

Gainesville Tea Party Local Candidate Questionnaire City of Gainesville Elections, 2012

1. The Constitution

- a. If elected, you will take an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution. Tell us about this oath and what it means to you.

Our Constitution established that government should be a small part of our lives; this is what our country was built on. "We the people" must be allowed the freedom and opportunity to prosper, (or fail,) on our own without the government trying to guarantee equal outcomes for all. Government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers! The role of government has grown far too great, resulting in a bloated system whose primary purpose is to perpetuate itself. I will use the Constitution as my guide to promote a more limited role for our overreaching local government.

- b. What is your view on the sanctity of private property as it pertains to eminent domain?

I see local government taking away our property right with over-laid and excessive ordinances that are placed on property owners without compensation. This must be questioned with boldness and STOPPED!

- c. Do you feel our government has curtailed liberties set forth in the Constitution? Specifically, how do you view the 10th Amendment to the Constitution as it relates to local government? Explain your answer in detail.

Our Constitution was built on the state and local governments better understanding what their people need, rather than the Federal Government. We need to get back to state legislators voting for their senators, and not the people, because that is what the constitution said when first written.

- d. What can you do at the local level to stop, reverse, or prevent erosion of constitutionally-protected liberties?

As a city commissioner, I would look carefully at everything that staff is proposing to determine the effects of all proposals on the freedom of our citizens and businesses. Decisions on ordinances, regulations, taxes, even on proclamations, need to be examined in light of the constitutional responsibilities of government and the consequences that they would have, intended and unintended, upon the rights of the citizens.

I would ask a lot of questions of staff, and would welcome and truly listen to citizen input, in order to get "both sides of every story." As a Gainesville resident for 26 years, I have definitely seen examples of the overreach of local government that need to be reversed. This approach will "promote the general welfare" of our citizens, as intended by our Constitution.

2. Energy and Environment

- a. Do you support the biomass plant? Explain your answer.

There are still too many unanswered questions on the biomass plant. When you propose putting that much of a financial burden on the shoulders of the tax payers, there should be many opportunities for the citizens/ratepayers to get all of their questions answered, and to be assured that this really is the most fiscally responsible option before it goes any further.

- b. Do you support GRU being owned by the City of Gainesville, and if so, why is this arrangement better for the citizens of Gainesville and the GRU service area than a privately owned utility?

Whatever the commissioners do with GRU, including any contracts, needs to be done "in

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the sunshine.” This question is worth looking into. What is the best option for providing affordable, clean energy for the citizens who rely on GRU should be the guiding principle in this matter.

- c. Why is it better for GRU to build the new power plant than to purchase power from already existing reliable and cost effective power providers?

I'm not certain that it is better.

- d. Do you accept the stated claims that salvaging biomass locally to fuel the new power plant will not harm our fragile environment? Explain your answer in detail. It's important to have more answers to these questions from experts, and from other states and municipalities that have already had experience with biomass plants. We don't have to re-invent the wheel every time...Let's examine closely the things we are thinking about doing and see what's working the right way!

- e. Large trucks will add significant usage to Alachua County's already under-maintained roads. Would you support a usage tax to be paid by GRU to Alachua County to compensate for the additional maintenance that will be required? If not, provide a rationale that justifies your position. The ratepayers/citizens would be the ones who end up paying for this, as GRU would just add this on to their bills...

The ratepayers/citizens would ultimately be the ones who end up paying this tax, as GRU would just add this charge onto their bills...

3. Limiting/Expanding the Role of Government

- a. When you get to city commission, what specific programs/agencies would you abolish?

I would start by abolishing....

- b. What is the proper role of local government?

Local government should provide the basic core services that our community requires for the common good; this includes police and fire protection, basic infrastructure services, like safe, well maintained roads and clean water and sewers. Public schools and libraries, the jail and a certain number of public servants, like the SOE, the sheriff and the tax collector are all, of course, necessary to local government.

But city and county government should aim to stay out of the way of the success of the citizen and of private business whenever possible by refraining from imposing excessive regulations and tax burdens. Government does not exist to perpetuate itself, or to micromanage every aspect of our community and our lives.

