

## 2024 TCPalm Candidate Questionnaire & Answers

### **Educational Background**

Leadership Florida, Cornerstone Class XXXVII, 2019

State University of NY at Albany, B.A., cum laude, 1974

Florida Association of Counties, Advanced County Commissioner Program, completed 2023

Florida League of Cities, Certificate Programs completed

### **Current Occupation & Work History**

Indian River County Commissioner, 2020-present

Vero Beach City Council, 2016-2020 (two terms)

Mayor, City of Vero Beach, 2016/2017

Vice Mayor, City of Vero Beach, 2019/2020

Board of Directors, Florida Municipal Power Agency (FMPA), 2016-2019

City of Vero Beach Utilities Commission, Chairwoman, 2015/2016

It is an honor to be the only woman to start City Council as Mayor in the 100+-year history of Vero Beach.

As an elected official on Indian River County Commission and previously on Vero Beach City Council, I have represented the county or city serving on the following: Affordable Housing Advisory Committee; Metropolitan Planning Organization; Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council; SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program); Children's Services Advisory Committee; Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments; Tourist Development Council; IRC Census 2020 Community Action Committee among others.

Prior to elected public office, I spent my career in the private sector. Executive experience as Director of Sales Promotion on a national basis (Sterling Optical NYSE). High-pressure, results-driven position with a large budget and staff.

### **Volunteer & Civic Engagement**

It is an honor to be the first civilian ever elected to the Board of Directors of Veterans Council IRC and later to be inducted as an honorary member of MOAA.

Veterans Council of Indian River County, Board of Directors, 2019/2020

Military Officers Association of America, Honorary Inductee, 2022

Sebastian Centennial Sponsor, 2024

"Friend to the Community" Award, Vero Beach Oceanside Rotary, 2024

Vero Beach Art Club, Supporter of the Year, 2023

Impact 100 Member, 2023

Conservation Project Award (native plant garden - County Complex), 2022

Municipal Landscape Award (UF) (native plant garden-Vero Beach City Hall), 2021

President's Award, Pelican Island Audubon Society, 2020

Mental Health Association, Fund Development Committee, 2018-present

Vero Beach Lifeguard Association, Supporter of the Year Award, 2018

Hometown Hero Award from St. Helen Catholic School, 2017

Successfully re-instituted "Coffee with the Mayor" in 2017 following a 10-year hiatus.

Board of Directors, Taxpayers' Association of Indian River County, 2015, 2016

Board of Directors, Roseland Community Association, 2015-2016

Steering Committee, Vero Beach Museum of Art, The Circle, 2015-2019

Membership in the following organizations: IRC Cattlewomen; Roseland Women's Club, Vero Beach Oceanside Rotary; IRC Historical Society; AAUW; Pelican Island Audubon Society; Treasure Coast Women; Friends of St. Sebastian River; Environmental Learning Center; Vero Beach Women's Club among others.

### **Why are you running for office?**

Nothing tops truly representing the will of the people and protecting their best interests. Being Mayor, now County Commissioner and holding local elected office is the best job of my life. Coming in first in the 2016 and 2018 general elections for Vero Beach City Council then first again in the 2020 election for County Commissioner, District 5 is a great honor. I thank each and every individual who took the time to make his/her will known. You gave me a mandate for change and the confidence that comes with it. I never forget that all power comes from you.

Since 2016, when I became the first woman ever to start her City Council term as Mayor in the 100+-year history of Vero Beach, and continuing to today as County Commissioner, I proudly have worn my official name badge everyday everywhere I go. This simple act has served to encourage people to speak with me anytime anywhere about anything on their minds. It keeps me in-touch with their hopes and dreams, as well as their fears and concerns, for our community. People can come away from me with the knowledge that they have direct access to local government. That their thoughts and feelings are important and will be considered in the decision-making process. It is not a one-time event; it is the start of a relationship. I invite them to contact me at any time. I view local government and my role in it as a partnership with the People. A sacred trust. A grassroots leader in touch with the People is more important than ever today. I delight in people. I relish problem-solving.

