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## Election Guidelines

5 messages

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**J Cornelius** <inbox@jcornelius.com>

Thu, Jul 3, 2025 at 8:15 AM

To: littleton.elizabeth@gmail.com

Hello Liz,

Thank you for your work on the election committee. As thankless as the board positions might be, I can imagine how people might easily overlook your contributions.

Please educate me on why public discussion about the campaign on social media is discouraged. Why would the POA or election committee want to prevent public discourse? What is the concern?

The other guidelines are understandable. The lack of campaign signs around the community is one of my favorite things about living here. :)

Thanks in advance, I truly appreciate your help.

- J.

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**Elizabeth Littleton** <littleton.elizabeth@gmail.com>

Thu, Jul 3, 2025 at 11:36 AM

To: "inbox@jcornelius.com" <inbox@jcornelius.com>

Hi J,

The election committee guidelines are written to provide a level playing field and fair elections for all candidates. We ensure that equality by producing communications for ALL candidates throughout the cycle:

- Video taped events: Smoke Signals Q&A, Fireside Chats, and Candidate Forums (You can talk about your campaign platform)
- Digital: BC Living Candidate Profiles and links to more materials on the election committee website, Amenities Monitors messaging, election cycle key dates, etc.
- Direct email to Property Owners

I would suggest you invite the other candidates to your social media forum to truly provide an equal opportunity for public discourse. Big Canoe policies and decisions are not made in social media, rather by the elected Board of Directors.

Best,  
Liz

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**J Cornelius** <inbox@jcornelius.com>

Fri, Jul 4, 2025 at 10:02 AM

To: Elizabeth Littleton <littleton.elizabeth@gmail.com>

Thank you for your response, Liz.

I understand and respect the Election Committee's intent to ensure fairness. The current restriction—prohibiting candidates from posting campaign-related content on any Big Canoe related social media—goes beyond what is reasonable or necessary to achieve that goal.

This policy effectively prevents open civic dialogue in the very public spaces where residents already gather to share opinions and information. That's not a level playing field—it's a narrow corridor controlled by a single committee. The policy raises a fundamental question: how do we know that the three official communication channels being offered—video events, digital profiles, and direct emails—are the fairest or most complete representations of each candidate? Who controls what gets asked, what gets published, and how it's framed?

Historically, democratic processes thrive on open discourse, not tightly centralized control. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that open debate on public issues is the “*essence of self-government*” (see *Garrison v. Louisiana*, 1964), and that political speech—especially during elections—occupies the “core of the First Amendment” (*Buckley v. Valeo*, 1976; *Citizens United v. FEC*, 2010). While the POA is not a government body and the First Amendment may not apply directly, the principles of transparency, free expression, and public accountability still matter—especially in a residential community governed by its own elected board.

Furthermore, courts have generally frowned upon HOA and POA policies that restrict residents' rights to communicate during elections. In *Committee for a Better Twin Rivers v. Twin Rivers Homeowners' Association* (NJ, 2007), the court recognized that even private communities must balance their governance authority with residents' rights to engage in political discourse—especially when that discourse is essential to the electoral process.

Encouraging equal access to official communication is one thing; suppressing independent discussion is another. Suggesting that candidates cannot post campaign content on social media—whether personal or public, resident-run or otherwise—is not fairness; it's gatekeeping.

I appreciate your suggestion to invite other candidates into any forums I host, and I will. But that invitation should be voluntary, not a condition of speaking. Voters deserve to hear directly from candidates—on multiple platforms, in multiple formats, without pre-approval or censorship.

This is their community, their election, and their right to participate fully in the process—not just as spectators of a committee-controlled broadcast, but as engaged citizens in an open conversation.

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