

# GUARDIAN

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March 14<sup>th</sup> Gainesville City Commission Elections — See Below for Candidates' Q&A

## HRCNCF Queries Gainesville City Commission Candidates on Human Rights Issues

The Human Rights Council of North Central Florida (HRCNCF) received responses to its candidate questionnaire from all seven city commission candidates running for three different seats.

Verbatim responses to the questionnaire are provided below.

The candidates include: Jenn Powell and Helen K. Warren for the At-Large Seat 2, Perry Clawson, Sheryl Eddie and Harvey Ward for the District 2 seat; and David Arreola and Craig Carter for the District 3 seat.

Warren and Carter are incumbent commissioners running for re-election in their respective seats; Clawson, Ward and Eddie are running for the seat currently occupied by Commissioner Todd Chase, who cannot run again due to term limits.

Gainesville elections are nonpartisan so all registered voters can vote for the at-large seat, while only voters in Districts 2 and 3 can vote for their respective district commissioner.

### **City Commission At-Large Seat 2**

In the At-Large race, City Commissioner Helen Warren is the first openly lesbian candidate to win election to the City Commission. She is a realtor and a local community activist. Since settling down in Gainesville in 2001, Warren has raised two children with her partner Flo Turcotte.

Warren has been involved in numerous civic organizations, including Equality Florida's Gainesville Gala steering committee, the United Church of Gainesville's Open & Affirming Committee, and the local Audubon Society chapter.

She has been honored with the Equality Florida Voice for Equality award and in 2013 the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida's Spirit of Pride award.

HRCNCF President Bob Karp noted that Warren's greatest strength is her dedication to furthering LGBTQ

### ***Three ways to vote:***

- ✓ **Vote by Mail:** Call the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections at 352-374-5252 to have a ballot mailed to you.
- ✓ **Vote Early: March 6-11** at Supervisor of Elections Office, 515 N. Main St., Millhopper Library, 3145 NW 43<sup>rd</sup> St., and Cone Park Library, 2801 E. University Ave.
- ✓ **Vote on Election Day:** Vote in your polling precinct from 7 AM to 7 PM on **Tuesday, March 14.**

and human rights in the community. She has volunteered for many political campaigns of pro-LGBT candidates, for annual Pride Festivals and Parades, and in 2009 was a steadfast “No on 1” volunteer when the city's human rights ordinance was at risk of being repealed.

“Helen Warren is no single-issue candidate,” said Karp. “Her energy and enthusiasm extends to advancing social and racial justice, environmental, and neighborhood preservation issues. She's always looking to build consensus among people.”

Karp noted that her opponent Jenn Powell provided good answers to the HRCNCF questionnaire, and hoped that, regardless of the election outcome, she would continue to be involved politically in the future.

### **City Commission District 2**

In the District 2 race, Harvey Ward, Sheryl Eddie and Perry Clawson are vying for the open seat being vacated by Commissioner Todd Chase.

“Harvey Ward has been a consistent and long-time supporter of the LGBTQ community, appearing at many events over the years,” said HRCNCF Board member Susan Eichner. “As City Commissioner, he will be a reliable voice for LGBTQ and other human rights issues while on the Commission.”

Eichner noted that Ward ran several years ago for County Commission, and his questionnaire responses then and now have been consistently very good.

Eichner also noted that both Eddie and Clawson provided very good questionnaire responses as well.

District 2 covers much of northwest Gainesville and a smaller part of northeast Gainesville.

### **City Commission District 3**

In the District 3 race, incumbent Commissioner Craig Carter is running against challenger David Arreola.

“Arreola not only provided excellent responses to the questionnaire, but he also continues to be outspoken in his support for LGBTQ and human rights,” said Eichner.

Eichner applauded Carter for responding to the questionnaire, something he did not do when he first ran

for office in 2014. She regretted however that some of his responses were noncommittal. For example, when asked about whether he supports marriage equality, he replied that he “supports all laws passed by our city, state and federal governments.” (Marriage equality came to Florida via a court decision, not through legislation.)

District 3 covers much of western Gainesville and includes large student-dominated precincts just west and south of the University of Florida campus.

Vote-by-mail ballots may be obtained by calling the Supervisor of Elections at 352-374-5252. Early voting runs from Monday, March 6, to Saturday, March 11, at three voting sites: The Supervisor of Elections Office, 515 N. Main St., the Millhopper Library, and the Cone Park Library.

