



# NAPLES CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE GUIDE

## December 16th Forum

Candidates to be interviewed in the following order, which was randomly drawn by the GSAC Board of Directors.



Ray Christman



Terry Hutchison



Ian Rudnick



John Dugan



Beth Petrunoff

## Engaged Residents are the key to a bright future

On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, there will be a very important election for Naples City Council members. At present five candidates are running for what will be three open seats. We have interviewed each of the five candidates about their views on what issues matter most in Naples, which are summarized in the following pages.

This election is an at-large election in which the three candidates who poll the most votes are elected without regard to where they live in the City. The composition of the present Council is such that, for the first time in many years, none of the members reside in the GSBN/ Park Shore area.


Vote-by-Mail ballots will be sent on December 30 to those registered voters who have requested them through the Collier County Supervisor of Elections ([www.CollierVotes.org](http://www.CollierVotes.org)). GSAC urges all who are eligible to vote to do so, whether by mail, during the week-long early voting period from January 26-29 at Norris Center, or in person on February 1st.



PMB 85, PO Box 413005  
Naples, FL 34101-3005  
[www.GSACNaples.org](http://www.GSACNaples.org)

*Enhancing your quality  
of life in Naples through  
education, civic  
advocacy, beautification  
and communication.*

Learn more at [www.GSACNaples.org](http://www.GSACNaples.org)



**GSAC Candidate Forum  
Question Guide  
December 16, 2021**

The citywide Naples Vision Survey in 2019 identified five main themes that City Council adopted in 2021 that include:

- **Our Place – preserve small town character and culture**
- **Our Nature – Environmental sensitivity**
- **Our Experience – Extraordinary quality of life for residents**
- **Our Economy – Economic health and vitality**
- **Our Governance – High performing government**

The questions below are framed to explore each of these areas. In particular we are interested in learning about your thoughts and plans to address the important issues raised in the following questions.

**Our Place:**

A concern expressed by many residents is that we are losing the small town character and culture many came here to experience.

How do you define “small town character and culture?”

Do you share the concern that the City is losing its small town character and culture? If so, specifically what will you do as a member of council to reverse that trend? If you don’t share the concern, why not?

**Our Nature:**

Clean water is essential to maintaining a healthy and sustainable environment.

Venetian Bay/Moorings Bay has been identified as a declining body of water. What will you do to reverse the decline and improve water quality?

Sea level rise and resiliency are particularly important to GSAC.

What is your opinion of the Army Corps of Engineers CSRSM study and report? As it pertains to the City, do you support any, or all, of the components of the plan in its current form? Why? Why not? If it was implemented how would you propose the City fund its portion?

Should the City be developing its own resiliency plan? Why? Why not? How would you go about developing a plan?





## **Our Experience:**

**The seawalls/sidewalks along the bay on GSBN in Park Shore are an integral part of the enjoyment of the area for City residents.**

**Now that it has been determined that ownership of the seawalls belongs to the City and it is responsible for repair and maintenance, and that Council has approved replacement of 700 feet of failing seawall, how will you insure the entire 3200 ft will be replaced on a timely basis?**

**Safety/ Security are highly valued by residents.**

**What policy decisions will you take to insure our Fire/Rescue and Police Department are fully staffed and competitively compensated?**

**High quality and accessible health care for City residents is essential.**

**NCH is planning to develop a Heart Institute at the current downtown hospital site. It will perhaps require a relaxation of the 42' height limit in commercial buildings. What is your position on the 42 foot height limitation? What is your position on NCH's plans?**

## **Our Economy**

**A vibrant and profitable business community ranks high in importance.**

**A resident driven study was recently completed on the 41/10 area. Give us your thoughts on the redevelopment ideas that came out the study and what you will do to implement them.**

**The cost of housing in Naples is at an all time high.**

**The lack of local low-income housing, as well as work force (moderate priced) housing, has been discussed for years. How should the City of Naples address this issue?**

## **Our Governance**

**A high performing and efficient government is a requirement.**

**What are your thoughts on how the current Naples City Council is working? How will you go about making changes to improve effectiveness?**

**Considering the growth of Collier County and its impact on the City, how will you build a stronger working relationship with the County?**





## **Meet the Candidate: Raymond Christman**

Ray Christman is one of two incumbent councilors up for re-election. Ray and his family were regular visitors to Naples before purchasing a home here in 2003.

After graduating with a master's degree in city planning, Ray worked in urban development and land conservation in his home state of Pennsylvania before embarking on a career in banking. His interest in the environmental scene eventually led him to The Trust for Public Land, a national organization that protects land and creates parks. As Director of Operations for the southeast, he helped lead an effort to pass, by voter referendum, the Florida Water and Land Legacy Act. "It was a major initiative and victory for the environmental movement

which created a reliable, ongoing monetary resource to protect water and land in Florida for a generation or more."

