



2020 Board of County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire:

Post-Candidate Forum: The Questions that Were Not Asked

The following questions were posed by the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee members and Chamber members but could not be asked at the recent BOCC Candidates Forum due to time limitations. As a candidate, we ask that you submit your responses and email them to ardath@citruscountychamber.com by end of business on Friday, July 17. We will post your responses on the Chamber website as you write them, with no editing:

Your Name: Mark S. Hammer

Candidate District #: Three

1. What are your thoughts about the way the County is dispensing the CARES Act funds for small businesses?

I think it is great that the county was able to secure 6.5 million dollars through the CARES ACT, and I think it was responsible to limit the applicants to non essential businesses with under 35 employees. There is a second review process which is also being considered so that is a good thing and I hope that the businesses that were affected will take advantage of this opportunity.

2. Are you knowledgeable about the regulations related to planning and development in Citrus County? What is your view of the way the Land Development Division is being managed at this time?

Being involved in the CCBA and serving as Chairman of the government Affairs Committee, along with my position of Historical Resource Advisory Board Chairman, I have a great amount of insight to the Land Development Division, the HRAB worked with this department to write the Historic Preservation ordinance. One of the issues in the LDD is an opinionated interpretation of the LDC instead of a definitive confirmation that it does/does not comply. There is

the issue of lack of leadership in that department with five Growth Management Directors in just as many years, hopefully that has been addressed with the hiring of Michael Sherman.

3. Many citizens have said that one of the most pressing problems in our county is the condition of our residential roads, especially Citrus Springs. There are homes on the golf course and new construction homes that are on roads that are crumbling. How do you plan on addressing this issue?

There are two ways to address the issues with the Citrus Springs roads. First, the current MSBU states that funds collected through this program must be used to pave the worst roads first weather there are houses on that road or not, the citizens need to radify this to allow for roads with houses to take precedence over roads with out homes, this can only be changed by a vote from homeowners in Citrus Springs. Second is to change the policies that direct how the county road resurfacing money is spent, Citrus Springs has almost 25% of the roads in the county but receive about ten percent of the funding. The funds need to be distributed in proportion to the mileage of roads in that given area.

4. What proactive ideas do you have for any of the topics below:

- Affordable Housing - Low Income Housing
Reinforce the relationship with organizations like the Citrus Family Resource Center and Habitat for Humanity, as a county we have Housing Services Department that has information about low income housing and HUD Section 8.
- Local Drug Addiction Resources
Attract a true Crisis Center that is capiable of handling persons that require intake and management, we need a facility that will accept persons that require the Baker Act instead of being transported to Ocala. Such a facility could also deal with drug addiction and intervention.
- Homeless persons and keeping homelessness to a minimum in our county.

Continued partnership with organizations like the Path and local churches, again a Crisis Center could assist with this situation

- Using the tourism tax on something besides marketing? (Examples: Using the funds for more than an “invitation” to our waterways and activities on the water; such as infrastructure that is needed for the persons that come here, additional restrooms, parking and safety resources, or maybe a conference/community center for corporate meetings and such.

It would be nice to see some of the tourism tax used to promote the east side of the county, I have seen commercials on T.V. promoting Citrus County and it focuses on the west side of the county. Additional publication advertisements for the cycling, fishing and outdoor activities with some information about our historical features would be nice to see. At this time I do not see our county being ready to fund a convention center, nor would I support tax dollars spent on such an endeavor at this time.

5. Under what conditions do you believe government has a right to infringe on constitutional rights? Please explain how you would apply this when considering how to restrict funds and public access to periodicals in the library (Example: New York Times subscription) ; and how you would apply it when faced with a pandemic.

No conditions exist where the government should interfere with a persons Constitutional rights. This statement speaks for itself.

6. Barring unforeseen family and health issues -if elected do you commit to serve your complete 4-year term?

I have spent 41 years living in this county, the last six years representing the county through different Boards and organizations and have every intent on taking my last breath here, so yes, if elected commissioner, I will fulfill my four year term.