

GARDNER

For Largo · Commission Seat 1

Paid advertisement for the GardnerForLargo political campaign, commission seat one. Greg@GardnerForLargo.com



**6 MANDATORY
CHARTER REFORMS**
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FAFO AUDITS
Eliminate \$15 million in waste
PAGE 6

**RESTORE ETHICS &
THE RULE OF LAW**
PAGE 3 & PAGE 8

**END CODE
ENFORCEMENT
TYRANNY**
Emulate Dunedin Policy

END LAWFARE
Terminate Bryant Miller Olive PA
contract as legal counsel for Largo

TRANSPARENCY
The Largo Free Press
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GardnerForLargo.com
Commission Candidate - Seat 1

It was a summer day in 2022 when two deputies from the Sheriff's Threat Management Team arrived at my driveway. They had stepped in to protect Brenda Kaiser, a vulnerable elder, and her family from what code enforcement had become, "tyranny" by the City of Largo. This was a calculated predatory scheme by city officials, disguised as social good, to strip elders of their life savings over trivial code violations going back as far as a decade ago. As the deputies prepared to leave my house, they

This is a story about a citizen named Greg Gardner who was summoned to serve — and answered.

It is about the vulnerable, the predatory, and the fierce determination to stand between them.

asked if I would run for city commission, I answered, "no". Yet that suggestion soon turned my refusal into a "yes" which changed everything. The deputies had just helped defeat a powerful adversary, St Petersburg attorney Matt Weidner and his network of aligned judges and city officials. They had been foreclosing on equity-rich elderly homeowners through a profit-sharing scheme. City leaders wanted me silenced for exposing their operation for daring to defend the elderly. I had become the mayor's next target. At the time, I had no idea how large the threat was or how much the deputies and State Attorney had done to protect me.

The Sheriffs' Office needs tenacious community fighters with strong convictions, not just polished politicians who hide behind social pleasantries. I was summoned because they seek people willing to stand up for others, not with words but with their time, wallet and unwavering convictions. Over the past 3 years, my relationship with the Pinellas county Sheriff's Office deepened as they aided other victims I referred. These deputies showed me the true meaning of an oath to protect and serve.

My friend, Attorney Ben Hillard, who fought six largo code tyranny cases for five long years, taught me persistence and courage. **It is now my turn to step into the arena.** I owe it to those who stood by me and gave my life purpose. I pledge my commitment will be proven through actions; defending the vulnerable and our freedoms against those who prey upon them.

★ THE MAN IN THE ARENA ★

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles... The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly... who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT — ★ ★ ★



THE CASE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

How a foreclosure case over alleged "carport junk" changed the course of a city commission race.

What began as a minor dispute over stored items under a carport spiraled into a legal nightmare that threatened mobile homeowner Brenda Kaiser's disabled daughter and autistic grandson's current residences.

Ms. Kaiser, a vulnerable elder who owned three mobile homes on Lark Ave, was targeted by city officials with daily code fines and a ransom that would outrage the entire Sheriff's department.

According to public court records, the City of Largo foreclosed on two of Brenda Kaiser's mobile homes for unpaid code fines totaling \$163,208. The alleged crime was "junk and overgrowth".

Greg Gardner brought Ms. Kaiser and Robert Kaiser, her 16-year-old grandson, to a commission meeting to plead for forgiveness. Not a single commissioner or the mayor spoke in Kaiser's defense, as each official smirked at them with contempt. City Attorney Alan Zimmet, City Manager, Henry Schubert, and Mayor Woody Brown refused to stop the foreclosure.

During the pandemic, Ms. Kaiser lost two close family members who always helped her when needed. Due to her limited mobility, Kaiser was physically unable to manage the properties. Gardner stepped in to help with the cleanup in hopes of satisfying the city and stopping the foreclosure action against a defenseless family.

Then came the unexpected, city officials were displeased with Gardner's perceived interference. The sheriffs were summoned, and an investigation by the Threat Management Team ensued. The detectives found more than 35 cases



Homeowner Brenda Kaiser (65) with her 16-year-old grandson Robert Kaiser, outside their residence at 201 Lark Ave. Brenda Kaiser's 42-year-old disabled daughter, Kim Kaiser, was not present.

identical cases of the same nature, some worse than Kaiser's. The instigator was attorney Matt Weidner of St. Petersburg and city employee Tracey Schofield.