On Election Day, Tuesday, March 14, voters must cast ballots at their polling places in the precincts in which they reside. Polls are open from 7 AM to 7 PM.

## **HRCNCF 2017 Gainesville City Commission Candidate Questionnaire Responses**

### **1. Do you support the city of Gainesville’s human rights ordinance which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodations, and credit?**

#### Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: Absolutely, every citizen should be protected from discrimination.

HELEN K. WARREN: Yes I do.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes, I fully support it. As the father of a gay child and of a transgender stepchild, both of whom I helped navigate the formative years of their lives and supported them in discovering who they are, it has always been important to me that people of all types be accepted and not discriminated against for any reason. While I was in the Army as a brigade commander I selected a gay deputy brigade commander because he was the most qualified individual for the job. To me the most qualified and competent individual should always be selected for employment regardless of any other factors.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, this is the civil rights movement of our time. We must not only ensure people are not discriminated based on sexual orientation or gender identity but for race, ethnicity or sex as well. It is still happening far too often in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

HARVEY WARD: Yes. All citizens have a right to equal protection under the law, and as a matter of practice,

specific protections need to be enumerated for communities that have been traditionally discriminated against.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: Absolutely. The ordinance is an important piece of legal protection for the civil and human rights of our local LGBTQ community.

CRAIG CARTER: Yes, no one should be discriminated against.

### **2. Do you support diversity training for city employees to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues?**

#### Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: Yes, I feel this is necessary at every workplace and considering the current political climate, this is even more important.

HELEN K. WARREN: Yes I do. And I do believe that our EO office is taking a strong guidance in all departments on this topic.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes, I do support additional diversity training for these issues. To me this type of training is no different than diversity training for minorities or other groups that we currently support with diversity training for our city employees. While I was in the Army as both a battalion and brigade commander I

made it a practice to have consideration of others training a quarterly training requirement.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, I do. I was instrumental in implementing a training on such issues at the non-profit I worked. A handful of employees made remarks based on their personal religious beliefs that made the environment hostile for our LGBTQ employees; such training helped some, but more must be done.

HARVEY WARD: Yes, because it is the responsibility of local government to serve their citizens and LGBT citizens deserve to be related to in a way that is sensitive to their needs. While city workers and others may have every good intention of providing appropriate communication, the training needs to be uniform in order to address the needs of all citizens.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: Absolutely. I believe this type of training is critical to fostering an inclusive workforce.

CRAIG CARTER: Yes.

### **3. Do you support annual city proclamations recognizing Gainesville's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Days?**

#### Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: Yes, as a parent, I feel this is very important, I know there are a lot of people that struggle for acceptance when society (and unfortunately some parents) reject who they are. Recognizing Pride Days, in my opinion is a way to help LGBTQ person feel proud to be themselves. Maybe one day we won't need to designate Pride days because everyday will be pride day. I have three teenagers and I am hopeful for the future when I hear them talk about these issues.

HELEN K. WARREN: Yes I do.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes I do. To me these proclamations and associated activities are no different than Women, African-American, Italian-American, Native-American or other groups for whom designated activities or proclamations recognize the uniqueness, heighten the awareness, and celebration of a segment of our total society.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, the city is making a statement when it makes a proclamation recognizing any movement or cause. I have been the author of many such designations regarding child abuse, human trafficking, and other children's issues. I personally think we must make these declarations more publicly known and incorporate a grander celebration when the proclamations are made.

HARVEY WARD: Yes. Officially recognizing our diversity reinforces that we are in this together and that all our communities need to be welcomed and embraced.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: Absolutely. Solidarity must be enacted in word and action when it comes to guaranteeing a welcoming city.

CRAIG CARTER: I look forward to a time when the city does not have to recognize any group because everyone is thought of equally but in the meantime, I understand the need for education.

### **4. Do you support the legal right of same-sex couples to marry? To adopt children?**

#### Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: [*To marry*] Absolutely. [*To adopt children*] I believe every child deserves to be loved and cared for and do not think sexual orientation should be a deciding factor in the adoption process.

