

MICHAELA HICKS – ANNANDALE

Personal: Wife; History Teacher; Doctoral Candidate at Piedmont College

Favorites: my dog, Molly; watching Jeopardy; research on cognition and behavior; coffee

Least Favorites: the dentist; people who don't use turn signals; fruit on pizza

Legacy Park Activities: Tennis player; active interest in the facilitation of events for children and teenagers; Op-ed participation in the monthly newsletter



Despite my short track-record of neighborhood committee involvement, I feel that I bring ample qualities to benefit Legacy Park's HOA. After purchasing our home in May, I found myself with a piqued interest in neighborhood affairs, community participation, and diplomatic discussion. The COVID-19 pandemic provided me with a great deal of time in which to consider the legacy that I want my life to leave; serving our neighborhood through the HOA would allow me to truly be where my feet are and invest in our community.

My greatest attributes that would encourage that I am a candidate worthy of election involve interpersonal skills, a reflective disposition, and the ability to increase engagement and participation. I currently have three degrees, all requiring research and synthesis, that confirm my ability to effectively communicate through written and verbal methods. Further, through my current job, I have experience in mitigating and advocating for a diverse body of people, implementing fundraising, managing a local account, earning respect through disciplined leadership practices, and maintaining professional standards and ethics. Whereas some may see my age as lacking experience, I would argue that I offer a diverse and needed perspective for our growing neighborhood, an extensive awareness of technology and best practices in social media communication, and a heart for community as a whole.

1. As we move into 2021 we will be faced with some of the same challenges of 2020, what are your thoughts on attending virtual Board meetings and making those meetings available to the HOA members?

So long as the Board is comfortable meeting in person, I believe that they should continue to hold meetings as they have been; accommodations should be made for those who wish to attend virtually. Regardless, I am a strong proponent of making board meetings available for community participation through online platforms. It is likely that public participation would increase and correlate with opportunities for vocalization. Open communication through virtual board meetings will foster community trust and allow for transparency.

2. 2020 saw many events cancelled. For 2021, if budgeted events continue to be cancelled, what are your thoughts on issuing a refund to the HOA members accounts? What are your thoughts on refunding to HOA members accounts for budgeted cancelled 2020 events?

Anticipating canceled events going forward and back-tracking for this year are two entirely different issues. Should there be cancelled events in 2021, HOA accounts *should not* be refunded a portion of their dues. Dues collected can be appropriated for amenity development, furthering/implementing initiatives in the community, ground maintenance, increased safety measures, and modernization where applicable. I believe that dues should remain the same, not to discount personal hardship, but to have an increased discretionary income for maintaining and modernizing our neighborhood to its fullest extent.

Further, the 2020 year is essentially done. We cannot go backwards but can only look forwards. I think that the amount and expectations have already been well-communicated and need not be revised.

3. What are your thoughts on replacing paper communications with electronic communications with the HOA members?

Technology and its integration are truly the forefront of our interconnected society. Additionally, eco-friendliness has grown in importance over the past decade. I see exceeding value in replacing paper communications with electronic communications were possible, however, I think it fair that homeowners receive the option to select how they desire to receive communication—whether it be electronically or through paper distribution. There may be pockets of homeowners who are not comfortable with electronic communication, and the cost is likely not exponential to accommodate peoples' desires where this is concerned.

4. What specific skills, personal and professional, do you have that will have a positive impact on the community?

In addition to near-proficiency in social media and technology integration, I am a strong communicator—both verbally and in writing. I am a teacher who excels at clear, effective communication, advocating for diverse populations, and anticipating conflict. Additionally, I feel that my role as a researcher and doctoral candidate speaks to my willingness to become educated on matters that I am not fully competent in. Perhaps my greatest skills that would yield positive community impact are a willingness to serve, to listen, and to advocate for the betterment of our

All 2021 HOA Board candidates had the opportunity to submit answers to five standard questions asked by the Elections Committee for publication to the community. Candidates are responsible for their own answers. Please note that the information provided by the candidates has **not** been edited (other than formatted to fit the space) **nor** verified for its accuracy by the HOA.

neighborhood. Genuinely, my greatest strength is my husband, who supports everything that I do—I believe that he truly enables me to prioritize involvement on our HOA board.

5. What is your vision for the next 5 years for the community.

The next five years in Legacy Park have the potential to be formidable and transformational. First and foremost, I envision an increased level of programming for teenagers. There is a growing amount of middle and high school students in our neighborhood who deserve programming that is engaging, timely, and fosters community within that age bracket throughout the year. Currently, we have great initiatives for this age-group during the summer, and I would like to see something continued. There are undeniable benefits to increasing community engagement among such a vulnerable population.

Additionally, I believe that our community is evolving and that our offerings should be aligned with what is of current interest. We need to inventory everyone in order to discern which amenities, programming, and events are best serving our population. From there, we must make financial modifications that appeal to our masses and support the desires of our community. This will increase participation and counter some of the impacts of the aging nature of the neighborhood. Further, improving amenities will help Legacy Park to remain current amidst newly constructed neighborhoods within a five-mile radius.