



**Candidate Questionnaire – County Commissioner
August 2024 Primary Election**

Your name: Michaela Kendall
Your email address: michaela.kendall01@gmail.com
Your phone number: (239)860-2521
Your age: 23
Today's date: August 7th, 2024

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

I was born here in Collier County in 2001 and have been here ever since.

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 Immokalee High School, where I took early admissions courses at Florida Southwestern State College (FSW) during my senior year. I graduated high school in 2019. After graduation, I attended Itech in Immokalee to study digital media and multimedia. My education was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as many other students' experiences were. I chose this path because I wanted to pursue art while avoiding student debt from a more formal art degree.

Please summarize your work experience, including employers and dates.

After graduating from Itech, I started exploring creative business ventures, recognizing that many businesses take several years to become profitable. Consequently, I began working temporary jobs. In 2021, I joined Carter Fence, a local fence subcontractor, as an office administrator. My role included managing various tasks such as payables, permitting, occasional reception duties, receivables, and scheduling. In 2023, I left Carter Fence on good terms to pursue a position with Rainbow Island Warriors, a non-profit organization. It was during this time that I became aware of the potential rezone on Capri, which ultimately inspired me to run for County Commissioner.

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

Over the past five years, my community involvement has included a mix of both formal and informal activities. During high school, I was actively engaged as a member of the marching band, art club, and prom committee, contributing to various school events and activities. After high school, I expanded my community engagement by attending and participating in commissioner, planning, and zoning meetings, where I gained valuable insights into local governance. Additionally, I contribute to environmental efforts by participating in python hunting in the Everglades, aimed at reducing the invasive species' impact on the ecosystem.

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What is THE most important issue facing the Board of County Commissioners today and how will you address it? The most pressing issue facing the Board of County Commissioners today is the infrastructure burden resulting from inadequate development planning and approvals. This issue is particularly evident in our local environment, as seen with the outdated infrastructure systems on Marco Island, which are affecting water quality. Recent testing of canal waters revealed high levels of enterococcus bacteria, linked to outdated sewage treatment facilities.

To address this challenge, I propose a comprehensive approach. First, we must conduct a detailed assessment of our existing infrastructure to evaluate its capacity and its environmental impact. This includes scrutinizing sewage treatment systems and their effectiveness in maintaining water quality. By identifying weaknesses and necessary upgrades, we can prioritize improvements that address both infrastructure and environmental concerns.

Additionally, stricter standards should be implemented for future development projects. Developers must be required to plan for and finance infrastructure improvements that meet current and future needs, including modern sewage treatment systems. This approach will ensure that the financial burden does not fall on local residents and that our infrastructure supports sustainable growth while protecting our natural resources.

By integrating infrastructure planning with environmental stewardship, we can enhance residents' quality of life, safeguard our natural resources, and build a more resilient community for the future.

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

One policy decision I disagree with is the 2023 approval to rezone the existing C-3 zoning to a mixed-use planned development. I believe the height of the proposed development is incompatible with the character of the surrounding community. Additionally, there are concerns about the potential strain on local infrastructure, particularly the sewage system. The proposed sewer line may need to connect to Marco Island, which could push the island's sewage capacity to its limit if Goodland ever has to convert to city sewage. Furthermore, the majority of Capri residents were vocal in their opposition to this development, and their concerns should have been more carefully considered. It is a County Commissioner's responsibility to prioritize decisions that reflect the will of the community and ensure that our infrastructure can support future growth without compromising our quality of life.

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?

To address the need for affordable housing, the County should prioritize creative and sustainable approaches to development that reduce costs and environmental impact. For example, promoting the use of alternative building materials can be one way to lower construction costs while also being environmentally conscious. Additionally, the County should encourage partnerships between public and private sectors to incentivize

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affordable housing projects, ensuring that these developments are accessible to a broader range of residents.

On the other hand, the County should avoid over-reliance on traditional methods that may be costly or environmentally harmful. Additionally, it should not place the financial burden of affordable housing solely on taxpayers. Instead, developers should bear the cost of any necessary upgrades to existing infrastructure that their projects require, ensuring that the burden is not shifted onto local residents. This approach balances the need for affordable housing with responsible growth and community well-being.

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?

I believe the role of government, especially at the county level, should be to serve the people by ensuring that policies and actions promote the well-being of the community while respecting individual freedoms. The government should act as a steward of public resources, balancing the need for growth and development with the preservation of our environment and quality of life. It should also ensure that the voices of residents are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

As a County Commissioner, these views would guide my actions and decisions by prioritizing transparency, accountability, and community engagement. I would work to ensure that the Board's policies are aligned with the long-term interests of the community, focusing on responsible development, infrastructure that meets current and future needs, and environmental stewardship. I believe that the government should facilitate opportunities for residents to thrive while protecting the rights and interests of all citizens. This approach would inform my efforts to create policies that are fair, equitable, and reflective of the community's values and needs.

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