HELEN K. WARREN: Yes to both.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes, I do support the legal right of same-sex couples to marry, to share in marital benefits and assets, and to adopt children the same as heterosexual married couples providing they are of the appropriate legal age for their state and are able to satisfactorily pass the background checks and other requirements for child adoption which are in place to protect the children. As a Guardian ad Litem volunteer protection of children is of paramount importance to me yet I recognize the benefit of a loving home can just as easily be provided by a same-sex couple.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, this is a human right and now the law of the land, finally; we must do everything to ensure all government employees as well as all government contractors understand this and behave accordingly. [*To adopt children*] Yes, I have an awesome relationship with both private, religious and public adoption agents. I am a firm believer that if an agency receives any money from public entities, they cannot be allowed to discriminate. Personally, I believe there should be no discrimination even if the agency does not receive public funding; I'm working within my faith to change the incorrect stance religious agencies often take on this adoption and marriage issue.

HARVEY WARD: Yes, unreservedly on both matters.

Again, all citizens deserve equal rights and equal protection under the law. Regarding adoption, I believe a loving and nurturing family is what is important in raising children, not a specific arrangement of chromosomes.

#### Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: Absolutely. These are basic civil rights that must be guaranteed to all citizens.

CRAIG CARTER: I support all laws passed by our city, state and federal governments.

5. **The Florida Competitive Workforce Act (HB 33 and SB 156) seeks to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity across the state in places of employment, housing and public accommodations. Would you support a city of Gainesville resolution that would urge the Florida Legislature to pass this bill?**

Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: Yes, absolutely.

HELEN K. WARREN: Yes I would.

Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes I would support such a resolution as it is in line with current City of Gainesville ordinances. During the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s similar legal Acts were required to prohibit discrimination in these areas for minorities and this is a continuation of that effort.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, we need as a progressive community to make our voices heard throughout the state.

HARVEY WARD: Yes, absolutely, and for the same reasons listed for question one. Additionally, the naming of the bill is appropriate. If Florida businesses are to be competitive for the best talent, we must create a welcoming environment for all workers.

Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: I have supported the Florida Competitive Workforce Act in the past. I wrote a resolution unanimously passed by the Alachua County Democratic Party's Legislative Committee and Executive Committee, that was sent to the Alachua County Legislative Delegation urging them to vote for the Florida Competitive Workforce Act. I would absolutely support a city of Gainesville resolution urging lawmakers to pass the Florida Competitive Workforce Act.

CRAIG CARTER: I have not read these bills specifically but I believe there should be no discrimination in the workplace or housing markets.

6. **In 2016, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a rule as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that prohibits discrimination in health programs and activities that receive funding from HHS. Prior to the implementation of this rule most individual and group health plans excluded coverage for gender transition services. After January 1, 2017, fully insured individual and group policies that receive funding from HHS will include coverage for gender transition services. This rule applies differently to large employer plans that are “self-funded”. A self-funded plan is one where the employer assumes the health plan liability and risk in exchange for more control over the plan’s administration and funding levels. The City of Gainesville is a self-funded entity. Do you support**

**the City of Gainesville including coverage for gender transition services for their employees?**

Gainesville City Commission At-Large

JENN POWELL: Yes, this should be covered.

HELEN K. WARREN: I do support the coverage with a respectful consideration to see what the impact would be on the budget.

Gainesville City Commission District 2

PERRY CLAWSON: Yes I would support including this coverage. If a medical procedure, as determined by a medically certified doctor is deemed necessary for the health or well-being of the patient, regardless of the procedure, then I believe any procedure should be covered for all plan participants. As an example, if a heterosexual person is provided covered hormone therapy then to me that and similar type therapy or procedures should be allowed for all.

SHERYL EDDIE: Yes, health care for all is a critical issue. I believe in universal healthcare, but we can only control what we can. I believe being self-insured we should have options for all employees that are equitable to everyone. We can only do so much in our current type of healthcare funding but we must be an example.

HARVEY WARD: Yes. Once again, this is a question of equal protection under the law. Further, the clear intent of the ACA is that these services should be included. Regardless, even with the future of the ACA in question, there is no doubt in my mind that this should be included in medical coverage for city employees.

Gainesville City Commission District 3

DAVID ARREOLA: Absolutely. An individual's health care choices must never be restricted by discrimination.

CRAIG CARTER: Without know all the information and the impacts, financially and otherwise, I cannot answer this question.

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC.**

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--MISSION STATEMENT--

*HRCNCF opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the interest of civic betterment and social welfare. HRCNCF also seeks to work in coalition with other organizations working to end discrimination based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, age, religion, national origin, or disability.*

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2017, AT 7:00 PM AT PRIDE  
COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA, 3131  
NW 13<sup>TH</sup> ST, GAINESVILLE

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