- c. Do you support International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)/Local Governments for Sustainability/Agenda 21? Explain.

I do NOT support Agenda 21 or the objectives of ICLEI. I will question and oppose with boldness any initiatives that originate with Agenda 21/ICLEI. This is a massive overreach of government, which ultimately aims to erode our sovereignty as a nation and strip American citizens of their liberty in the name of "saving the earth." It has done enough damage already and needs to be reversed.

4. Economic Philosophy and Economic Development

- a. What do you view as strengths and weaknesses of the free market?

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This country was built on the strength of the free market and not on the government doing everything for everybody; we must always remember that. *We live in America, not a socialist country!!!*

The strengths of the free market have propelled this country to a leadership role in the world, as well as to the amazing level of prosperity that we enjoy as Americans. We can reach for the "American Dream" because of our free market economy. Some will succeed more than others. Some will fail at their efforts, and try again. Some see that possibility of failure, as well as the abuses of some that can occur in a free market system as a weakness of the system, and want to limit freedom and the possibility of failure in order to correct things. I disagree. The free market corrects itself, and when the government tries to step in and insure equal outcomes, we all lose. We lose our freedoms, and our opportunities to succeed.

- b. What would you do to make the city more fiscally responsible? Explain.

We need to out-source some services to the private sector to reduce waste and increase efficiency. I will personally visit every department and look for waste and inefficiency, as well as areas where the local government has no business being involved. I took the Gainesville 101 class last January and saw a lot of things that could be changed to cut costs and get excessive government out of the way.

- c. Do you feel our present city and county standards are favorable to business development? If not, then explain what changes you would make to promote business development.

I feel that less restrictive rules need to be in place for businesses overall. It's time to look of the Planning Department and other departments that hurt businesses. When I drive down Main Street and see all the vacant store fronts, I know that it's time to ask why and help businesses by relaxing many of the excessive regulations that the city has imposed. We need to study the State of Texas, and the city of Houston. They know how to keep growth going in a good way, even in a bad economy, and we might benefit greatly from doing things the way they do..

5. Transportation

- a. Should we allocate more funds to repairing existing roads and building new ones? I'm not sure what the budget is but will look into the numbers and see what can be done. My understanding is the money is mainly going to RTS and not our roads.
- b. Do you support more spending on RTS? The RTS does a good job for UF, but when I see 2 or 3 people on many of the buses it's time to take another look at where all that money is going, and whether there are more cost efficient solutions to public transportation.
- c. Should we privatize the bus system? That would be a good thing to look in to, it makes common sense to see what the numbers are and see what other cities are doing too.
- d. Do you favor the narrowing of city thoroughfares? Include in your answer the present plans to for the 16th Avenue project. **NO, NO, NO!** NW 16 th Ave should be repaved **ONLY!** We don't have the dollars to do anything else, because there are other roads that are in bad need of repair too. First priority is to get our roads in good safe condition so citizens and businesses can get where they need to go safely and without unnecessary time lost.

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Please answer the below with YES/NO responses. (Many of these questions are very had to answer with a Yes or No answer....I have made some comments because of that.....)

- a. Do you think local taxes are too high? Yes No
- b. Do you favor the use of eminent domain for non-public-related needs (per amendment 5 of the Constitution)? Yes No
- c. Are municipal unions too powerful? Yes I think so, but will look into it No
- d. Should union membership be voluntary? Yes No
- e. Do you support the gender identity ordinance? Yes No
- f. Would you support privatizing GRU? Yes This may be a good idea but need more information No
- g. Do you feel our local taxpayers do enough for homeless people? Yes We need more jobs for them with teaching them to help themselves No
- h. Do you support the one-stop homeless shelter? Yes No too far away from where services and jobs are located.
- i. Do you support spending public funds on Ironwood golf course? Yes No We should sell it NOW!!
- j. Do you support Alachua County Forever? Yes No WE have too much property off the tax rolls.
- k. Do you feel local law enforcement agencies are overreaching? Yes No I'm not sure what this means...

I, Darlene Pifalo, have completed this form voluntarily and the above responses honestly represent my positions and principles.

Signature _____



Print Name: Darlene Pifalo

Date: Oct 27th 2011