

Get to Know Your Candidates

Four candidates have submitted their candidacy for two Board Director positions. Read ahead to hear from each one regarding their qualifications and interest in serving our association through this important volunteer position.

STEPHEN J. BENKOWITZ

Introduce yourself. Include your background (business, volunteer, other experience), the # of years you have been a resident, etc.



My wife, Regina, and I have been residents of Stonebridge Ranch for 12 years. Prior to that we lived in Plano for over 20 years. We have three grown children, all are successful in their own right.

I am currently retired. Prior to retirement I worked for Marriott Hotels for more than 40 years. I was a General Manager for 36 years, the last ten as area GM overseeing a few additional hotels as well as my primary one. I oversaw up to 4 properties, 50+ managers and over 400 employees.

I was responsible for overall management including sales and marketing, finance, maintenance, rooms operations and food and beverage operations; all of which were focused on driving sales, improving profit, customer and associate satisfaction.

I volunteered to participate in the Greater Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Irving Convention and Visitor Bureau, The Addison Rotary Club (President one year), and the Collin County Appraisal District Appeal Board (Ass't Director my last year). I also was the Commissioner of Baseball for the Plano YMCA, a position I held so that I could coordinate schedules as I coached all three of my kid's baseball teams.

What do you believe is the primary function of the Board?

To provide a safe, well-maintained community that the residents are proud of, and others want to move into.

Which areas/issues do you feel need attention from the Board?

The board has recognized (12/6/19 minutes) that the relationship between the board and the home owners on compliance issues needs to be improved. I am one of those homeowners who was on the receiving end of that poor relationship. I want to help fix it.

I am not a "politician." That is, I do not go along to get

along. When I encounter something that is not working as it should, or is just wrong, I enlist others of the same mind and work towards resolving the issue.

I believe that some of the compliance guidelines and procedures are not homeowner friendly. They are not designed with enough flexibility to help the homeowner meet his goals to improve the value of his significant investment. I believe we should and can improve this process.

I would also like to see more detail in the monthly minutes. We are generally told what is discussed, but rarely the outcome or result. I would like more information to be shared, which would only improve homeowner interest and involvement.

To which area(s) do you feel you could make the greatest contribution? Why?

I would be willing to serve in any capacity, but feel my greatest contribution would be in the modifications and compliance area. I have seen first hand how poorly a situation could be handled. I know that with my extensive management background, I could be instrumental in leading the board to a better process. ◀

NORMAN COUNTS

Introduce yourself. Include your background (business, volunteer, other experience), the # of years you have been a resident, etc.



Wife – Carol, Daughter - Tracey, 2
Grandchildren
Resident of Stonebridge – January 2008

Actively Retired – July 2012

Stonebridge HOA Director – 2014 to present, current Vice-President, previous Treasurer
McKinney Seniors Helping Seniors - Volunteer, Home Repairs for Seniors and Disabled
AARP Foundation Tax-Aide– Volunteer, Site Coordinator;
Federal Tax Return Preparation

2003 - 2008 Independence Hill HOA
Plano Texas – Board President & Treasurer

Texas Instruments, Inc. & Raytheon Corporation, 41 years
Finance - General Accounting, Financial Planning,
International Audits, Manufacturing Mgt.
APICS – CPIM Certification
Industrial Engineering – Factory Design and Automation
Elected Senior Member Technical Staff
Information Technology – Systems Architecture and
Strategic Planning
Certified Six Sigma Expert
Elected Information Technology Fellow

Decco Jobber Supply Company, 10 years
Owner- Janitor Supply Company

Education

University of Texas at Austin – BBA Statistics
University of Texas at Dallas – MAS Finance

What do you believe is the primary function of the Board?

The primary function of the Board of Directors is to be the steward of the financial resources provided by the residents, executive oversight of operations, setting strategic priorities, and establishing + policies that ensure that Stonebridge Ranch continues to be the premier, large scale, master planned community of choice in North Texas.

Which areas/issues do you feel need attention from the Board?

Resident feedback indicates that owners want the Board to ensure we maintain our rich canopy of trees and vibrant landscaping, active lifestyle, effective management of operating expenses, and maintenance of current amenities while evaluating the potential for incremental capital investments to expand amenities as allowed by the budget.

- Oversee the execution of the landscape master plan
- Establish a budgeted capital improvement plan
- Establish a comprehensive communications strategy focused on keeping our residents informed
- Establish and execute a resource conservation plan
- Oversee the financial resources used to manage community association assets
- Oversight of the maintenance of the common areas
- Proactive response to governmental issues affecting the HOA from the State, County, City, and North Texas Water District.

To which area(s) do you feel you could make the greatest contribution? Why?

My background, experience on the Board, training, and personal interests lead me to look forward to making additional future contributions for the benefit of the Association in the areas of financial analysis, strategic

execution, and process improvement.