Prior to his election to Naples City Council in 2019, Ray spearheaded the campaign to establish a new ethics code and independent ethics commission for the City. Currently, he chairs the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Community Redevelopment Agency and serves as Council representative on the County's Coastal Advisory Committee.

Ray says he is running for re-election for the same reasons he ran in 2019.

"Naples continues to be at an important point in its history. Growth is going to happen whether we like it or not, but we want to do all we can to maintain the character and identity of our community. The aim must be to manage and guide development in a smart way. Past leadership was often to laissez faire and too willing to let development occur in whatever fashion proposed."

"Council is the front line in the role to manage and guide growth. We should not give away variances and deviations of our land use code; we need to focus on clean water and stormwater management and on quality-of-life issues like beach access for residents and air traffic; we must have transparent and ethical local government – these are all things that local residents want and what I want."

Ray says he doesn't come to the job with any narrow interest group, ideological, or geographic bias. "I try and look at every issue objectively and independently" in order to do "what's right for the community."

Ray believes there's been more forward action on key city priorities in the last three years than in the last decade. "While I think it is a fair criticism that our meetings are too long, we've made a heck of a lot of progress on issues like protecting the environment, strengthening and enforcing our land development code, and sustaining our quality of life. But we still have a long way to go."

For more information on Ray: [christmanforcouncil.com](http://christmanforcouncil.com)



## **Meet the Candidate: Terry Hutchison**

If there was one person in the world who could claim a median was the launchpad for a stint in the political arena, it would be Terry Hutchison. While the convenience store company 7-Eleven brought the native from Indiana initially to Venice, Florida in 2008, frequent visits to our city inspired Terry's relocation here eight years ago. In 2016, Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida partnered with the City of Naples for a redevelopment project along Central Ave. Part of the improvements included the installation of a median. What was thought to be a great looking street project had unintended consequences for Terry's business.

"The construction of a median negatively impacted numerous businesses including mine," recalls Terry. It served as a blockade to what had been a simple turn into his store at the intersection of Central and US 41. "When I approached city council with my concerns nothing got addressed and I felt like there weren't enough people on council with business experience to appreciate what we business owners were trying to say."

Terry couldn't beat them, so he joined them. The Vice Mayor believes council has had great success addressing the city's Vision since his election in 2018. "I'm committed to not repeating mistakes from the past. By really paying attention to the details, I believe we can properly manage growth and not get into the situation of accelerating growth for growth's sake."

He voted against the Naples Beach Hotel redevelopment. "We had the right developers, but we didn't have a strong enough conservation easement on the last large green space left in Naples. It just couldn't get my vote."

Championing responsible development such as the 10th street commercial corridor and the River Park community and protecting the environment, are priorities for Terry.

"Water quality is number one. If we compromise water quality, we are in serious danger in many different ways. We need to tackle the root causes of pollutants entering the lakes and stop compromising on adherence to stormwater codes by developers."

He's delighted for the residents of GSB that "we've finally got to the point where action is being taken on the repairs to the seawall and sidewalks" along Venetian Bay. However, he says we must remain vigilant about efforts to construct a cell tower in the neighborhood. "Verizon may have backed off, but Crown Castle is moving forward very aggressively" with an installation at 3rd Street South.

While acknowledging council meetings may seem endless, they are necessary. "For many years council did not dedicate the time to the issues and important decisions were deferred. So careful, sometimes intense and lengthy deliberations are needed to shape the right decisions and the needed reforms."

For more information on Terry: [hutchison4naples.com](http://hutchison4naples.com)



## Meet the Candidate: Ian Rudnick

As befitting the youngest candidate in the race, Ian Rudnick's enthusiasm is matched by a sense of urgency.

"I'm not getting into this to become a politician; I'm going into this because I was a Naples police officer and I see that this city is going to become unsafe if we keep going down the road we are on and I want to make sure it doesn't."

Ian is the only candidate that can claim Naples as his hometown. He spent almost 17 years with the Naples police force before retiring last May. He ran the SWAT team, the vice unit, worked along DEA detectives and made it to assistant commander.

"I have seen a lot of the inside of the city at all hours of the day and night. From the greatest times to the worst times. I've dealt with it all."

He's deeply concerned by the drawn-out contractual negotiations between the city and its first responders and sees hiring and retention over all departments as huge issues for City Hall.

"We are at a place right now where we have 25% vacancy rate in the public safety sector and if we don't get this contract with police and fire sorted out, we will be way beyond that. That's scary."

Ian believes compensation is the number one issue, followed closely by career opportunities and affordable housing. "As a patrol officer on a starting salary of \$52,000 you are not going to be able to afford to live in Naples; you are more likely to live in another county and when that county or another agency is offering you better compensation, specialty units to broaden your experience and a career path – why would you come to Naples?"

