

# 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 orientated, 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.