(Read: [The Foreclosure Franchise, Miami Herald](#))

State Attorney Bernie McCabe took matters into his own hands and ordered Judge Cynthia Newton to halt the proceedings. Kaiser was able to keep her two mobile homes, but not without a second round of fines from the city. Kaiser received a \$1,000 fine levied on each property. Case closed December 23, 2022, Honorable Magistrate Thane Covert.

“

According to court filings and public records, the City sought to foreclose after code-enforcement fines accumulated to approximately

\$163,205.00
Fine Amount Due

CRIME:
“CARPORT JUNK AND OVERGROWTH” ”

SEE THE KAISER CLEAN UP VIDEO



Search: Vimeo.com / 754445348
Robert Kaiser Clean up.MP4
A video showing Greg Gardner helping the Kaiser Family remove items and clean up their property.

This is not a fight about junk. It is a fight about whether government exists to serve the people, or to prey upon them.

City of Largo v Brenda J Kaiser:
Case: 22-003321 Foreclosure
\$124,304.00

City of Largo v Brenda J Kaiser
Case: 22-003295 Foreclosure
\$38,904.00

A Campaign for a Better Largo Tomorrow.

GardnerForLargo.com

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Charter Reform

A city charter is more than a procedural manual; it is the city's constitution. The set of rules that defines who decides, how decisions are made, and where authority and accountability must meet. Largo's charter lays out a representative democracy operating under the commission-manager form of government.

Elected commissioners set policy while a professional city manager administers day-to-day operations. On paper, this arrangement is designed to pair expert, nonpartisan administration with democratic oversight, creating an administrative "engine" guided by elected stewards. In practice, however, the promise has frayed.

The last major revision to Largo's charter occurred in 1974, a period that coincided with a dramatic population surge. In five and a half decades, the city has grown from roughly 24,000 to approximately 83,000 residents. It now meets the threshold of a high-density municipality at about 4,400 people per square mile. The charter, written for a very different era, no longer anchors the structures of local governance; it is long overdue for a comprehensive overhaul, as evidenced by the near absence of transparency and adequate representation. The charter review committee convenes in Q1 of 2027, of commission appointed community volunteers. The community is encouraged to email all commissioners for nomination. Here are six charter reforms that must be considered and brought to public vote in our 2028 election cycle.

Reform #1 No Kings



A call to end the monarchical mayorship. Political scientists warn that the fastest route to a monarchy is to eliminate or rig democratic elections. Another route to concentrated power is to diminish potential rivals or simply make the position unappealing.

The Largo mayor position currently pays \$29,000 a year. With such small compensation, qualified, competitive candidates have little incentive to run. Fewer challengers mean more unopposed races, and an effective automatic win or continual re-elections. This is not an accidental quirk of civic life; it is a structural flaw that preserves entrenched power. To restore democracy to the City of Largo, we must increase the mayor's salary to a level that attracts skilled candidates and impose term limits. Mayor Woody Brown is now serving his 4th unopposed term. Anyone who believes our Royal Highness works 40+ hours per week for a pittance salary, I have a London bridge to sell you.



Photo: Pinellas County Commissioners

Each seat is challenged every election cycle. Meaningful pay attracts intellectuals, commitment, engagement, representation, collaboration and genuine servitude.

Reform #2

Commission Upgrade 2.0

Restoring Largo's commission from passive to accountable: Largo must transform its city commission from a low-paid, passive advisory body into a dynamic, active, and fully engaged governing body like the county commission. Solution: adopting equitable compensation and meaningful time commitments. At the current annual salary of \$19,000, most commissioners - including Holck, Johnson, DiBrizzi, Smith, and Lauser - hold full-time jobs outside city government. The adage "you get what you pay for" applies. Inadequate pay creates structural incentives

for part-time attention, minimal oversight, and deference to administrative staff. Restoring commission autonomy requires the necessary charter changes that will increase the commissioner salary to reflect the responsibilities and expected time commitment, for a viable and worthy public service. Largo's residents deserve a governing body that has both the means and the mandate to govern effectively.

Reform #3



Authentic Constituency

We must replace Largo's "at large" commission with district-based representation so each commissioner is accountable to a defined geographic community, and every constituent's voice can be heard. In addition, the name, e-mail, and telephone number of each commissioner should be made readily available to the public. The current "at large" system yields little to no meaningful representation.

