

WILDE LAKE VILLAGE ELECTIONS GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

Village Elections in Wilde Lake are officially guided by Article VIII, Section 8 of the Wilde Lake Community Association (hereinafter referred to as “Association”) By-laws. The following rules and regulations are derived from these By-laws and past Election experiences, traditional practices, and press deadlines. These guidelines are for the benefit of the Village Board, staff, and the Election Chair before, during, and after the Village Elections. The procedures are described according to the timeline of Election activities.

In administering Village Elections, the following major goals should be reached:

1. The Election should be fair and be perceived as fair by the establishment of clear procedures.
2. The Election procedures should encourage potential candidates to run in the Election and encourage people to vote.
3. The Election should be efficient and conducted at reasonable cost.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. BEFORE ELECTION

A. Selection of Election Chair

The Election Chair works very closely with the Village Manager and Association staff to ensure that the By-laws requirements are met and that all duties are performed

1. Appointment by Village Board

The Village Board is responsible for appointing the Election Chair during the first Board meeting in January.

2. Duties and Responsibilities of Election Chair

In addition to the duties and powers as described in Section 8.02(c)i-ix, the Election Chair has the following responsibilities:

- a. The Election Chair must be completely familiar with the rules and regulations of the Election. It is the Election Chair’s ultimate responsibility to the Wilde Lake Village Board that the Election conforms to the By-laws and that all deadlines, as required by the By-laws, are met.
- b. The Election Chair coordinates Candidates’ Night and serves as moderator.
- c. The Election Chair and the Association staff are responsible for instructions to poll workers who are recruited. It is particularly important that all poll workers clearly understand how to determine voting eligibility, how to read the voters list, and how to manage special problems.
- d. The Election Chair is responsible for validating all ballots.

- e. After the Election, the Election Chair is responsible for posting the official Election results, handling challenges to the Election and submitting an Election Report to the Village Board.

B. Schedule for Election

1. Setting Election Day

The Village Manager is responsible for setting the date of the Election with other Village Managers so that elections are held simultaneously throughout Columbia. The Village Manager will consider the need for transition time between the Election of the Village Board members and their taking office on May 1 to allow time for Election challenges to take place and for the Election results to be accepted by the outgoing Village Board.

2. Setting Election Schedule

The Village Manager prepares an Election timetable based on the By-Law requirements in January. Important dates are outlined below:

- **April:** Required month for Village Elections
- **January:** Appointment of the Election Chair
- **45 days or more prior to the Election:** Candidate information packets available and begin accepting nomination petitions
- **No later than April 1:** List of eligible voters posted at Slayton House
- **30 days or more prior to the Election:** Finish accepting nomination petitions ●
- **30 days or more prior to the Election:** Validation of nomination petitions
 - **20 to one day prior to the Election:** Receive requests for absentee ballots
 - **By April 1:** Mail out absentee ballots and instructions for online voting
 - **21 days or more prior to the Election:** Deadline for candidates' statements ●
 - **5 days or more prior to the Election:** Publish candidates' statements
 - **By 4pm of the Business Day prior to the Election:** Deadline for Tenants to submit current Lease Agreements.
 - **By 4pm of the Business Day prior to the Election:** Deadline for mail-in absentee ballots ●
 - **By 4pm of the Business Day prior to the Election:** Deadline for online votes ●
 - **5 days after posting Election results:** Deadline for written challenges to the Elections ●
 - **Within 5 days of receiving a challenge:** Election Committee will meet for discussion ●
 - **5 days after Election or until disposition:** Election Chair will hold ballots of any challenge

C. Nomination Petitions

1. Preparation

- a. Each nomination shall show the full name and address of the candidate, their signature, and the office they are seeking.

b. Room will be provided for twelve signatures of Association members (Owners and Tenants), plus space for printed name, address and telephone numbers.

c. Candidates may file for either Village Board or Columbia Council Representative but not both.

2. Validation

a. The Election Chair will declare the petition valid when ten signatures have been verified as members of the Association.

b. Association members may sign more than one petition. Each member of the Association (including joint owners) may each sign the same petition.

D. Election Information Packets

1. Preparation and Distribution of Packets

a. Association staff is responsible for the preparation of packets for each candidate. These packets are posted on the Association's website. Hard copies of the packets will be made available upon request.