"We used to hang our hat on the idea that although we may not be the biggest agency, nor offer as much opportunity as a big sheriff's office, we were always very competitive salary-wise. Now there's really nothing we can offer a young police officer."

Community outreach is another area Ian feels is being neglected. "The ACE project is a good example of a failure of community outreach. No federal plan can work without buy in from the local citizenry and city council needs to make sure of that."

Ian says he is not looking to springboard a long political career, he's just seeing problems that he wants to fix. If voters are looking for someone who is going to play a political game, not make waves, not get anyone angry, then that's not going to be me. What I will do is what is best for the city and not what's best for my political career."

For more information on Ian: [rudnick4citycouncil.com](http://rudnick4citycouncil.com)



## **Meet the Candidate: John Dugan**

Newly remarried and “learning a lot” out on the political trail, John first came to Naples when his parents relocated to the city in 2003. He’s called Naples home since 2010.

Nearly all of his business career was spent as a road warrior with the global services and consulting giant Accenture. Getting involved with the Republican Party and becoming President of the Naples Republican Club (“I needed something to do”) was his first foray into politics. He says this experience piqued his interest in City Council. “I saw that they were having trouble getting things done and there was some angst. So, I thought maybe somebody like me, with my skills might help them figure it out. I spent two decades

helping corporations decide where they wanted to go, how they were going to get there and what the implications would be. I think I can help the Council make a business plan and we’ll move forward from there together.”

If he were elected, he says he would be very future oriented. “I find what’s going on now to be past-present verses where we’re going.”

He cites the current approach to growth. As he sees it, there needs to be more proactivity. “The city has to prepare for the growth that is happening in the county. The city is a pinch point for people coming from Immokalee in the north and Collier Blvd. in the east and we haven’t done very much at all to plan for that growth. We should be going to the County and telling them this is what we want the edge of the city looking like, this is how we want this seam to come together.”

He’s also keen on re-structuring the way in which the city listens to residents, advocating the creation of neighborhood ‘prioritization committees,’ and of how the city minds its pennies: “I’d like to see the budget shift from a bottom up budget to a top down budget and I’d like to see more money carved off to strategic spending verses tactical spending.”

While John is on the outside looking in on some of the issues, he is quite certain on the importance of water quality to the city’s residents: “if you want to undermine the lifestyle in Naples just undermine the water.”

Having come up through public accounting and public consulting, John says he doesn’t know how to do anything that isn’t transparent. “Everyone will always know ‘why’ with me. If they want to debate it or talk to me about it, I’m always willing to listen, to change the shape of any argument or any business case. That’s what I view my job as and that’s what I think I can do better than everyone else.”

For more information on John: [johndugan4naples.com](http://johndugan4naples.com)



## **Meet the Candidate: Beth Petrunoff**

Beth discovered Naples in 2008 when she was searching for a vacation home. Her first impression of the city is not uncommon. “When I drove over that bridge into 5th Avenue, I nearly had to pull my car over because it was so pretty,” recalls Beth. She liked the ‘Midwest vibe’ – it looked clean and safe. She became a full time resident two years ago. “I moved houses a lot as a kid and a lot with my career, but Naples is the first city that I actually chose to live in.” Beth feels the best way to be effective in preserving the character of the city is to get involved in its politics. “I’m not from a political background; I’ve never done anything in politics, but I want to be part of the fabric of the

community, and I think this is the best way.”

Beth is running on the basis of the 2019 Vision Plan, the culmination of a community wide effort to establish the framework of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. “It’s all about preserving our small-town charm and protecting our environment. I feel that my 19 years with GE and my business acumen will help deliver on what the 1600 residents and local business owners said they wanted.”

As the daughter of a man who dedicated his career to cleaning up polluted waters, Beth says ecological stewardship is in her DNA. She’d like to see removal of pollutants from the city’s lakes accelerated with scheduled timelines.

“The budget is a 300-page laundry list. We need to prioritize what’s most important to us and make sure they are embedded for years to come in our budgeting, so we get projects done.”

Beth says she is convinced the neighborhood action plans stripped out of the Comprehensive Plan in 2008-9, need re-instating. “They are necessary to have a robust plan meaningful to all residents; we should be incorporating each neighborhood’s unique needs into our plan at city hall.”

Additionally, “there’s probably things in there that don’t make any sense anymore because of the environment we live in today. There will be things that need adding or deleting and I want to be part of that conversation.”

Beth also suggests that the city needs to better protect itself against the threat of cyber-attack. “The city spends about \$2m on tech services. I am proposing that we do not outsource our top position to an outside help desk. Rather, hire a technology leader in the city that’s thinking more strategically for Naples, helping guide the city to the best tech solutions – including who we outsource to and what functions we outsource.”

For more information on Beth: [beth4naples.com](http://beth4naples.com)