Reform #4

Term Limits



Floridians voted for term limit for the legislature three decades ago, known as "Eight is Enough." Florida lawmakers are actively pursuing a constitutional amendment to term limit all FL county commissioners and school board members. Largo sought to implement term limits in 2022, but recognized the city knew it

it would be hard pressed to find new candidates due to the "**peanut pay**" offered for the required position. Four-term Mayor Woody Brown opposed the idea, along with commissioners Smith and Holck, who have now served three terms and are seeking a fourth run. The solution is to offer fair and reasonable pay for the position making it worthy for new improved candidates to run for office. It's time to let the community decide. (mayor and commission term = 4 years)



Reform #5

City Ombudsman



Largo District Fire Chief Emmet Sands (superior) with his daughter Sydni Sands, St Petersburg, July 11, 2020



Largo Fire EMT Brandon Stoffel (subordinate) attending a St Petersburg No Kings protest, June 14, 2025 - Terminated

An ombudsman is essential in small-town government because, for many residents, they are the only truly independent watchdog available. Serving as an impartial investigator, the ombudsman helps citizens resolve disputes with municipal departments, evaluating complaints neutrally to promote fairness, transparency, and accountability in city administration.

Unlike a lawyer or an advocate, the ombudsman does not take sides or initiate adversarial proceedings. Instead, they use informal, confidential, and voluntary methods—mediation, fact-finding, and recommendations to address complaints. While an ombudsman can assist in employee relations and workplace disputes, their role is ordinarily nonbinding: they identify problems, recommend remedies, and report systemic issues to help prevent recurrence or unequitable solutions. City ombudsman must be incorporated into our charter by community vote.



Joan Byrn – Parks & Recreation Director, 20+ years. Terminated without cause. No remediation process provided.



Michael Gordon - Solid Waste Director, 20+ years. Terminated without cause. No remediation process provided.



Chili Verdi Restaurant
1199 Missouri Ave N.
5 long years of city beauracy.

Largo foreclosed on Sameer Malki's gas station property for an unregistered donation bin violation. Malki had to pay \$52K. The city foreclosed a 2nd time for work without a permit. Restaurant owner & tenant, Dhillon, is getting the endless city run-around of delay and deny tactics by the building department. The commission could care less.

"I CARE!"



Florida's chief financial officer, **Blaise Ingoglia** has come to be known as the "fiscal watchdog" for his persistent efforts to expose waste, fraud and abuse in local Florida government budgets. Ingolia is seeking re-election for Florida CFO in the 2026 election.

Reform #6 **FAFO AUDIT**

Florida Agency for Financial Oversight

"Government spending won't change unless someone steps up to the plate and confronts city officials", argues Blaise Ingoglia. Like many Florida municipalities, the City of Largo will find every reason to raise taxes until someone with a big enough bat is willing to fight the entrenched establishment.

Largo's property tax revenue is forecast at 6% increases for the next five consecutive years, and beyond. City officials have no interest to find efficiencies or cut waste, just borrow and tax more. The city taxpayers need a commissioner who is willing to bring authentic accountability to Largo's wasteful spending.

Largo borrowed 26.5 million in 2025 and lied to the public about the use and purpose of the funds with more unscrupulous borrowing slated for this fall. Bi-annual FAFO audits is the answer and Florida Statute 17.04 gives that authority. Taxpayers must demand FAFO audits cemented into our charter because it's your money, not theirs.

“The first amendment exists so the press can serve as the watchdog of democracy, exposing government deception and holding those in power accountable to the people”

Justice Hugo Black, *The Pentagon Papers*

THE LARGO FREE PRESS

My vision for the community

Over the last thirty years, the landscape of local journalism has withered, leaving vast "news deserts" across the country as traditional outlets shuttered. While the digital age promised a revolution, it often delivered shallow engagement through platforms like NextDoor and Facebook, which function more as chat rooms than newsrooms. Instead of insightful reporting, digital spaces are frequently filled with government-fed narratives passed to obscure reporters who rarely leave their home offices, failing to spark a genuine appetite for community involvement.

A hopeful shift is occurring with the rise of nonprofit, hyper-local news. This new frontier is reviving the printed word and placing a renewed focus on dedicated community watchdogs, holding the powerful to account and strengthening civic life. By stripping away the noise of state and federal politics, these organizations prioritize local accountability and stories that directly impact residents' daily lives.

Largo Free Press is stepping into this role with a clear mission: to deliver trusted, in-depth reporting that strengthens our community of eighty-three thousand right here in Largo. With longtime community advocate Greg Gardner (me) potentially serving on the commission, I can bring insider information and perspective that cuts through fake narratives and political spin. By focusing on local government transparency, neighborhood development, and the people making a difference, I aim to rebuild that vital connection between residents and the issues shaping our daily lives. With your community support and engagement, I can ensure Largo stays informed, empowered, and united.

