

HARPER'S CHOICE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ELECTION GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

Harper's Choice Community Association Village Elections are officially guided by Article VIII, Section 8 of the Bylaws. In addition, tradition, experience and press deadlines contribute to the effective administration of an annual election. These rules and regulations draw from the bylaws and past elections in order to serve as guidelines for the Village Board, the staff and the Election Monitor Committee before, during and after the village elections. The procedures are described according to the timeline of the election activities.

GOALS

The following major goals have been identified in administering village elections:

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. Elections should be efficient and run at a reasonable cost.

"ELECTION ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS"

I. BEFORE ELECTION

A. Selection of Election Monitor Committee and Chair

1. Appointment by Village Board
 - a. The Village Board is responsible for appointing the Election Monitor Committee (EMC) by Jan. 31. The Committee will number at least three people.
 - b. The Chair of the EMC is appointed by the Village Board.
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 that the Bylaw requirements are met and that all duties are performed.
 - b. The committee is responsible for explaining the rules and procedures of the election.
 - c. The committee coordinates Candidates' Night and the chair traditionally serves as moderator.
 - d. The committee is responsible for training poll workers who are recruited by the board of directors and the village staff. It is particularly important that all poll workers clearly understand how to determine voting eligibility, how to read the voter 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 acts as 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 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.

2. Setting election schedule

a. The Village Manager prepares an election timetable based on the Bylaw requirements after the election day is established. This should be distributed and publicized to the Village Board, residents and EMC in January. Important dates are outlined below:

- First week in January: appointment of EMC by the Village Board of Director
February 15 - Petitions will be available at Kahler Hall
- February 27th – Eligibility date for members
- March 1st - Nomination petitions accepted
- March 14th - Acceptance of nomination petitions closed
- 20th day prior to the election until the day prior to election: Absentee Ballots may be requested in person at Kahler Hall.
- 5 or more days prior to election: publish candidates' statements
- midnight of day prior to election: deadline for absentee ballots at Kahler Hall

C. Nomination Petitions

1. Preparation

- a. Each nomination petition shall show the full name and address of the candidate, his/her signature, and the office he/she is seeking.
- b. Room will be provided for 12 signatures of association members, plus space for printed name, address and telephone numbers. (See sample attached.)

2. Validation

- a. A member of the EMC will declare the petition valid when ten signatures have been verified as those of association members.
- b. Association members may sign more than one petition.

D. Directions for Information Packets

1. Preparation and distribution of packets

- a. The Village Manager, with the help of the EMC, is responsible for the preparation of packets for each candidate.
- b. These packets are distributed to potential candidates when they pick up their nomination petitions.

2. Contents of information packets

- 1) Village Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- 2) Election Guidelines and Regulations
- 3) Calendar for election
- 4) Board of Director Responsibilities

E. Candidates' Statements

1. Length
Candidates' official statements must be 150 words or less. All words in excess of 150 will be deleted from the statement. Statements must be submitted by March 20th in accordance with Section 8.04 of the By-laws.
2. Publication
 - a. Complete statements are published on the Thursday prior to the week of election to fulfill Bylaw requirements.
 - b. Statements shall be posted in the lobby of Kahler Hall.

F. Volunteers for Election Day

1. Recruiting
 - a. The Board of Directors, EMC, and staff will recruit workers to staff the polls on Election Day.
 - b. The EMC chair or a delegate from the 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 to be determined by the EMC.

G. List of Eligible Voters

1. Acquiring voter lists
 - a. The Village Manager is responsible for securing a list of eligible voters according to the Village Bylaws.
 - b. The list of property owners shall be obtained from CA assessment computer printouts.
 - 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 and one by address. Both are important to validate all possible ballots.
 - b. A current list of apartment dwelling units must be available.

H. Regular and Absentee Ballots

1. Preparation
 - a. The Village Manager is responsible for the preparation of all ballots as directed by the EMC.
 - b. The order of names on the ballot is determined by lot by the EMC.
2. Absentee ballots
 - a. Absentee ballots will be available as provided by the Bylaws.
 - b. Ballots may be submitted by mail or in person at Kahler Hall.
3. Procedures for validating ballots
 - a. Absentee ballots will be validated by committee members or designee following the process described in II.C.2. prior to Election Day. Walk-up ballots will be validated on site.
 - b. In the event of duplicate ballots from the same household, the first ballot received will take precedence.

II. DURING ELECTION

A. Voting Time and Place

1. Location

- Voting takes place at a site or sites designated by the EMC.
2. Hours for polls to be open
Polls must be open from 9:00AM until 3:00 P.M.
 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 100 foot electioneering boundaries.