As a county, we are at a critical juncture. With the need to protect our water supply, lagoon, green spaces, and very sense of community in the face of what can become a relentless push for development. I remain committed to protecting this special place we call home and the strong sense of community that we enjoy. And I am optimistic that we can do so. With the help of our new County Administrator, initiatives to improve existing services and to plan carefully for our future have begun. I enjoy being part of that process. Envisioning and suggesting improvements. And I look forward to continuing to contribute to the process and its implementation in my second term.

### **What would be your top priority during your first year in office?**

Re-evaluating growth and the price we pay for it. Working with the municipalities to do so. In simple terms, land use within our county and the quality and quantity of our water. For example, a review of the Urban Service Area currently is underway with public outreach workshops having been conducted. Related studies or plans underway include a first-time Parks & Recreation Master Plan, a Stormwater Master Plan, and a Beach Preservation Plan. All of which will become valuable tools in planning the best future for our county.

With regard to actions I've already taken, my initiative to create an educational native plant garden at the County Complex was completed within a year of my start on County Commission with the help of Pelican Island Audubon Society. The funding for this award-winning demonstration project was largely raised through private sources.

I've promoted the updating of our 1988 Geohydrology Report prepared by the US Geological Survey (federal agency) since the Soil & Water Conservation District advised us of this need in 2021. This report is the most comprehensive and specific guide to the water in our County. I voted against the creation of Community Development Districts (500+ acres at a time with financial incentives for developers) in our county in 2022, and I voted against filling in wetlands for purposes of development in 2023.

Additionally, I've requested that the traffic studies for proposed developments be readily available to County Commission and the Planning & Zoning Commission and that a cumulative count be kept of the amount of traffic added any given year. From my perspective, adding a subdivision should be considered within a larger context than several hundred feet from its doors. It takes years for roads and bridges to be added or even expanded. Most of us already have felt that our roadways are unable to keep up with the current increase in traffic. A large project such as the I-95 Oslo Road Exit is intended to make travel easier but the area effected will need to be planned carefully.

Other important issues currently facing us include our aging infrastructure, our economic growth, our continuing viability as an affordable home to our hardworking middle-class, and how best to address our homeless.

### **What distinguishes you from your opponents in this race?**

#### **Moss = Leadership**

Being Mayor. I am honored to be the only woman to start City Council as Mayor in the 100+-year history of Vero Beach.

#### **Zudans = Lack of Leadership**

My opponent, Mrs. Zudans, nominated herself for Mayor at the Reorganization meeting of Vero Beach City Council last November. Her motion died for lack of a second.

#### **Moss = Experience/Commitment to the Community**

Having served two terms on Vero Beach City Council and completing my first term on County Commission, my commitment to our community is clear.

#### **Zudans = Lack of Experience/Commitment to the Community**

My opponent, Mrs. Zudans, filed to run for County Commission less than halfway through her first two-year term on Vero Beach City Council.

#### **Moss = Accomplishments**

With a mandate from the voters, I started as Mayor on 11/21/2016, and I signed the contract for the electric sale on 10/24/2017.

For details, see "How FPL-Vero Deal went from "War" to "Godsend", reprinted with permission of Standard + Poor's Global Market Intelligence at [votelauramoss.com](http://votelauramoss.com).

#### **Zudans = Lack of Accomplishments**

To date, with regard to the City's single largest project, Three Corners, to say that Mrs. Zudans has been unsuccessful in bringing it to fruition is an understatement. It recently has regressed and devolved all the way back to the Request For Proposal (RFP) stage. And the downward spiral includes Mrs. Zudans recusing herself from an important vote in this matter against the advice of the City Attorney. She was advised that Florida Statute required it and still refused to comply. Elected officials have an obligation to follow the law whatever their personal opinions might be. For details, see "Three jeers for clown show on Three Corners", Vero News, 06/13/2024