The **Institute for Nonprofit News** (INN.org) is forging the path forward with over 500 local news organizations throughout North America. The physical newspaper, which may seem outdated, yet remains the benchmark for financial sustainability, delivering the perfect venue for small local businesses to advertise. The cost to deliver a 28-page tabloid, full-color, non-recycled newspaper, is a mere 60 cents per mailbox (not per curb). Each page features a unique story written by more than 20 local authors who are paid for their time and effort, delivering editorial passion with every edition not found online. My end goal is three editions per year, delivered to 80,000 business and residential mailboxes. Advertising remains extremely affordable (.046¢ mailbox) yet limited to just 30% of the real estate per page keeping the newspaper priority on content. Projected annual revenue - \$500K.

Editorial Genres

- **The Best in Humanity / Everyday Heroes:** Stories about small acts of generosity, neighbors helping neighbors, or unexpected compassion during ordinary or difficult times. Social benevolence that makes us kinder to each other.
- **God · Guns & Country:** Share your Christian faith with the community. Narratives of faith and perseverance through personal or community challenges, or moments of divine inspiration.
- **Hope & Resilience in Everyday Life:** Narrative on life's vast ocean of personal challenges including recovery, healing, despair, addiction, death and loss.
- **Gardening, Horticulture and Landscaping:** Everything under the sun that gives us life and makes us happy farmers.
- **Connections to Place and Local Identity:** From town history to local hot spots worth writing about.
- **Government Decisions & Civic Virtue:** Who's good & who's bad. What's good & what's bad. Be in the know.
- **Sports, attractions, entertainment, unique experiences and venues:** Let's get the word out.
- **Psychology, science,** astrology, maternity, health and wellness, home repair, wisdom, fish stories, humor, real estate, insurance, children's topics, school issues, condominium life, finance, retirement, poetry, baking and vacationing.

