

JOHN M. FLEMING

Republican Candidate for Charlotte County Commissioner

"THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER"

County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire District 2

1. My vision for economic development is simple: create better paying jobs, support our small business community, and make sure growth pays for growth. But before we can focus on this, we urgently need to address our aging infrastructure. Charlotte is facing serious challenges with our roads, sewer/water capacity, drainage, and public safety. As County Commissioner my first priority will be to expand hospitals, outpatient centers, and medical research partnerships. Healthcare is one of the fastest growing employment sectors in Southwest Florida. We need to attract engineering, technology, cybersecurity and professional service firms. I also favor well planned mixed-use development as it will make more efficient use of land and infrastructure and increase our quality of life.
2. I'm not necessarily opposed to the 1% sales tax. Instead, I am strongly opposed to a 20-year extension. I believe it reduces accountability for how our tax dollars are spent. One of my main arguments is that residents deserve more accountability in this area, not less. A shorter extension would have alleviated those concerns and will force the County to focus on the most important projects first. In addition, project lists can become outdated over a period beyond 10 years. That still provides stability for long-term planning while ensuring transparency and accountability in how government spends our tax dollars. I also am concerned that such a long extension was proposed before voters decide on the property tax relief bill.
3. My background has prepared me to serve as an effective Commissioner because my career has always been about solving problems, protecting citizens and being accountable to the people I serve. As a retired New York City Police detective, I learned early on in my career that the key to gaining the trust of others was to be accountable and accessible to my subordinates, citizen groups and my superiors. I also developed strong interpersonal communication skills and strong leadership qualities which allowed me to build a consensus among diverse community groups and law enforcement agencies. Beyond law enforcement I co-founded the largest community coalition in southwest Florida. The Burnt Store Coalition represents over 11,000 residents and has successfully worked with officials in Charlotte and Lee Counties. As its chairman I have provided leadership, coordination, and accountability while ensuring residents keep informed and stay focused on its mission. My interpersonal communication skills have played a large role in this area.

