



Questions for
Naples City Council Candidates

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1. About you:

- How old are you? 60
- How long have you lived in the City of Naples, and where did you live previously? I've lived in Naples for 26 years. After college, I chased my seventh-generation Floridian wife Susie to Dade County where I taught and coached for eleven years. We are blessed that our four daughters, aged 31-14 have grown up in Naples.
- What is your educational background and past work experience? I earned a Bachelor's degree in health from Liberty University (Lynchburg) where I attended on a football scholarship. I also earned a Master's degree in computer science from Nova Southeastern (Ft. Lauderdale) and a Master's degree in guidance and counseling from St Thomas University (Miami).
I was a teacher, counselor, administrator, and coach for 34 years, 11 years at American High School in Miami, 22 years at Naples High School, and one year at Collier County Alternative Schools. I left Collier County Public Schools in September of 2021, and that same month became the area director for Collier County for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). I also served for many years on the board of directors and executive committee for the 6,000 member Florida Athletic Coaches Association, eventually serving as president of that association.

2. What are your thoughts on the proposed NCH Heart and Stroke Institute and its location on NCH's Downtown Naples campus?

I cannot think of a better location for a world class heart and stroke center than downtown Naples. If we want world-class health care, then we need a world class facility. The best and brightest doctors are being trained in the latest techniques using the latest technology and tools. Common sense dictates that they would take

jobs at hospitals that have the latest technology and tools. Common sense also dictates that when our city, with a median age of 66.3, is offered more than 200 million philanthropic dollars to build a state-of-the-art heart and stroke center, our council and mayor should do all they can to facilitate and expedite the project.

3. Do you support the Naples Airport continuing to operate at its current location along Airport-Pulling Road? What are the most important considerations with respect to a potential relocation of the Airport?

Airplanes have been flying out of Naples Airport since 1942. All of us who purchased our homes in the flight path of the airport had planes flying over our houses as we signed the closing documents for our homes. Common sense would dictate that we could anticipate this would continue to be the case. The Naples Airport Authority has worked in good faith with the City for as long as I have lived here (26 years). We need to stop wasting time and resources on the notion of moving it, or dramatically changing its operations. Instead of being an existential threat to Naples Airport, the Naples City Council needs to partner with the Naples Airport Authority and recognize the airport as the exceptional amenity that it is.

4. What are the most important factors to be considered by City Council as it is asked to approve redevelopment proposals for the 5th Avenue South Extension, Four Corners, and Davis Triangle areas?

All petitioners before Naples City Council should be treated with respect. If the proposed projects comply with the guidelines set forth by the City of Naples then we should do all we can to accommodate the projects. If the proposed projects do not comply with City of Naples guidelines, then we should encourage planners to follow the guidelines set forth by the City of Naples.

5. What are the most important environmental (especially water-related) issues facing the City of Naples? What measures can and should City Council take in the next four years to address them?

The number one environmental issue is moving stormwater out of our city in a safe and environmentally friendly way. The first step in this is the completion of the beach outfall stormwater project. We have had a viable plan in place for a long time. Bob Middleton, our Director of Stormwater is a tremendous asset for

the City of Naples. We need to give him what he needs and get out of the way. If we can't move the water out, everything else is a moot point.

6. Some people generally want to limit any new development and keep Naples the way it is. Others are generally opposed to any infringement on property owners' rights. Where do you fall on the continuum between the two?

An honest conversation must recognize that there is very little room for development in the City of Naples proper. We also must acknowledge that there will always be the need for redevelopment as homes and buildings age or become distressed. Having said that, I will defend individual property rights. The fact that just a few weeks after Ian, our current mayor and council thought it was a good time to shrink lot coverage on single family houses is beyond the pale. Further, petitioners before Naples City Council are not the enemy. In fact, we are here to serve the people who work and live in the City of Naples. For those people, who live and work in our great city, and who follow the rules, the only question is: "How can we help?"

7. Was there a City Council vote during the last four years in which you disagreed with the outcome? If so, why did you disagree?

There are several, but the vote that stands out to me was on March 1, 2023. I had been considering, researching, and praying about running for Naples City Council for some time. March 1, 2023, was the day I committed to enter the race.

On that day, our current mayor and city council voted (Terry Hutchinson and Ted Blankenship were opposed) to allow a group to use Cambier Park to hold a festival in celebration of various ways of having sex. Part of that celebration included a drag show. Our city park, next to a children's playground, is not an appropriate place for that festival, any more than it is the appropriate place for a wet T-shirt contest.

8. What three things do you want to accomplish in the next four years?

My top priority is health and safety. The City of Naples should have the best trained, the best equipped, and the best compensated first responders in Florida...

period. We need to end the mentality of “competitive compensation”. And we should make no apologies for that. Naples should be THE standard for our great State. Our metric for determining this should be to consider the value of what our first responders are protecting.

Another specific health and safety issue is the upgrade to NCH with a state-of-the-art heart and stroke center. I’ve watched the project (a project which is funded by 250 million charitable dollars) get stiff armed for two years. The process would be comical if it were satire, unfortunately it is reality and it must change.

The third priority is getting the storm water project finished. I do not know if we can get it finished in four years, but at the very least, we must get it started as soon as possible.

Please email your responses to Sandy Parker, sandy@sparkers-soapbox.com, no later than February 2, 2024.