

Alachua Voter Guide

City Commission Candidates for Single District 1

These are the questions and answers from the March 3rd League of Women Voters candidate forum, as recorded by the editor of AlachuaVoterGuide.Com

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Tuesday night, March 3rd, the candidates for the 2 city commission seats were asked to respond to the League of Women Voters, The forum met on the fourth floor of the downtown public library, and due to time constraints, there were no citizen questions sought from the audience.

The forum opened with single District 1 candidates Marcia Wimberly and the incumbent, Sherwin Henry. The audio I recorded was not as good as usual, due to the poor acoustics and sound system. Therefore, after taking a lot of notes while straining to hear these recordings, I will give you the summary of the questions and answers.

How to prioritize budget?

Wimberly: No cuts at all to health (trash pickup) and public safety. Local stimulus package for local businesses...money for local citizens to buy things from local merchants.

Henry: We're already doing it. 4 day work week. Delay projects. Not hire replacements. We will get citizen inputs.

Editor: I have no idea where Wimberly's "stimulus" money is coming from. And Henry's assertion about getting citizen input for cuts seems unlikely. Citizens only show up to protect programs that benefit them. And when they show up to oppose them, the commissioners routinely stand to defend the citizens who benefit from them. In short, neither candidate wants to cut anything.

How do we attract jobs to (East) Gainesville?

Henry: We could manufacture solar panels. Streamline permitting process.

Wimberly: Incentives and tax credits to attract businesses. Incubator programs to help people start businesses.

Editor: I think Mr. Henry ought to talk to both the city and county commissioners about solar panels. They would love to buy them, but I cannot imagine them wanting to make them here. And Ms. Wimberly ought to have illuminated us as to the

success of the existing incubator program in East Gainesville.

How to conserve energy?

Wimberly: Promote solar.

Henry: Weatherization is most important. Bring landlords to the table and show them the incentives. Educate homeowners about investing in energy saving. Get banks to give low interest loans.

Editor: Wouldn't have much to say about this except that I have invested a lot in conservation the past couple of years, and some of my savings have been wiped out by higher rates. Can we work on that?

Your position on Charter One?

Henry: I am against it because of home rule. It does not enable us to protect all of our citizens.

Wimberly: Against it because it is a step backwards. City should have left out the controversial language from their ordinance.

One stop homeless center:

Wimberly: This is not a top priority at this time.

Henry: It's important.

Editor: Both seem to be for it in principle, but don't think we have the money.

Mom's Kitchen purchase?

Henry: For it. No money was taken from anywhere to buy Mom's Kitchen. For Ironwood, too. And wants to improve it and let it pay its way, as far as it is able.

Wimberly: We cannot ignore the recession. Mom's Kitchen should not have been a priority.

Editor: I'd like some explanation as to where the money did come from.

Are officials out of touch?

Wimberly: We need economic stimulus to help citizens get online and better informed.

Henry: I am not out of touch. I go to their churches, their neighborhoods, hosted a city commission meeting at the MacPherson Center.

END

There was not a presentation of the positions on Charter Amendments One or Two. For more information about those items, go online to AlachuaVoterGuide.com.

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