



Candidate Questionnaire – County Commissioner

August 2024 Primary Election

Your name: Burt Saunders
Your email address: burtsaunders@gmail.com
Your phone number: 239-229-8945
Your age: 75
Today's date: June 17, 2024

What year did you move to Collier County and where did you live previously?

I moved to Collier County from Miami to serve as the County Attorney in July 1982.

Where did you go to high school, and if you received any post-secondary education, where did you go, what degree(s) did you receive, and when?

I went to Kecoughtan High School in Hampton, Virginia. Received a degree in physics from the University of South Florida in 1972. Received my law degree from William and Mary Law School, Williamsburg, Virginia in 1975. Received a LL.M from the University of Miami Law School in 1979.

Please summarize your work experience, including employers and dates.

Dade County Attorney from 1979 – 1982
Collier County Attorney from 1982 - 1986
Member of the County Commission 1986 – 1994
Member Florida House of Representatives 1994 1998
Member Florida Senate from 1998 – 2008
Partner Gray Robinson Law Firm from 2006 to present
Member Collier County Commission from 2016 to present

Describe your community activities, either in elective office or as a volunteer, in the last five years.

See above

What is THE most important issue facing the Board of County Commissioners today and how will you address it?

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Please email your responses to sandy@sparkers-soapbox.com
no later than Friday, June 14, 2024.*

Managing growth while providing affordable workforce housing and protecting our natural environment.

Name one past policy decision of the Board of County Commissioners that you disagree with that you would like to change if elected. Why?

The policy of taking funds from Conservation Collier for other budget purposes. I disagree with that policy since Conservation Collier provides a voter approved policy (77% voter approval) that will help the County preserve critical environmentally sensitive lands, reduce development in areas that impact the County's drinking water supplies, and help provide natural barriers to saltwater intrusion into our drinking water suppliers and deal with storm surges due to hurricanes and rising sea levels.

What actions, if any, should the County take to address the need for affordable housing? What actions should the County not take with respect to providing housing?

First, I do not believe the County should mandate that a portion of a project must have a certain amount of affordable housing. The County should provide incentives for that such as density bonuses, impact fee deferrals or waivers, and should form joint public/private partnerships where the County can provide the land for an affordable housing project. This is the process utilized by the County to promote the construction of a 380-unit workforce and affordable housing project at the old Golden Gate Golf Course that should be under construction this year.

What are your views about the role of government as they relate to the policies and actions of the Board of County Commissioners? How would these views influence your actions and decisions as a Commissioner?

The County should stick to the areas in which the Commission has authority (jurisdiction) instead of areas of policy that are politically popular. For example, the County has no authority to legislate or regulate firearms. We should resist any efforts to legislate in that area as an example.

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