rule on the Challenge. |
| ● At least 2 days prior to the seating of the new BOD/Columbia Council Rep | Certify election. |

- b. The Village Manager will consider the need for transition time between the election of the BOD and, if applicable, the Columbia Council Representative and their taking office on May 1 to allow time for challenges to take place and for the election results to be accepted by the outgoing BOD.

C. Nomination Petitions

1. Preparation
 - a. Each nomination petition shall allow space for the full name and address of the candidate, his/her signature, identification of the office he/she is seeking, email address, and telephone numbers. Each nominee must present proof of RHCA membership or residency.
 - b. Room will be provided for a minimum of ten signatures and addresses of RHCA Members.
2. Submission
 - a. Nomination petitions may be submitted by email as a PDF or in-person at Claret Hall from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
 - b. Electronic signatures are not permitted.
 - c. RHCA staff, at the direction of the Election Committee, will declare the petition valid when ten signatures have been verified as those of RHCA members and will collect evidence of person, age, and residence as required.
 - d. RHCA members may sign more than one petition.
 - e. Validation of the petitions, by RHCA staff, shall occur within seven calendar days. Candidates shall be notified immediately of the outcome of the validation results within one day.

D. Election Information Packets (Packets)

1. Preparation and distribution of packets
 - a. The Village Manager, at the direction of the Election Committee, is responsible for the preparation of packets for each candidate.
 - b. The packets are distributed to potential candidates when they pick up their nomination petitions or upon request.
2. Contents of information packets
 - a. The information packets shall include:
 1. CPRA Declaration of Covenants, Articles of Incorporation, and By-Laws
 2. River Hill Community Association Covenants, Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and Election Guidelines and Regulations
 3. Election Calendar
 4. Other information about the RHCA as prepared by the Village Manager.

E. Candidates Statements

1. Length
 - a. Candidates' official statements shall be 150 words or less. All words more than 150 will be deleted from the statement. The Election Committee is not permitted to edit the statement.
 - b. Candidates may be asked to supply a shorter statement for use when space will not allow printing the official statements.
2. Publication
 - a. Complete statements are published in the April issue of *The Villager* to fulfill By-law requirements.
 - b. If the statements are reprinted in the *Columbia Flier* or other publications, the Village Manager will inform the candidate of any space limitations.

F. Volunteers for Election Day

1. Recruiting
 - a. The Village Manager is responsible for recruiting workers to staff the polls on Election Day.
 - b. The Election Committee Chair or a delegate from the Election Committee is responsible for the supervision of poll workers on Election Day and for answering their questions during election hours.
2. Training
 - a. Each poll worker must be specifically trained. All workers are encouraged to attend a training session before Election Day.
 - b. Poll workers should be asked to arrive at least 20 minutes before their shifts begin to review and observe procedures. Individualized training must be provided at this time for workers who did not attend a previous session.

G. List of Eligible Voters

1. Acquiring voters list
 - a. The Village Manager is responsible for securing a list of eligible voters according to the RHCA By-Laws.
 - b. The list of property owners shall be obtained from CA assessment computer printouts.
2. Format of list
 - a. Two lists of property owners should be available at the polls, one printed out in alphabetical order by owner, and one by address. Both are important to validate all possible ballots.

H. Regular and Absentee Ballots

1. Preparation
 - a. The Village Manager is responsible for the preparation of all ballots.
 - b. The order of names on the ballot is determined by lottery at a time set by the

Election Committee.

2. Absentee ballots
 - a. Absentee ballots will be available as provided by the By-Laws.
 - b. Only absentee ballots may be submitted by mail.
 - c. The absentee ballot will contain a detachable statement signed by the member certifying that he/she will be unable to cast his/her ballot at the designated polling place.
3. Procedures for validating ballots.
 - a. Regular ballots will be validated during the election and after the close of the polls.
 - b. Absentee ballots are validated last.

II. DURING ELECTION

A. Voting Time and Place

1. Location

Voting takes place at Claret Hall in the River Hill Village Center
2. Hours for polls to be open.

To encourage voter turnout, polls are open as determined by the BOD at the recommendation of the Election Committee and Village Manager.
3. Visibility and location of polling sites
 - a. Voting tables should be in a clear, obvious place, not obstructed by other special events or displays.
 - b. People setting up poll sites should be aware of the electioneering boundaries.

B. Who Can Vote?

1. Residents of RHCA and Columbia Association assessed lots, including tenants with a lease on property in RHCA, aged 18 and older.
2. Eligibility and identification
 - a. A member in good standing pursuant to Article 111 of the Declaration of the Association shall be eligible to vote in the annual elections. The BOD has determined that Members whose RHCA properties are in violation of the Covenants and have been accepted by the Architectural Resource Committee (ARC) for flagging, legal action, and/or restriction of facility use will not be permitted to vote for Village Board Members.
 - b. A member will be considered eligible to vote if she/he can present identification showing a current address to be on RHCA Assessed land.
 - c. The Election Committee should publicize, along with the names and statements of candidates, information about voter eligibility, and I.D. requirements to encourage voter turnout. The BOD has approved the following methods of proof of person, age and residency: presence on the CA assessment rolls, tenant lists, presentation of a deed or lease, Howard County Voter registration card, Maryland Driver's License,

passport, utility bill addressed to the individual at an RHCA assessed address, or other evidence.

