



Vail Town Hall, Town Council 2023 Election – The clock is ticking.

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Letters to Vail

September 19, 2022

2023 Vail Town Council election - Four seats open

At this time next year, the 2023 Vail Town Council election will be fully underway. The outcome depends upon the thoughtfulness of those participating in the electoral process whether they are voters or part-time residents. All those who hold Vail in high regard are urged to participate by raising their voice or supporting those who are willing to speak up.

Of the present Council, three are term limited and a fourth received a two-year term in the previous election. Choosing among those who step forward to serve the public good are the important decisions to be made over the next 12 months.

Each candidate's qualifications should be carefully considered. Their position on the issues of the day should be made plain. The community deserves to know their positions on preserving open space and the environment.

In the past, candidates have been counseled to not discuss issues that might come before them if elected. Since almost any issue could come up, that kind of advice has served as a convenient excuse to avoid discussing touchy or tricky issues. That denied the public the ability to learn how candidates would govern if elected. VHA advocates that electoral processes are the most effective when open public debate occurs.

Severely limiting a candidate's ability to publicly discuss the important issues of the time drives a wedge between officials and the public. Knowing a candidate's position on important issues is the fuel necessary to propel the public debate forward.

During the coming months, VHA will address those subjects that animate the public discourse. The points raised are the result of dialogue between VHA members and invited guests at the 2022 Vail Homeowners Association Annual Membership Meeting. These issues, beginning below, will be serialized in forthcoming VHA communications.

1. Declaration of conflicts required when participating in open public community meetings was raised by a former TOV official. How is a Town Councilperson, who works for Vail Resorts, able to vote on issues that affect his employer's interests?

An effort, begun in the last Town Council, would have the Council adopt a more strenuous ethics code for conflicts of interest. Council rejected bringing the matter up for discussion. Unless an item is brought to Council by staff, it takes four council members to bring it up for discussion and four to vote to adopt. Currently, there may be four on Council willing to consider the matter, but none, at the present time, are pushing for consideration.

Many of the TOV's peers have comprehensive conflicts of interest on ethical rules. It is past time that Vail did likewise. Too often in the recent past conflicts of interest have been brushed aside. Having strong rules promotes integrity and confidence in government. [. A VHA report containing a proposed conflict of interest ethics code is available on the VHA website.](#)

2. Today, more than usual, people need to pay attention to what is underlying critical public issues.

The TOV is conducting a "sustainability" study which is scheduled to be released this fall. While the precise scope of the study is yet unknown, the study should address the fundamental question of whether the community has the capacity to handle increases in density and occupancy. Chasing more parking and workforce housing through increased density, after decades of trying, has yet to prove that development can keep pace with consumer demand incentivized through aggressive mass marketing. There is the potential for overwhelming pent-up consumer demand to be released as an economic recovery accelerates.

Recent developments seem to indicate that the TOV recognizes the need to limit Frontage Road parking. However, new developments are routinely asking for parking variances to provide fewer parking spaces, which will likely push residents and very likely seasonal workers to find additional spaces outside their residential area.

Residential activism is required now and over the next year to ensure that candidates for the community's leadership positions are prepared to balance tourism while protecting the quality-of-life experiences of the community's full and part-time residents. Sustainability recommendations will factor into the Town Council election in the Fall of 2023.

Is there enough concern to support and elect those to the Town Council who will strive for a quality-of-life balance between the experiences of residents and tourists?

VHA provides clear and concise discussions of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. We intend to promote more citizen involvement and community discussions of issues facing the Town. If these are issues that concern you, please make your views known to [town officials](#). Public discussion of current issues by concerned citizens creates an environment to further community initiatives. We heartily encourage your input in shaping the road ahead.

Receive VHA letters and reports as a Paid-Subscriber or Member.

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