

City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Rob Gable

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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?

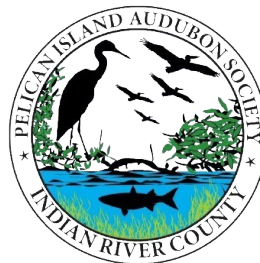
- If it passes, how do you expect the revenue reduction to affect the City's support for water utilities, Lagoon monitoring, and water quality projects? If you intend to protect those programs, tell us specifically where the money comes from instead (which services or staff positions you would reduce,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

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER:

At first i did support amendment 3. I was excited to be saving money on my taxes every year. That quickly changed once I read further in the small print and reading that the state has no back up plans to counties or cities to help them in the loss of revenue.

If amendment 3 passes. This city will have to really look at all departments to see where cuts can be made. The city has done a very good job over the last couple of years cutting back wasted expenses. With making great progress on city and river front improvements.

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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:

I believe that lagoon and indian river restoration is very important. Restoration and improvements is just a city project. The state and federal governments need to be more involved with funding and resources to keep the momentum moving forward. The volunteers and local residents can only do so much with education, starting new oyster beds and growing/planting the sea grasses but we really need the state and federal governments to do there part.

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:

Planting of the sea grasses is working. But its not just the grasses its also the oyster beds, removing septic tanks near the lagoon, pausing fertilizer usage during rainy season. Helping our lagoon thrive should not be about money. Its more about education and getting people more involved with restoration.

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:

I have not read anything about the county running out of potable water for residents anytime soon. I believe we have an ample supply for many years to come.

Recently i did attend the septic to sewer meeting the county held at the fair grounds. What a disappointment. I was excited to hear the time lines of when Sebastian was going to start the conversion, when we could apply for the grants and when they planned on completing the conversion. Only to find out none of that was happening. Only 476 homes or businesses along the river were part of the conversion the other 28,000 homes in the county were on there own to buy the new septic tanks by 2030 with no grant money available from the state.

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:

The city should have more of a say on what is being built on our borders especially when it comes to land on the indian river. We dont want development that has negative impacts from water run off from parking lots or pollution running into the river killing the plants ot mangroves.

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:

These developments were going to happen even if the city did not annex the land. The difference is the city has much more control on what is being built, how much green space is required. where the storm water is treated and diverted. The benefits of the annexation for the city out weight the negative.

Every house in those developments will be on county sewer no septic tanks. That makes me very happy. I do not believe the county will have much leverage over the city other than the sewer/water lines, fire & rescue and road development. The city's codes on what is being built will take precedence over the county.

Annexation must impact the city in a positive way. If the residents of Sebastian don't benefit from the annexation I will vote no.