

Winter Haven

City Commission Candidates - Seat 4



Mayor Yvonne J. Brooks

Winter Haven Resident: 22 years

Work and Civic Involvement: General Manager of Maas/Burdines/Macys through those transitions. Following demise of WH Mall, I convinced corporate the store would be more productive/profitable in Winter Haven. Many believe it was instrumental in development of Citi Centre.

Chamber of Commerce Board: Six years
Chamber Foundation Director: One year
Planning Commission for 2-3 year

Participation in Leadership Winter Haven
Graduate Leadership WH Class IX
Chair of Leadership WH Class XX
Distinguished Alumni Award 2001

Participation in Community Visioning? Yes. as a member of the Initiating Committee which spearheaded the creation of Our Future By Design.

Familiar with Visioning Document: "Our Future By Design:" Yes

Results of the Visioning Effort Positive or Negative: Since becoming a City Commissioner in 2000, I have used our vision as a basis for decisions reflecting what our citizens wanted for WH future. From our revitalized downtown core to the placement of our beautiful library, the results are impressive.

Most Important Personal Attribute: My optimism and willingness to take the leadership role whenever necessary. I love this city. City leaders have invited me to take an active part in many projects. I enjoy people and think that attribute serves me well in the city.

City's Greatest Strength: The city team that has been developed over the past eight years. I also value the partnerships forged with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street WH. Together, we are able to accomplish far more than we could separately.

City's Greatest Challenge: The economy! We would like to continue to reduce millage for our citizens, and while we are able currently to do that and maintain good bond ratings, and complete the vision, a worsening of the economy would pose a challenge.

Investments in Revitalization: Favor. This has been accelerated through creation of the CRA (Community Redevelopment Agencies) Downtown and in Florence Villa. Any growth in the tax revenues within the CRAs since 1999-2000 must be spent within each of the districts. This has funded needed improvements.

Top priorities if Re-elected: A key priority is improvement of the water quality in our Chain of Lakes -- our greatest asset. Equally important is continuing economic growth i.e. Winter Haven Municipal Airport with corporate hangars and an air-commerce park. The city will foster economic growth while maintaining our commitment to sustaining our natural resources.

Why Better Suited Than Opponent: Winter Haven's citizens have twice elected me to office as I worked to implement the vision plan they created. My experience led to current involvement on major issues of public transit (voting member), water use and conservation. I've participated in community planning and I work to further our citizen's vision.



Jamie Beckett

Winter Haven Resident: 17 years

Work and Civic Involvement: Five years of service on the Winter Haven Code Enforcement Board, a consistent interest and awareness of public policy as a newspaper columnist, and extensive aviation experience that can be tapped to improve the management and fiscal health of Gilbert Field.

Participation in Leadership Winter Haven: No

Participation in Community Visioning: No

Familiar with visioning document: "Our Future By Design:" Yes

Results of the Visioning Effort Positive or Negative: Positive. By bringing together a wide range of people and encouraging them to personally and collectively participate in a process designed to bring out the best in Winter Haven, both commercially and in terms of quality of life; our city and its residents are undeniably enhanced.

Most Important Personal Attribute: An almost boundless curiosity about how things work and how they can be made to work more effectively and efficiently.

City's Greatest Strength: Its enviable wealth of natural beauty. Most notably, our interconnected chain of lakes. That strength is closely followed by the stunningly diverse collection of talented, hard-working residents who have made Winter Haven such a wonderful place to live and work.

City's Greatest Challenge: To actively engage ourselves to meet the challenge of productively and profitably managing and marketing the resources and facilities we have to offer the world.

Investments in Revitalization: I support the goal while respectfully suggesting that we utilize the talent and insight of our residents to make future investments more wisely. The airport terminal is a classic example of a well intentioned, but poorly executed plan.

Top Priorities if Elected: I will work side by side with my fellow commissioners to restore a level of open public discourse that was once common in Winter Haven, but is currently lacking at city hall.

Why Better Suited Than Opponent: I pledged at the start of this campaign that I wouldn't belittle anyone or denigrate the contributions of any other candidate. Since I can't articulate the benefits I believe I'll bring to city hall in only 50 words, I will merely say, you will get my best effort.

Winter Haven City Commission Candidates - Seat 5



City Commissioner Murray E. "Mike" Easterling

Winter Haven resident: 43 years

Work and Civic Involvement: My years of service with the City of Winter Haven give me a unique understanding of its operations from the inside. The strategic location of such facilities as the Winter Haven Library, Police Station and Airport Terminal are decisions I'm most proud of. I have also been strong in supporting Avenue T redevelopment, expansion of our park and trail system and downtown redevelopment.

Participation in Leadership Winter Haven
Graduate Leadership Winter Haven Class XXII

Participation in Community Visioning? No, not at first. However, after my election in 2000 I was and still am an active participant in that process.