2 Contents of Information Packets

a. The information packets for Columbia Council Representative shall include:

1. CA Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
2. Responsibilities of the Columbia Council Representative
3. All of the information included in the packets for the Village Board listed below:

b. The information packets for the Village Board shall include

1. Village Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
2. Election Information
3. Calendar for Election
4. Biographical/Emergency Forms
5. Declaration of Compliance
6. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors
7. Other information about the Village as prepared by the Village Manager.

E. Candidates' Statements

1. Length

Candidates' official statements must be 150 words or less. All words more than 150 will be deleted from the statement. Candidates may be asked to supply a shorter statement for use when space will not allow printing the official statements.

2. Publication

- a. If the statements are reprinted in the Columbia Flier, the Village Manager will inform the candidates of any space limitations.
- b. The statements shall be posted on the Association's website.

F. Uncontested Elections

In January 2017, Sections 2.03A and 4.04 of the Wilde Lake Community Association By-laws were amended.

1. The Association is not required to have an election for Village Board in a year when the number of candidates for Village Board is five or less **AND/OR**
2. The Association is not required to have an election for Columbia Council Representative if there is not more than one candidate for Columbia Council Representative.
3. In the event of no election, qualified candidates shall be deemed to be elected by the members of the Village Board and Village Board shall appoint such candidates for the term provided for in the Association's Articles of Incorporation.
4. If there are more than five candidates for Village Board or more than one candidate for Columbia Council Representative, then an election will be held in accordance with the Association's By-laws and Wilde Lake Village Elections Guidelines and Regulations.

G. Volunteers for Election Day

1. Recruiting

- a. The Election Chair and Association staff are responsible for recruiting workers to staff the polls on Election Day.
- b. The Election Chair 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 receive clear instructions or a letter at least one week prior to the Election. All workers are encouraged to attend a training session before Election Day.
- b. Poll workers should be encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes before their shifts begin to review and observe procedures. Questions on procedures will be answered at this time.

H. List of Eligible Voters

1. Acquiring Eligible Voters List

- a. The Village Manager is responsible for securing a list of eligible voters according to the

By-laws.

- b. The list of property owners shall be obtained from the Columbia Association annual charge office.
- c. The list of apartment tenants shall be a list of apartment dwelling units, not residents of the units, for each apartment complex.

2. Format of List

- a. Two lists of property owners should be available at the polls, one printed out in alphabetical order by owner, one by address. Both are important to validate all ballots.
- b. A current list of apartment dwelling units must be available.

I. Regular and Absentee Ballots

1. Preparation

- a. Association staff is responsible for the preparation of all ballots. In September 2013, the Wilde Lake Village Board approved use of a joint Business Reply Mail Account with five other Villages which is used for the return of mail-in absentee ballots.
- b. The order of names on the ballot is determined by lot at time set by the Election Chair.

2. Absentee Ballots

- a. Absentee ballots will be available as provided by the By-laws and will be mailed to all eligible voters.
- b. The Election Chair will accept absentee ballots (mail-in and online) until 4pm of the day prior to the election.
- c. Absentee ballots are not accepted on Election Day.
- d. In December 2018, the Wilde Lake Village Board approved the use of absentee e-voting in addition to absentee mail-in and in person voting.

3. Procedures for Validating Ballots

- a. All ballots will be validated during the Election and after the close of the polls. This includes in-person and mail-in absentee ballots.
- b. The Election Chair will slit mail-in absentee ballot return envelopes, verify addresses and sort absentee ballots after 4pm of the day prior to the election. Ballots remain in the envelopes until the polls close. Each candidate may designate an observer to watch as the absentee ballots are sorted. The name of the observer must be provided to the

Election Chair by 5pm two or more days before the Election. At no time may the observer handle the ballots.

c. The first ballot received will be accepted. Therefore, in-person ballots will not be accepted if an absentee ballot (mail-in or online) has been received.

II. DURING ELECTIONS

A. Voting Places

1. Voting tables should be in a clear, obvious place, not obstructed by other special events or displays.
2. People setting up poll sites should be aware of the electioneering boundaries. Such boundaries should be clearly marked.

B. Electioneering

1. Electioneering Boundaries
 - a. No electioneering is allowed within one hundred feet of the polling tables.
 - b. Poll workers should take care to remove any electioneering hand-outs from the voting tables.
2. Violations
 - a. The Election Chair is responsible for warning candidates and their representatives if they electioneer within the electioneering boundary.
 - b. If a serious problem results, the Election Chair should document the violations in writing and may recommend that the Village Board invalidate the Election.

