

2024 BHA Board Candidate

Chris Parrish



Profession and education: Owner of Parrish Manor, Inc., a 280-site manufactured housing community in Raleigh, and Homes by Parrish, a custom home builder on BHI. Graduated UNC-Chapel Hill in Political Science and MBA from Appalachian State University.

Spouse name and background: Married to Colleen since 2006 and have four children. Colleen is a graduate of UVA and Duke University. Formerly a neonatal intensive care nurse and pediatric nurse practitioner.

What is your history with Bald Head Island that has brought you to ownership and now a candidate for BHA? We started visiting the island in 2010 when our oldest daughter, now 15, was just a year old. We visited multiple times each year and became homeowners in 2015. We love the island for its beautiful scenery and laid-back atmosphere and as a place that our kids can explore and enjoy.

What professional skills and life experiences do you feel would be most valued as a member of the BHA Board?

The experiences I have gained by operating a manufactured housing community are much like being the mayor of a small town. Our community is over 1,000 residents, with almost half being 18 or younger. I have experience developing and enforcing guidelines and rules, which I will be able to apply to the BHI Board. My experience as a homebuilder on the island gives me a unique insight into the workings of the Board and ARC and how they impact builders and future homeowners.

As a BHI property owner, what aspect of Island life is most important to you as a key to BHI's future and, if elected, how would you help craft that future? I think harmony is the aspect of Island life that is key. Not only harmony with our surroundings, but with each stakeholder living and working on the island. By building consensus and using common sense, I hope to bring all the parties together.

Platform/Philosophy/Positions — Address these real-world questions:

The trend toward a “resort-like” Island poses issues for the property owners who favor a culture of stewardship and conservancy. What are some of the mechanisms BHA might use to address these issues? It is true the island has experienced accelerated growth over the last few years, but we must remember that every home and business on the island were once undeveloped and natural. Development on the remaining lots and tracts of land are inevitable and BHA should tailor its approach to the specific needs and characteristics of the island and its property owners, considering the balance between development and conservation that best suits the community's values and long-term sustainability. The association should foster communication among the various stakeholders and bring them to the table for conversations to raise awareness and hopefully a consensus on the community's values and long-term vision. Developing and building on the island is not an easy task and most that make a decision to operate on the island are invested in the island not only with their time and money but also as a partner in protecting the beauty and culture.

What are some ideas to help strengthen our “community” as a whole for all BHA members, without regard to how much time members spend on the Island? Strengthening the sense of community among all BHA (Bald Head Island Association) members, regardless of the time they spend on the island, is essential for fostering a cohesive and inclusive community.

Some ideas to strengthen community are:

- To create an online platform or forum where members can connect and engage in discussions, share updates, and stay informed about island news and events.
- Host virtual or hybrid community events that allow members to participate from anywhere, such as webinars, virtual town hall meetings, or live-streamed island activities.
- Develop a welcoming committee that pairs new or less-involved members with long-time residents for mentorship, guidance, and a warm introduction to the community.

Continued

Continued

Chris Parrish

If you are elected to the Board, what initiatives would you propose and lead to help ensure participation among property owners, especially among members who are on the Island part-time? If elected to the Board of the Bald Head Island Association (BHA) with a focus on ensuring participation among property owners, especially those who are on the island part-time, I would propose and lead several initiatives to achieve this goal.

These include:

- Create an inclusive digital platform that offers property owners easy access to community news, updates, and discussions. This platform should be a central hub for all communication and engagement efforts.
- Organize regular virtual town hall meetings that allow property owners to participate in decision-making and voice their concerns, regardless of their physical presence on the island.
- Develop an online welcome and orientation program for new property owners, including part-time residents, to help them integrate into the community and understand BHA's services and initiatives.
- Host events tailored to the schedules of part-time residents, whether in person when they are on the island or virtually when they are away, fostering a sense of belonging.
- Allow property owners to participate in BHA committees remotely, ensuring that their expertise and input are accessible regardless of their location.
- Host informative webinars on island-related topics, including conservation, wildlife, and community updates, ensuring that part-time residents remain informed and engaged.
- Develop efficient channels for property owners to provide feedback, suggestions, and ideas, demonstrating a commitment to listening to all voices.

By implementing these initiatives, the Board can ensure that all property owners, including part-time residents, feel connected, engaged, and valued members of the Bald Head Island community. This approach will foster a strong sense of participation and a greater sense of ownership in the community's well-being.

How could the BHA Board, the Village Council, BHI Limited and the BHI Clubs better work in tandem to ensure an alignment of respective organizational goals while also implementing collaborative plans for the Island? To ensure alignment of respective organizational goals and foster collaborative plans for Bald Head Island, the BHA Board, Village Council, BHI Limited, and the BHI Clubs can take several steps to work in tandem effectively.

- Establish a regular schedule for joint meetings or collaborative sessions where representatives from each organization can come together to discuss common goals and initiatives.
- Work together to establish long-term and short-term goals for the island. Form cross-organization committees or task forces focused on specific areas, such as infrastructure development, tourism, or community engagement. These committees can work together to create and implement plans.
- Keep the community informed about collaborative efforts and progress. Encourage feedback and input from residents to ensure their voices are heard. Periodically assess the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and adjust strategies as needed to achieve common goals.

Continued

Continued

Chris Parrish

What other issues should the BHA Board be discussing and considering? Why are they important? I think another issue that needs to be discussed is the difficulties homeowners, builders and designers are having with the ARC process. We have pages of guidelines that for the most part work well, however, there seems to be a push over the last few years to implement designs and rules that are non-conforming with many past designs on the island. Award-winning home designers have stopped working on the island due to obstacles presented and I have heard from potential clients and others about how the process is not welcoming or helpful; rather it is burdensome and authoritarian. We need to ensure that the process fosters collaboration with all parties and that the process works within the guidelines. Too many times I have heard about the “intent” of the guidelines and other subjective opinions.

The introduction page of the guideline’s states that “These Design Guidelines also contain a uniform review process of clear expectations and design requirements for obtaining approval of the Architectural Review Committee.”

This is not consistent with the proposed guideline change in the ARC Decisions page which has added the following language, “When reviewing a submitted set of plans, the ARC may require compliance with requirements that, although not itemized specifically, are supported by sections of the Design Guidelines and Covenants.”

The proposed change creates the possibility that design decisions will be arbitrary and gives the small ARC members carte blanche to decide what they believe is supported by the guidelines. This is especially concerning since Bald Head HOA members do not get to vote on proposed guideline changes. The ARC committee and staff recommend the changes and while they do ask for public input, not every outside suggestion makes the final proposal. I just do not think a document as critical as the guidelines should be controlled by only a few people.