Familiar with Visioning Document: "Our Future By Design?" Yes

Results of the Visioning Effort Positive or Negative: Positive. The process created a 20 year plan for the city. The city has followed that plan and completed many elements way before the original timeline.

Most Important Personal Attribute: I believe my 20 years as a city employee and now as an elected official give me the experience to move the city forward. It has given me the opportunity to see and be an intricate part of our government.

City's Greatest Strength: The ability to progress and achieve measurable goals through the leadership of city officials and continued support of the vision plan. For our community to grow and prosper, we need to listen to and work with our citizens.

City's Greatest Challenge: To continue to serve the people in our community and provide the level of services that the community has come to expect through sound financial planning. It is a very challenging task during difficult financial times, but I'm ready for that challenge knowing we can succeed by working together.

Investments in Revitalization: Favor. If you look around our city you will find much activity at the library, airport and parks. The citizens are enjoying THEIR city. This was not always the case in the past. There can be no better investment than quality service to our citizens.

Top priorities if Re-elected: To continue to serve and provide the people of Winter Haven the quality services they expect and deserve.

Why Better Suited Than Opponents: My long service to the citizens of Winter Haven as both a city employee and now as a public servant afford me the knowledge, tools and vision to know where the city has been and where it is going. I would like the opportunity to continue.



Steven M. Hunnicutt

Winter Haven resident: 4 years

Work and Civic Involvement: I strongly believe in the importance of community involvement and public service. I retired as a police officer and had great experiences as a public servant. I was elected to serve on the home owners association board in my community, Gates of Lake Region. I have worked in the Polk County Schools as a substitute teacher. I am a volunteer as a SCORE counselor and have a small business that does business start-ups and consulting/coaching.

Participation in Leadership Winter Haven: No

Participation in Community Visioning? No

Familiar with Visioning Document: "Our Future By Design?" Yes

Results of the Visioning Effort Positive or Negative: POSITIVE, anytime you can get a collective group of citizens together, it is a positive. It shows them their city cares. Goals are essential, like a business plan for a striving business, and if you are going to be a striving city, you need a plan.

Most Important Personal Attribute: I am a strong visionary leader who is detail oriented, hard working, decisive, service driven, self-motivated, honest and discerning. I believe an important personal attribute will be the willingness and ability to seek out information to make informed, effective decisions for the good of the city as a whole.

City's Greatest Strength: Our greatest resource, which I believe is our citizens. We are a city of cultural diversity. And our lakes make a positive impact on our region. Winter Haven has some of the benefits of a larger city, but by far our residents are friendlier.

City's Greatest Challenge: Trying to deliver what we may promise. We have several areas, the economic downturn, and the decline in our housing market will continue to pressure us with the taxable assessed value of our homes, which will affect our financial flexibility as a city, even though we have projected a surplus.

Investments in Revitalization: Favor. I believe it is important that our downtown businesses prosper. Our downtown has long been a gathering place for our events and celebrations. This needs to continue, and seek out creative ways to help the downtown businesses succeed.

Top priorities if elected: To meet with the current Commissioners, and City officials to revisit our goals, or vision plan. Items have been put on hold, and may take longer than expected to complete. We may need to prioritize each area and communicate with our citizens what we are doing and why.

Why Better Suited Than Opponents: I bring a new face and voice. Our vision plan is in some areas that are under construction, but the big question residents have is when, and to them when matters. I believe our residents have waited too long for jobs, parks and affordable housing.



Robert "Bob" Jardine

Winter Haven resident: 20 years

Work and Civic Involvement: Associate Degree in Business Management, Marketing & Administration Experience in Real Estate Management at KMART Corp Fire Service Training at Texas A & M and Houston

Participation in Leadership Winter Haven: No

Participation in Community Visioning? No

Familiar with Visioning Document: "Our Future By Design?" Yes

Results of the Visioning Effort Positive or Negative:

Positive, because it contributes to the improvement for better quality of life for the citizens of Winter Haven.

Most Important Personal Attribute: I have seen where the city has been for the past 20 years, where it is today and with my vast experience, where it can go considering the vision of the people in an economic manner.

City's Greatest Strength: I believe that the opinions of the citizens of Winter Haven, to contribute with decision making for the future of Winter Haven, taking into account public safety and transportation, natural resources and in an economical manner relating to taxes.

City's Greatest Challenge: Maintaining adequate services throughout the city such as: police and public safety, providing current and up-to-date services with education and medical, while staying in status quo tax structure.

Investments in Revitalization: Favor. However, will need to take into consideration the current economic status.

Top priorities if Elected: Public safety, transportation and natural resources.

Why Better Suited Than Opponents: I have a wide range of experience with a passion to support the needs for all citizens and to improve and/or maintain a quality of life for the people.