

City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Damien Gilliams

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QUESTION:

The Property Tax Amendment and Water Infrastructure.

HJR 1F on the November 3 ballot would raise the non-school homestead exemption to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028, cutting the City's annual revenue.

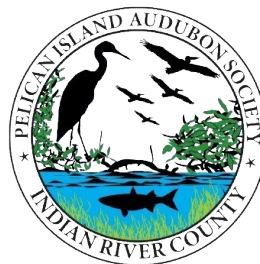
- Do you support this amendment?

- If it passes, how do you expect the revenue reduction to affect the City's support for water utilities, Lagoon monitoring, and water quality projects? If you intend to protect those programs, tell us specifically where the money comes from instead (which services or staff positions you would reduce, or what revenue you would raise).

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

Yes, I would along with the other council members give the city manager directions to cut across the board except I would not want to interfere with funding for any stormwater or lagoon projects? I would be looking to try to increase funding for any and all critical drainage issues. As you know when I was a councilman, the first thing I did was to put a moratorium on all spraying of chemicals to control the weeds in our canals there are other ways to accomplish this task.

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QUESTION:

Sustaining Restoration Under Funding Pressure.

Much of our local restoration relies on layered, non-guaranteed outside funding: EPA National Estuary Program dollars, competitive NOAA grants, the state Indian River Lagoon Protection Program, and water management district contributions.

- If state and federal funding are severely cut, how will you keep research and restoration moving for the Indian River Lagoon?
- Would you support a dedicated, recurring City funding source to insulate these projects? If not, what is your alternative?

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

Yes, I will support a dedicated recurring City funding source.

QUESTION:

Understanding Our Lagoon.

The St. Johns River Water Management District's 2025 monitoring showed a significant rebound in Lagoon seagrass coverage after years of decline.

- In your own words, what are the current water quality issues facing the Indian River Lagoon?
- Do you read the seagrass recovery as a reason to sustain current spending and effort, or to ease off?
- Beyond funding, name one or two concrete City-level measures you would champion to restore and maintain Lagoon health.

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

Yes ... Sustained the current spending .The storm water coming off of US highway 1 which is the state of Florida and every time we get a heavy rain everything washes into the lagoon through the system they have set up. Storm water retention ponds need to be set up along US1 to prevent anymore drainage from going into our lagoon

QUESTION:

Future Water Supply and Utility Expansion.

- What is your assessment of the City's long-term potable water supply, and how do existing and expected utility operations (wastewater and potable, City and County) affect the City's overall water resources?

- What specific expansion of utilities is necessary to meet future demand and restore our water resources, including the planned connection of legacy septic systems to central sewer?

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

The assessment on the city's potable water is poor, back in the day they sold their utilities to the county which was a poor decision however every assessment needs to be conducted and negotiated with the county for future annexations before being done with water and sewer in mine

QUESTION:

City-County Collaboration.

- Where do you see tangible opportunities for the City and County to work together on water and land use?

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

First thing I would do is start off with a master plan for annexations to be worked out with the county and the City of fellsmere with the water and sewer in mind. The next important thing would to retain a Land development attorney to handle all annexation agreements on behalf of the city and the taxpayers.

QUESTION:**Annexation**

The recent Sebastian Pines and Cresswind annexations approved roughly 1,512 homes on former agricultural land. Because Sebastian operates no water or wastewater utility of its own, both developments will rely entirely on the County's system under an interlocal agreement.

- How will you navigate a situation where the City approves major density increases that the County is ultimately responsible for serving?
- Do the current interlocal agreements give the County too much leverage? If so, what specific changes would you pursue?
- Are you in favor of future annexations? What makes an annexation attractive to you, and what would make you vote no?

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

Again, I would have a master plan for future annexations and having the county on board with water and sewer. In the meantime, I would request a moratorium and stop all annexations until this is worked out. The only annexation that would be attractive to me is getting the developer to pay all the expenses to address all the issues they created. I will leave you with this. This. The last time I was on city council we created 3.4 million for the new public works garage. I warned the council that the city manager and his friends from the West Coast are going to take us for a ride and they did. They were 6 million over budget on a 3.4 million job. I call that embezzlement with change orders and they're still didn't have enough. They just added another \$500,000 shed to cover up their millions of dollars in equipment. What a bunch of morons! I will leave you with this for a sunshine law violation. They said that I committed which is a misdemeanor. My bail was \$350,000. What a joke that's called the political hit job.