C. Voters Lists and Procedures for Validating Ballots at the Polls

1. Voters lists
 - a. There should be two or more poll volunteers at the polling table. Poll workers should work in pairs to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
 - b. Each pair of poll workers should be assigned a part of the official voters list.
 - c. Clear markings should indicate which line a voter should go to present their identification and vote.
2. Validation of member of the Association
 - a. After showing suitable I.D., members whose names are on the voters list will be checked off by the poll worker. A ballot will then be issued to them.
 - b. After showing suitable I.D., members whose names are not on the voter's lists and there is a question about eligibility, will place their ballots in a cover envelope with their name and address on the outside, and the ballot in the envelope will be placed in the ballot box.

D. Electioneering

1. Electioneering boundaries
 - a. No electioneering is allowed within 100 feet of the polling place.
 - b. Poll workers should take care to remove any electioneering handouts from the voting tables.
2. Violations
 - a. The Election Committee or a delegate is responsible for warning candidates and their representatives if they electioneer within the electioneering boundary.
 - b. If a serious problem results, the Election Committee should document the violations in writing and may recommend that the BOD invalidate the election.

III. AFTER ELECTION

A. Vote Count

1. Setting up for the vote count
 - a. Members of the Election Committee and assigned helpers shall count the ballots. The Chair is responsible for the smooth processing and counting of the ballots.
 - b. The vote count shall be held in a room separate from post-election socializing.
 - c. Candidates (or their representative) are permitted to be present in the counting room, but they may not verbally question the counting or any other election procedures. If they have any objections to the procedures, they must submit a written challenge.
2. Preparation and validation of ballots
 - a. All ballots will first be scanned to be sure none has more votes cast than slots

available for the BOD, and in years when the Council seat is open, no more than one (1) vote cast for Columbia Council Representative. If part of the ballot is invalid, the invalid section will not be used in the count.

- b. The Chair next validates the absentee ballots. These ballots are added to the others if it can be confirmed the individual did not vote in person.
3. Counting the ballots
- a. The ballots are counted by at least two counters.

- b. Each counter records ballots on a counting grid. The two grids are compared for accuracy. If a discrepancy exists, the ballots shall be recounted until the discrepancy is resolved.
 - c. In the event of a tie for election to the position of Columbia Council Representative, or for the last position to be filled on the Board of Directors, the Election Committee shall conduct a recount of the ballots within two (2) days. Ballots shall be placed in a locked container and retained by the Chair until the recount occurs.
 - d. Should a tie persist, the Village Manager will immediately notify members of RHCA of the date, time, and place for a runoff election to resolve such a tie.
4. Official election results
- a. After the ballots are counted, the Election Committee Chair posts the official election results.
 - b. Only the Election Committee Chair is authorized to post, publish, announce, or otherwise release the election results. The Chair acts as the only spokesperson for the committee.
 - c. The Election Committee Chair will hold ballots for five (5) days or until the disposition of any challenge.
 - d. A final report providing the names of those persons elected and the offices to which they were elected, respectively, must be provided to the incumbent Board of Directors of RHCA.

B. Runoff Election Procedures

- 1. Hold Runoff Election
 - a. The runoff election must be held within two (2) weeks after the posting of certified election results by the Election Committee.
 - b. The Village Manager will notify members of the Association of the date, time, and place of the runoff election by fliers delivered to each residence.
 - c. Where a tie vote occurs and the election results have been challenged, the runoff election shall take place within two (2) weeks of the disposition of the challenge.
- 2. Runoff Ballots
 - a. Only the names of the candidates involved in the tie will appear on the runoff election ballot.
 - b. A tie vote for Council Representative, or for the last position to be filled on the Board of Directors shall not affect the results of the entire election.

C. Vote Challenge Procedure

- 1. Challenge Submittal
 - a. Challenges must be submitted to the Election Committee Chair within five (5) calendar days after the posting of the election results.
 - b. Challenges may be submitted in writing by any candidate or a member of the Election Committee and must be signed.
- 2. Challenge Disposition

- a. After receiving a challenge, the committee shall meet in a public session at least two (2) days prior to the seating of the new Village Board and/or Council Representative. At this time the Committee will accept and rule on any written challenge.
- b. In the event of a challenge, the Election Committee will prepare and submit a statement of the conduct of the election to the incumbent Board of Directors.
- c. The committee is not required to consider any challenges, unless they could affect the results of the election, until after the election is certified. The committee should then evaluate the election procedures and the complaint and make recommendations in the final report of the election.

D. Second Election for Lack of a Quorum

1. The continuation of the Annual Meeting (if the quorum is not achieved) has been advertised and takes place on May 9th at Claret Hall from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. pursuant to MD HOA Act Section 11B-111(6).

Revisions Approved by Election Committee: February 16, 2023.