

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Candidate Questions – 2022

MARK "GUNNY" STEVENS

JULY 8th, 2022

What role should the County play in economic development?

The county should entice business to come to our county by initially pointing out the tremendous benefits of locating in Charlotte County (e.g. Outstanding weather, low taxes, no state income tax, centrally located, easy access to major highway arteries, and a commercial airport). For larger corporate projects, a solid plan for infrastructure requirements before they relocate or build facilities. Other considerations which must be anticipated are the population increase which will affect our schools and law enforcement. Proactive not reactive is key.

Do you support the extension of the penny sales tax?

This issue was already decided by the Voters and cannot be decided by the Commissioners. I will however say that I voted against the penny sales tax. The concept is an easy way to bring in more revenue to the county for special projects without increasing property taxes and have nonresidents also pitching in when they make purchases in the county. My reasoning for opposing the tax is that it has an impact on some retailers and especially automotive and boat purchases. Why buy in Charlotte County when you can make the same purchase by going over the county line. An example of a project that was completed using the penny sales tax would be the boat ramps. They were in need of repair and updating. The new boat ramps and parking were done well, however, rather than have the penny sales tax maintain these areas, you must now pay to park at these facilities. Conclusion – we build a project by charging the sales tax and then hit the taxpayer again to use these facilities.

Why are you the right choice for County Commissioner?

I have been a resident of Charlotte County for over 20 years and understand what issues are of concern to the citizens. I served and retired from the U.S. Marine Corps after over 20 years of active service. As a Marine, I worked for the Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG), acted as the Operations Chief for a seven state area in the recruiting force, and worked with multimillion dollar government budgets. Obviously, I am a strong supporter of our veterans and understand what serving our country is all about. I also understand the needs and services our veterans require and will be their greatest advocate on the Board of Commissioners. I have been a business owner in Charlotte County and am a licensed real estate agent and licensed pilot. I am a member of the American Legion and the Elks and have been involved with community and charitable ventures. I understand that I work for the citizens of the county and I am elected to "Represent" them. Their opinions and concerns are what will be my agenda. I recommend that in addition to formal Commissioner meetings, I will promote and hold informal Town Hall Meetings for my District to advise them of issues affecting their area and welcome their input. I will present this to my fellow commissioners and vote according to the wishes of my constituents. I am not a "Career Politician". The Marine Corps motto *Semper Fidelis* which is Latin for *Always Faithful* is my promise to you. I will be faithful to you, my constituents, and make you my number one priority.