

**2024 Lake Wales  
City Commissioner  
Candidates for  
Seat 4**

**Carol Gillespie**



**Danny Krueger (incumbent)**



**1.** Who are you? (background, family, beliefs, etc.)

My name is Carol Gillespie. I have been married to my husband, Gary Robillard, for 48 years. We have three grown children and two grandchildren. We also have an African grey parrot named Nanji, who has lived with us for 22 years. I have an AB degree and a JD degree from the University of California. I also have a Masters Degree in International Affairs from Columbia University. I graduated from law school and was admitted to the California bar in 1972. I was subsequently admitted to the New Jersey bar and the Florida bar and am still a member of the Florida State Bar Association. During my legal career I handled complex litigation as an associate with a Los Angeles law firm. I also worked as an in-house attorney for several corporations, including as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of a Miami-based publicly traded pharmaceutical company. Most recently I was employed by the Florida Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel representing indigent parents in dependency court. Upon my retirement, I moved with my husband to the Lake Wales community of Lake Ashton, where we have pursued our interest in golfing as well as traveling in our recreational vehicle. What are my beliefs? I believe in the Constitution, including the separation of church and state. I believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ when he said to love our fellow human beings, to welcome the stranger, and to provide for the less fortunate. I believe in Edward Bok’s statement, “Make you the world a bit better or more beautiful because you have lived in it.”

Raised on a dairy farm in NE Wisconsin. Graduated U Minn, Mankato with degree in El Ed, minor in music. Marketing Trainer AT&T NW Bell, Lay member of church body’s evangelism commission, Pres of Men’s acapella chorus international competition, Retired Sales manager, Lead weekly bible study, lead constitution class, active in 912 group and Republican Executive Committee, Past pres Lake Ashton Republican Club, Currently Lake Wales City Commissioner

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<p><b>2.</b> Why are you running for city commissioner at this time?</p>	<p>I have seen the changes that rapid growth has brought to our community, and I believe that the Lake Wales City Commission is best positioned to manage this growth in a manner that will preserve the beauty of our community and maintain our quality of life. I support the vision for Lake Wales that is set forth in the “Lake Wales Envisioned” plan adopted by the city in 2023. However, a number of steps are required to see that this plan is followed as a guide to our future growth. I am concerned that the current commissioners will not follow the plan and that they will continue to put the interests of landowners and developers above those of the average residents of Lake Wales. The current occupant of Seat 4 always sides with the mayor; he has few ideas of his own and is reluctant to express views that differ from the other commissioners. The only exception is his insistence that climate change is a hoax that should not be considered in our urban planning, and in fact he has repeatedly lectured the commissioners about his views on climate change. I believe that I could provide an informed and independent voice on the Commission and could help to ensure our continued quality of life as we grow into the thriving city that is described in “Lake Wales Envisioned.”</p>	<p>Hoping to continue the good work started 2 years ago. Economic growth is a major priority. Directly related to affordable housing. Good jobs = able to afford.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Why do you consider yourself the better/best candidate for this seat? What distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race?</p>	<p>My legal background equips me to analyze and form judgments on proposals presented to the Commission. By contrast, the current incumbent is a follower. If you look at the incumbent’s record, you will not find any independent analysis or voting record. Also, my respect for science qualifies me to express informed judgments on issues that come before the Commission, while his lack of education or scientific knowledge causes him to follow the opinions of others rather than making his own independent decisions on these issues.</p>	<p>My only agenda is what is best for the city of Lake Wales and all the citizens of Lake Wales. It is clear that my opponent has a gay pride/LGBTQ, pro-abortion, pro-manmade global warming agenda. With all those questionable ideologies, it’s hard to imagine any good decisions coming out of them. I base my decisions on the truth of God’s word and real science.</p>

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<p><b>4.</b> What would be your top priorities for the city, should you be elected?</p>	<p>My first priority would be to see that the principles of the Lake Wales Envisioned plan are followed in approving proposals for new development. Another priority would be to allocate adequate resources to improve the living conditions of residents in the Northwest neighborhood. Specifically, I would favor establishment of social centers for youth to gather after school as well as a place for senior citizens to meet and socialize. I would ensure that the \$50,000 grant recently received for recreation areas in the Northwest neighborhood is used for projects that would benefit this neighborhood. I would also devote more resources to maintaining and improving our streets and adding more parking spaces in the downtown area. Rather than discouraging public participation in Commission meetings, I would favor more transparency in regard to Commission decision-making. Another priority would be to devote more effort and resources to identifying sources of water to replace our vanishing aquifer.</p>	<p>When I am re-elected, my priorities will remain the same: do what I can to heal the racial divide, make sure growth continues to be managed so that it does not outstrip critical infrastructure, (concurrency).</p>
<p><b>5.</b> As an elected city official, would you fight for ALL citizens of the city to be heard and represented, or only those who agree with you and your agenda? Lake Wales contains a diverse group of people. A person who is a commissioner should see value in all the people who live here. How have you, and how will you listen and assist citizens in Lake Wales with whom you may disagree?</p>	<p>I consider myself a pragmatist rather than an ideologue, and my desire to see that all citizens are treated fairly would prevent me from favoring those who agree with me. Unlike my opponent, who is an avowed conspiracy theorist, I would not favor any particular religious or political viewpoint that could interfere with the exercise of my independent and informed judgment.</p>	<p>Again, my only agenda is what is best for the city of Lake Wales and all the citizens of Lake Wales. When questions and concerns are voiced in good faith, I pass the concerns on to the city administration and follow up. I voice my own concerns, as an example the city's storage lot was overgrown with weeds. It has now been cleaned up. Unfortunately, not all concerns raised are in good faith. There is a small faction in Lake Wales whose only goal it seems is to tear down and destroy. I try to deal with them as civilly as I can. Not always easy.</p>