C. Who Can Vote?

1. The Association shall have as members only Owners and Tenants. Each member of the Association shall have one vote.
 - a. The Articles of Incorporation specifically state that there shall be one vote per Lot.
 - b. For Owners, the vote shall go to the Owner. If any member owns more than one lot, such member shall be entitled to one vote for each such Lot. When any Lot is owned or held by more than one member by any manner of joint ownership or interest, such members shall be entitled to only one vote.
 - c. For Tenants, if casting an absentee (mail-in or online) ballot, Tenants must file a copy of a lease agreement with the Association no later than 4pm on the day prior to elections. If voting in-person, Tenants may present a copy of a lease agreement on Election Day. The voter shall be 18 years of age or older.

2. Eligibility and Identification

- a. Members will be considered eligible to vote if they can present an identification showing current address to be in Wilde Lake Village. If identification cannot be presented, then members must sign attestation form to confirm that they are an Owner or Tenant at the stated address.
- b. The Election Chair should publicize, along with the names and statements of candidates, information about who can vote and I.D. requirement to encourage voter turnout.

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

1. Voters Lists

There should be poll volunteers at the polling table, each with a part of the official voters list.

2. Validation of Owners

- a. After showing suitable I.D, Owners whose names are on the voters list will be checked off by the poll worker. A ballot will then be issued to them.
- b. Owners whose names are not on the voters' lists will record names on the printout next to their address for further verification using the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation online property search records. They will then place their ballots in an envelope with their name and address on the outside, and the ballot, in the sealed envelope will be placed in the ballot box.

3. Validation of Tenants

- a. An apartment tenant will be checked off the apartment unit at the appropriate address.
- b. To cast an absentee ballot (online or mail-in), Tenants must present a legal, executed copy of a lease agreement by 4pm prior to election day. To cast a ballot in person, Tenants must present a lease agreement at the polls on Election Day.

III. AFTER ELECTIONS

Vote Count

Each candidate may designate an observer to watch the counting process. The name of the observer must be provided to the Election Chair by 5pm two or more days before the Election. At no time may the observer handle the ballots.

A. Setting up for the Vote Count

1. The Election Chair and poll workers shall count the ballots. The Election Chair is responsible for the smooth processing and counting of the ballots.
2. The vote count shall be held in a room separate from post-Election socializing.

B. Preparation and Validation of Ballots

1. All ballots will first be scanned to be sure none has more than five (5) votes cast for Village board slots and no more than one (1) ballot cast for the Columbia Council

Representative. If part of the ballot is invalid, only the invalid section will not be used in the count.

2. The Election Chair validates the absentee ballots. These ballots are added to the in-person ballots.

C. Counting the Ballots

1. The ballots are divided into piles of up to fifty ballots and each pile of ballots is assigned two (2) counters.
2. Each counter records ballots on a counting grid. The grid shall be numbered vertically from one to fifty and have candidates' names across the top. Each pile of ballots shall be numbered from one to fifty. Each ballot shall be assigned a separate line.
3. Each team counts one pile of fifty ballots twice on separate grids. The grids are totaled and compared for accuracy. If a discrepancy exists, the pile of fifty ballots shall be recounted until the discrepancy is resolved.
4. Each candidate may designate a representative to observe the counting of the ballots. The name of the representative must be provided to the Election Chair by 5pm two or more days before the Election.

D. Official Election Results

1. After the ballots are counted, the Election Chair notifies the candidates and posts the official Election results.
2. Only the Election Chair, or his/her designee, is authorized to post, publish, announce or otherwise release the Election results. The Election Chair also acts as the only spokesperson for the committee.

E. Challenge Procedure

1. Challenges to the manner in which the Election was conducted must be in writing and submitted to the Election Chair within five (5) calendar days after the posting of the Election results. The By-laws do not allow for request for re-count except in the event of a tie.
2. After receiving a challenge, the Election Chair will make any recommendations to the Village Board within seven (7) calendar days.
3. The Election Chair is not required to consider any challenges, unless they could affect the results of the Election, until after the Election is certified. The Election Chair should then evaluate the Election procedures and the complaint and make recommendations in the final report of the Election.

F. Certification

1. The Election Chair certifies in writing the Election results to the incumbent Village Board after the deadline to challenges to Election by the end of April.
2. The Election Chair will submit its report at the first Village Board meeting in May.

Approved by the Wilde Lake Village board 1/17/91

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Revised 2/99

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