



Charlotte County
Chamber of Commerce

City Council Candidate (District 4) Questions - 2024

Name: Lynne Matthews Date: 6/8/2024

What is your vision for economic development in the City of Punta Gorda?

Redevelopment in our City Center downtown will be critical to the long-term sustainability of our City. We need to have a development that will provide a live-work-play environment for synergy in our downtown, to support the over 1,100 businesses in the local business community and energize the blighted areas that have been vacant missing teeth since 2004. Developers will also need to understand the character and charm of our community and work with the City design team to create a project that complements our already existing businesses and fits into our new form-based codes requirements. Without new development at City Marketplace, the U-Save parcel and the PG Waterfront Hotel, we are greatly lacking the synergy we really need for long-term success.

What is the City of Punta Gorda greatest need and how do you plan on to address it?

Once again, the redevelopment downtown will be a huge need, however the project to restore and rebuild the City Hall is a very important part of the needs of the City. We need to get the historic portion of the building repaired and up to historic register standards, and rebuild a Council Chamber that will provide a much-needed facility for all Council and board/committee meetings for years into the future. We also need to get our entire City staff back in a centrally located building, where they can work cohesively together again. Currently, we have various departments working in several satellite locations around the City, and it is very inefficient for our needs.

This building is the City's seat of government and operating it at peak efficiency is important to our success. Efficiency for Planning, Permits, Building, Finance, Urban Design and all other departments is much better controlled when everyone operates under one roof. The current Council Chamber, if brought up to the required ADA and security standards, would only be able to accommodate 18 people, which is totally inadequate for current and future needs. Also, purchasing a different space to accomplish this would be a waste of taxpayer dollars and would not serve the needs of the City well. We need to be proud of our City Hall, which should serve as the cornerstone of our downtown and represent who we really are as a City.

Why are you the right choice for City Council?

I would hope that the voters can see the importance of retaining incumbents, as they have the knowledge of past, current and future projects that need to be completed. Our City Council has accomplished some great things over the past few years. Members of the City staff won the 2023-24 award for our recently approved Comprehensive Plan 2045 from the Florida Planning and Zoning Association. Our Finance Department also won an award for excellence in financial reporting. And we are among 20 semi-finalists at the All-America City competition in Denver as I write this.

Our City is highly respected and recognized all over the state, and I am very proud of that. Our involvement and excellent working relationship with the Florida League of Cities, local, regional, state and federal legislators has proven to assist us with financial support when we need it for

capital projects. I have worked very hard to develop those relationships and I am proud to say it is better now than it has ever been.

Also, I have fulfilled all the promises I made when I was first elected in 2016, and always try to be fair and impartial when I vote. I have worked very hard to be a voice for the citizens and a good public servant – not a politician whose votes can be bought. I love my job and would really love to continue doing the good work we have been doing since I've been on the Council. I am heavily involved in the community and support all the local Chambers, organizations and businesses and look forward to continuing to serve the residents of our beautiful City.

Please answer each question in 300 words or less and email back to bwhite@charlottecountychamber.org on or before July 12, 2024.