

GUARDIAN

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March 15th Gainesville Mayoral and City Commission Elections — See Reverse for Candidates' Q&A

HRCNCF Teams Up with NAACP in Joint Mayoral & City Commission Candidate Forum

The Human Rights Council of North Central Florida (HRCNCF) joined up with the Alachua County branch of the NAACP to kick off the 2016 election season by co-hosting the city's first mayoral and city commission candidate forum on January 11 at the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida.

Election Day is March 15, which coincides with the presidential preference primary elections.

HRCNCF also sent out candidate questionnaires to Gainesville Mayoral and District 4 candidates.

Four out of the five candidates returned HRCNCF questionnaire responses, which are provided below. Mayor Ed Braddy did not reply to the questionnaire.

In the Mayoral race, incumbent Mayor Ed Braddy is running for a second term against former City Commissioner Lauren Poe and Donald Shepherd.

Both on and off the commission, Lauren Poe has been a reliable and outspoken advocate on behalf of LGBT rights, said HRCNCF President Bob Karp. Though he was not on the city commission during the historic January 2008 vote to include "gender identity" in the city's human rights ordinance, he was on the commission later that year and was a vocal opponent of the charter amendment that sought to remove both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" from the city's human rights ordinance.

As city commissioner in October 2014, Poe made the motion to have the city of Gainesville sign on to a friend-of-the-court brief in legal cases that challenged Florida's same-sex marriage ban. Mayor Braddy was the sole dissenting vote.

Karp noted that Ed Braddy has had a consistent anti-LGBT stance on most ordinances that have come before him. As City Commissioner in 2007, Braddy voted against the adoption of the city's Domestic Partner Registry. During the January 28, 2008, city commission public hearing, Braddy stated: "When you boil it down the issue is that because of some people who have some sort of emotional or psychological issue, others have to change."

But it was during 2008-2009 in which Braddy not only voted against adding "gender identity" to the city's human rights ordinance ordinance, but he campaigned for the effective repeal of that ordinance using the "bathroom scare"

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 4-12** at several early voting sites.
- ✓ **Vote on Election Day:** Vote in your polling precinct from 7 AM to 7 PM on **Tuesday, March 15.**

tactics employed by proponents of the charter amendment ballot measure.

In a March 20, 2009, *Gainesville Sun* guest column, Braddy asserted there was no need for the city to have sexual orientation and gender identity rights protections. He described the gender identity ordinance as "reckless". Framing it as a public safety issue, he stated: "Men entering women's restrooms... is an undeniable fact."

58% of city voters defeated the charter amendment.

At the recent candidate forum, Braddy was the only candidate who did not express support for same-sex marriage equality. "In fact, Mayor Braddy was rather indignant that HRCNCF would even pose such a question," said Linda Bassham, who is a member of HRCNCF's Board of Directors.

In the District 4 race, Adrian Hayes-Santos and Jim Konish are vying for the open District 4 seat.

"Hayes-Santos has been a consistent and vocal supporter for LGBT rights," said Karp. He noted that his questionnaire and candidate forum responses were very good.

Hayes-Santos is the UF Director of Entrepreneurship Master's Programs. Konish is an attorney and landlord.

District 4 covers much of the central core neighborhoods of Gainesville, extending from the Duck Pond to College Park, and including the University of Florida campus and the SW Archer Road corridor. *(see reverse side)*

The election is nonpartisan so all registered city voters can vote in the mayoral election; all District 4 voters will also be able to vote for their district commissioner. Voter turnout

is expected to be higher than usual because the presidential preference primaries appear on the same ballot.

HRCNCF 2016 Gainesville Mayoral & 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?

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: Absolutely. I also support being proactive with the implementation of the ordinance, including educational outreach efforts to local businesses and landlords to make sure that they are fully aware of and understand the ordinance.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, I strongly support this and other ordinances that ensure equality for everyone. Without federal or state laws prohibiting such discrimination, it's vital that the city provide these protections.

JIM KONISH: Yes.

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

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: Yes, and this needs to also include sexual harassment training, ethnic and racial diversity training and understanding of the importance of how city employees interact with members of the public.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, I fully support LBGT diversity training for all city employees.

JIM KONISH: Yes. But it should be expanded to discrimination based on political party affiliation.

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

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: Yes. I in fact look very much forward to the proclamation.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, it is important that the city actively support celebrations of diversity and equality like Pride Days.

JIM KONISH: Yes.

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

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: Yes, and it was a great day for equality when the Supreme Court invalidated Florida's archaic and discriminatory laws forbidding both.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, I strongly support both the right for same-sex couples to marry and adopt children. I was thrilled when last year the Supreme Court ruled that the freedom to marry is a fundamental right!

JIM KONISH: This question has been decided legally.

5. The Florida Competitive Workforce Act (HB 45 and SB 120) 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 an official city of Gainesville resolution that would urge the Florida Legislature to pass this bill?

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: Yes, and I would personally lobby our delegation to support such a bill.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, I would support the commission making a resolution to urge the Florida Legislature to pass the Florida Competitive Workforce Act.

JIM KONISH: Yes.

6. The Protection of Religious Freedom Act (HB 401) seeks to specifically empower certain businesses, health providers, and child placement agencies to refuse any service to any customer if it would be contrary to their "religious or moral convictions." Would you support an official city of Gainesville resolution that would urge the Florida Legislature to oppose this bill?

MAYOR:

LAUREN POE: This bill is a red herring and entirely unnecessary.

DONALD SHEPHERD: Yes.

DISTRICT 4:

ADRIAN HAYES-SANTOS: Yes, I would support the commission making a resolution to urge the Florida Legislature to oppose this bill. This is an unnecessary and dangerous bill that could permit discriminatory practices against not only those who are LGBT, but also those of different religions, ethnicities, etc.

JIM KONISH: Oppose.

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