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<p><b>6.</b> There are individuals being served by Lake Wales utilities that do not live inside the city limits. Would you support a Lake Wales commission seat being designated for those individuals' representation?</p>	<p>Although our commissioners (except the mayor) are required to live in the seat from which they are nominated, they are elected by the citizens of the entire city. They thus do not represent the residents of any particular area. I do not believe that we should deviate from this principle with regard to residents of the utility service area who are not in the city limits. These citizens are allowed to express their views at Commission meetings, and at this time, I do not believe that we should create a special commission seat to represent exclusively their interests, but I would be willing to address this issue after hearing arguments on both sides.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>7.</b> Our neighborhood is marked No Soliciting. What can be done about the daily knocks on our doors by Solar, Roofing and Window Replacement representatives.</p>	<p>It is very difficult to enforce “no soliciting” laws. I would definitely not favor using our police force for this purpose. Homeowners who live in no soliciting areas should simply refuse to talk to solicitors, which is becoming more feasible with the widespread use of doorbells linked to video cameras. Also, in communities that have neighborhood watches, they could be given the responsibility of removing solicitors.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, not very much. They have first amendment rights like everyone else, including the pan-handlers. The city could open itself to lawsuits if we tried to enforce the “No Soliciting” signs.</p>
<p><b>8.</b> Do you think things should be done to SLOW the population growth in our area, rather than building more to accommodate the growth? Is there any cap on what seems to be uncontrolled growth in Lake Wales?</p>	<p>The Lake Wales Envisioned plan, if consistently applied, will not only slow population growth but will channel it in ways that do not detract from the beauty and integrity of our community. However, people who own property in the city must be allowed to develop it, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this plan. We have an ideal location, which will continue to attract people who want to live, work and raise their families in this community. We should welcome development that will accommodate new residents without detracting from our existing quality of life and may even enhance our property values.</p>	<p>There is always a tension between personal property rights and “we don’t want anything to change” mentality. Uncontrolled growth I think is a mischaracterization, almost like “urban sprawl”. Growth will happen. If we can predict it we can mitigate some of the adverse effects of growth so that growth is not such a bad thing.</p>

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<p><b>9.</b> What can the City of Lake Wales do to help remediate climate change?</p>	<p>We should install solar panels on all civic buildings.</p> <p>We should retrofit municipal buildings to make them more energy efficient.</p> <p>We should purchase electric vehicles for our police force and other government uses.</p> <p>We should require that all new single family dwellings provide a 220 volt outlet in each garage to facilitate charging of electric vehicles, and that every multi-family development provide a charging station for every certain number of units.</p> <p>Electrical vehicle charging stations should be installed in public parking lots.</p> <p>We should follow the Lake Wales Envisioned plan to plant more trees in public areas and also adopt measures to encourage the planting of trees on private property.</p> <p>We should provide bike paths and public transportation to connect housing areas to business and shopping areas in order to minimize reliance on private cars.</p>	<p>Nothing. The sun is 1 million times larger than the earth, let alone Lake Wales. Oceans cover 3/5s of the earth's surface and have more to do with climate than all the electric vehicles that will ever be produced.</p>
<p><b>10.</b> Would you support significant investment by the City to expand our athletic facilities in an effort to begin drawing in sports tourism to LW, similar to what has been successfully done in WH and Auburndale?</p>	<p>I would not support significant investment in athletic facilities at this time. To build a stadium large enough to accommodate professional sports would require such a large expenditure that the city could not possibly recoup its investment in the foreseeable future. Also, our population is not yet large enough to support professional sports teams. The Winter Haven sports complex did not generate enough interest to keep the Cleveland Indians for spring training, and now the facility sits idle most of the year. Instead, we should use the \$50,000 federal grant to create upgraded sports facilities in the Northwest area, which could be used by local teams and would encourage local residents to attend amateur events to support these teams.</p>	<p>I would need to have “significant” defined and see objective analysis of cost/benefit. Also, what is considered “successful”.</p>

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<p><b>11.</b> How have you built relationships or going to build relationships with the people of the Northwest Community after the election? When was the last time you were in the Northwest Community other than ribbon cuttings?</p>	<p>For some time, I have been assisting in the food distribution program at the B Street Community Center, which takes place twice a month. I attended the Martin Luther King breakfast at the Austin Center and participated in the MLK Day parade. I also participated in the gospel service on the eve of MLK day at the First Institutional Missionary Baptist Church. I attended the police and citizen liaison meeting at the B Street Community Center in January and will continue to do so in future months. I have gotten to know several of the leaders of the Black Community, and in March I will attend a meeting with some Black Community leaders. After I am elected, I intend to maintain contacts with these individuals in order to learn firsthand of their needs and concerns. Although not in the Northwest area, the Lake Ashton Black Heritage Club has given me their endorsement, which I believe confirms the priority that I place on this community.</p>	<p>I have tried to build relationships in all parts of the city, not just the NW neighborhood. I have been to the Austin center for the MLK celebration, to follow up of the community garden, participated in the MLK unity walk, sang in the gospel sing at Institutional Baptist church two years, organized the first meeting to recruit small business entrepreneurs for the business incubator, sang at Lake Wales Family Church.</p>