B. Who Can Vote

1. Owners of property in Harper's Choice and tenants with a lease on property in Harper's Choice
 - a. All owners of real property are entitled to one vote per property.
 - b. If a property is jointly owned (by husband and wife, for example), the voting right is jointly held, so only one vote may be cast.
 - c. If a "fee simple" lot, condominium or cooperative unit is leased to a tenant, the tenant is also entitled to a vote.
2. Eligibility and identification
 - a. A member who has resided in Harper's Choice prior to February 27 is eligible to vote.
 - b. A member will be considered eligible to vote if she/he can present an identification showing current address to be in Harper's Choice.
 - c. The EMC should publicize, along with the names and statements of candidates, information about who can vote and I.D. requirement such as Drivers Licenses and BG&E Bills, in order to encourage voter turnout.

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

1. Voters lists
 - a. There should be two poll volunteers at the polling table,
 - b. The following documentation should be used by the volunteer poll workers to validate voter eligibility:
 1. Property addresses (computer printout)
 2. Property owners listed alphabetically (computer printout)
 3. List of apartment units.
2. Validation of property owners
 - a. After showing suitable I.D., property 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. After showing suitable I.D. apartment tenants should also be asked if they have lived in the Village of Harper's Choice prior to February 27. If eligible, apartment tenant will be checked off the apartment unit at the appropriate address.
 - c. After showing suitable I.D., property owners whose names are not on the voters lists will place their ballots in a covered envelope with their names and address on the outside, and the ballot, in the envelope, will be placed in the ballot box. Questionable voters will be validated by using the criss-cross directory, telephone book, or other means as determined.

D. Electioneering

1. Electioneering boundaries
 - a. There shall be no electioneering within 100 feet of the polls.
 - b. Poll workers should take care to remove any electioneering hand-outs from the voting tables.
2. Violations
 - a. The EMC chair or a delegate is responsible for warning candidates and their

representatives if they electioneer within the 100-foot boundary.

- b. If a serious problem results, the EMC should document the violations in writing and may recommend that the Village Board invalidate the election.

III. AFTER ELECTION

A. Vote Count

1. Setting up for the vote count
 - a. Members of the EMC 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. Each candidate may have a representative 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 have more votes cast for village board slots than are available to be filled and no more than one vote cast for Columbia Council Representative. If part of the ballot is invalid, the invalid section will not be used in the count.
3. Counting the ballots
 - a. All validated ballots are batched in twenties and are numbered.
 - b. A grid is used by vote counters to tally the ballots in each batch. There will be teams of two counters per batch (sample grid attached)
 - c. The EMC chair creates a master grid with candidate names across the top of the grid horizontally with each batch listed vertically.
 - d. Once accuracy is ensured by the vote counter team for each batch, the grids are attached to the batch and given to the EMC chair. The EMC chair enters the ballot count of each batch into the master grid and totals the results.
 - e. The Master Grid will be the official record of the Election.
4. Official election results
 - a. After the ballots are counted, the official election results are posted by the EMC designee.
5. Challenge procedure
 - a. Challenges must be in writing and submitted to the EMC chair within five calendar days after the posting of the election results as authorized in the Bylaws, Article VIII Section 8.09.
 - b. The committee is not required to consider any challenges, unless they could affect the results of the election, until after the election is certified.
6. Certification of results
 - a. The committee must submit its final report to the board by April 30.

ATTACHMENT A

HARPER'S CHOICE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

NOMINATION PETITION: HARPER'S CHOICE VILLAGE BOARD

I, _____
(first) (middle) (last) (address)

Hereby submit this petition as evidence of my candidacy for **the Harper's Choice Village Board.**

Phone _____ Email address _____
Signature _____

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 8.03 as amended entitled Nominations, of the By-Laws of the Harper's Choice Community Association, Inc. **Any qualified candidate for the Board of Directors or representative to the Columbia Council must be nominated. Nomination shall be by petition only. The petition, to be circulated by the candidate or by other persons in his behalf and with his consent, will show the full name and address of the candidate, his signature, and the office he is seeking. The nomination petition shall be valid when ten or more members of the Association have signed it. Association members shall not be restricted from signing more than one nomination petition. Each candidate shall be nominated for one office only. Each candidate will submit his nomination petition to the Election Monitor Committee for validation. The Election Monitor Committee will accept nomination petitions for the first day of March through the fourteenth day of March, at which time nominations will be closed. Each candidate submitting a valid petition during the nomination period will be a nominee for the indicated Association office and his name will be placed on the appropriate ballot.]** This petition is submitted for validation with the signature of at least ten (10) Association members, who reside in the Village of Harper's Choice.

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____

Use reverse side if necessary.

Note: A resident of the village of Harper's Choice may sign more than one petition.

THIS PETITION TO: Chairman, Harper's Choice Election Committee, Kahler Hall, 5440 Old Tucker Row, Columbia Maryland 21044 by **5:00 PM SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2015.**

Election Committee_____