Send me your thoughts - editor@LargoFreePress.org

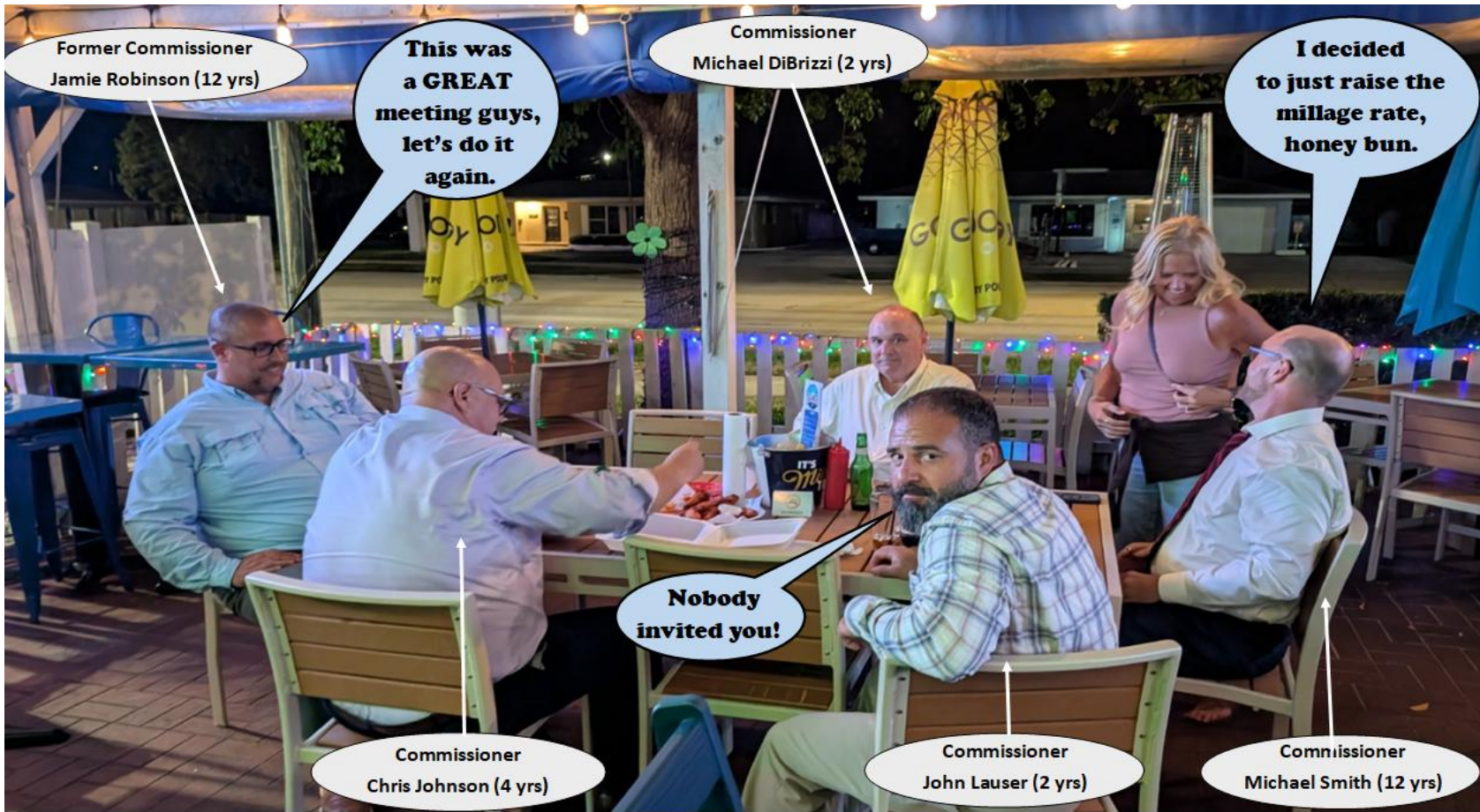
Florida



UNDERSTANDING FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE LAW

Florida's **Sunshine Law** prohibits city and county commissioners from conducting private, two-or-more member discussions on any public business. *The appearance of impropriety* arises when commissioners skirt this law through private emails, serial one-on-one meetings, using staff as go-betweens, or dinner & drink engagements, eroding public trust in their official actions. **FL Statute 286.011**

Real Commission meeting immediately following previous commission meeting



Actual Photo
Not AI Generated

June 2, 2026 "9:30 pm" · Schooners Bar & Grill, Largo, Florida

Commissioners Johnson and Smith, along with former Commissioner Robinson (pictured above), voted to impose draconian code fines on the community, with involvement from the Matt Weidner Law Firm (2019–2026). When the "buddy system" takes hold in government, it generally shifts a merit-based system toward one driven by political patronage, nepotism, and bureaucratic favoritism. Over time, the buddy system doesn't just create occasional bad decisions — it changes the culture of government. The line between right and wrong becomes blurry. Public trust erodes because residents' sense that rules are applied unevenly. Good people either leave, stay quiet, or eventually participate in the system themselves to avoid conflict. Only commissioner Curtis Holmes has enough sense to avoid these situations.

Challenger: Greg Gardner

- Conservative • Experienced
- Business owner since 1987
- Proven fighter for the community elders.
- Journalist: Largo Free Press
- 5 yrs invested into Largo politics.
- The fight for Largo begins here.★

VS



Incumbent: Michael Smith

- Ultra Liberal • Part Time Librarian
- Expert at nothing • Babbler
- Professional "selfie" photographer.
- Has been in office 12 years.
- Accomplished nothing.
- Can't fight • Won't fight
- Member: Good Ole Boy's club.

CANDIDATE PETITION

Notes: - All information on this form becomes a public record upon receipt by the Supervisor of Elections.
- It is a crime to knowingly sign more than one petition for a candidate. [Section 104.185, Florida Statutes]
- If all requested information on this form is not completed, the form will not be valid as a Candidate Petition form.

I, ☒ _____ the undersigned, a registered voter
(print name as it appears on your voter information card)

in said state and county, petition to have the name of **Greg Gardner** placed on the Primary/General Election Ballot as a: [*check/complete box, as applicable*]

☒ Nonpartisan ☐ No party affiliation ☐ _____ Party candidate for the office of

City of Largo Commission, Seat 1

(insert title of office and include district, circuit, group, seat number, if applicable)

☒ Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY) or ☐ Voter Registration Number

☒ Address

City

LARGO

County

PINELLAS

State

FLORIDA

Zip Code

☒ Signature of Voter

☒ Date Signed (MM/DD/YY)
[to be completed by Voter]

le 1S-2.045, F.A.C.

DS-DE 104 (Eff. 09/11)



Mail to: PO Box 1424 · Largo Florida 33770
Gardner For Largo Campaign
727-282-8140
Greg@GardnerForLargo.com
Home Address: 2748 Adrian Ave, Largo 33774

A commission candidate requires 200 registered Largo voter signatures to be placed on the ballot. This candidate petition is not an endorsement; it merely consents the candidate to appear on the ballot.

A Largo citizen will have a green garbage can.
A County citizen will have a blue garbage can.