- Develop a portfolio of operating health metrics.
- Review and update of critical governance documents
- Assist with development and validation of a project management system
- Assisting with financial and project audits
- Administration of Board collaboration system ◀

JOHN CRABTREE

Introduce yourself. Include your background (business, volunteer, other experience), the # of years you have been a resident, etc.



Hello, my name is John Crabtree. My family, which includes my wife Brittany, daughter Emma (10) and son Maximillian (6), moved to Stonebridge Ranch from Boise, Idaho about 18 months ago. I am a veteran of the United States Navy, where I served 4 years as an avionics technician in an attack squadron and made several deployments aboard the USS Enterprise. I hold bachelor's degrees from UCLA and Boise State University and an MBA from Boise State. In the just over 30 years since I have been out of the military, I have been working in the aerospace industry including starting my own avionics design engineering firm. For the past 14 years I have been working in operations and project management with full P&L responsibility for a \$60M business and served for 2 years on the occupational advisory board of a community college. I strongly believe in fiscal responsibility and as a steward of our community resources, I will do whatever I can to ensure compliance with that principle.

What do you believe is the primary function of the Board?

I believe the primary function of the board is to ensure the SRCA governing documents are followed and enforced. The board should also ensure that day to day operations of the association are conducted with the best interest of the community at heart.

Which areas/issues do you feel need attention from the Board?

I believe the board should give attention to the perceived contentious relationship that exists with association members. Through transparency, open dialogue and listening with a purpose I believe the board can change the perception that many association members have and eliminate the "us vs them" relationship that currently exists. Revisiting current association vendor contracts to ensure the association is getting maximum value is another area to focus on in the short term. I feel that for

the long term the board needs to focus on strategies that will minimize the impact of the TXDOT 380 bypass project on our community quality of life in the coming years.

To which area(s) do you feel you could make the greatest contribution? Why?

Based on my business and operations background I feel like I could make the greatest contribution in the areas of finance and modifications, but I do have the project management skills to effectively work in whatever area I am called upon to do so. ◀

KRISTEN VARTIAN

Introduce yourself. Include your background (business, volunteer, other experience), the # of years you have been a resident, etc.



My name is Kristen Vartian, and I am running for reelection to Stonebridge Ranch Board of Directors. I truly enjoy serving on the Stonebridge Ranch Board, and it is my desire to continue to help facilitate the implementation of our strategic plans to ensure that Stonebridge remains North Texas' premier community to live, work and play in. My husband David, our 2 sons and I have lived in Aspendale since April of 2006.

My Community association experience includes serving on the BOD since 2017. Acting as board liaison to the Modifications Committee. In this role I support and assist the committee and act as an interface between the board and committee. I also serve as chair of the Board Appeals Committee. Prior to my board service I spent eight years on the Modifications Committee, during this time, I helped process several thousand applications for modification, heard homeowner appeals, assisted in guidelines updates as necessary. I served as committee chair for four terms and cochair for two terms.

My professional experience includes 13 years in the telecommunications industry, three years in the mortgage business, for the past 12 years I have been a local REALTOR®, and a commercial/residential property manager and investor 20+ years.

What do you believe is the primary function of the Board?

- Manage the annual budget, with prudence and savvy.
- Ensure reserve funds are properly invested and allocated.
- Provide support/guidance to committees.
- Protect/preserve property values by making certain that covenants and guidelines are abided by.
- Embody our vision and mission.

Which areas/issues do you feel need attention from the Board?

Stonebridge is a unique community, as we have been established for over three decades, however, we continue to grow. The board needs to focus on:

- Identify/prioritize items throughout the community in need of repair/replacement, and the resources necessary to plan implementation of such repairs.
- Ensure the fiscal health of the association by continually and prudently evaluating revenue streams and expenses.
- Continue to look for efficiencies to reduce operational costs without compromising value and quality.
- Maintain the lines of communication with homeowners, and continually seek volunteer participation within our association.
- Focus on strong relationships with our city and state elected officials, as well as, keeping current on all governmental issues that affect the association.

To which area(s) do you feel you could make the greatest contribution? Why?

A board member must have the skill set and availability to meet the challenges of the community. As a business owner, and experienced board member, my experience facilitates our ability to best deal with the challenges of community with focus on architectural control, capital improvements, repair/replacement, finance, maintenance and communications. Board members need to have the ability and acumen to negotiate, create consensus and harmony while making informed decisions that will best position our community for the challenges of the future.

It is vital to remember that Stonebridge Ranch being, the largest Homeowners Association in Texas is no ordinary Homeowners Association, it is its own city.

This is both a challenge and opportunity. Service to the board requires both professional experience and a commitment of time and energy. I am committed to continue to grow friendships, and preserve the integrity of our community. ◀

