

Your Name	Rob Long
Seat running for	Delray Beach City Commission, Seat 2
District	At Large
Website	www.RobForDelray.com
How long have you lived in Palm Beach County?	14 years

JOBS

As a small business owner, member of the Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Commerce of The Palm Beaches, and a former Board Member of the Delray Beach Chamber, I understand the importance of high wage job creation firsthand. Having a sustainable business community that creates and maintains local jobs is critical to a healthy city and a high quality of life.

On top of our robust downtown and Atlantic Ave. businesses, it's important to support business creation in our business park and industrial areas by making prudent zoning decisions and encouraging appropriate development that fuels economic development. By working with our CRA, DDA, Chambers of Commerce, the BDB, as well as the business owners, we can encourage and incentivize growth in our business market that's compatible with the surrounding communities.

Our city must remain a business-friendly environment where investment is encouraged and welcomed. City spending has gone up 7% this year and is growing, and our tax revenue is shrinking. It's crucial to bring more jobs to Delray Beach and bring more corporate tax revenue to our city, and create a job market so more people can live and work in Delray Beach.

TALENT

In Delray Beach, the issue comes down to affordable housing and a high-quality education. A lot of Delray's available jobs, such as teachers, first responders, and service industry workers, don't receive wages compatible with Delray Beach's high home and rental prices. This creates high traffic from people driving in from other cities to work in Delray, and an unsustainable tax base. Additionally, Delray's schools are not as highly rated as surrounding communities (Boca Raton) which impacts our ability to attract young families, so corporate headquarters are less likely to relocate to Delray Beach.

As a Commissioner, I'll focus on affordable housing initiatives and partner with our School District to support our local schools. My priority will be ensuring we can attract and retain talented individuals, and that the ones we have can afford to actually live in our city.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Businesses are important for our local economy especially when they are owned and operated by residents. We need to attract businesses that are grounded in the community and cater to the specific and unique needs of our population. Doing this requires more support from government as well as community stakeholders because having this support system will protect them from economic downturns or uncertainty.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Adding additional affordable housing options is easier said than done, especially as the cost of construction has skyrocketed recently. Another issue is the lack of available open space that could be utilized for new housing units. Right now, our best option is to incentivize builders to incorporate as many affordable units as possible within their proposals. In many cases, this is not financially feasible for private businesses to do and therefore creative solutions are required to make it workable.

I think the available spaces in and around the Congress Avenue Corridor present us with a unique opportunity to plan a walkable, multi-use and versatile area that can limit the need for vehicles, provide affordable homes, as well as provide storefronts for local small businesses. Everything we do next must ensure compatibility with the surrounding community, include resident and expert input, careful review, and tangible benefits for our entire city.

TAXES

Balancing the city budget is one of the main duties of being a Commissioner and I will ensure we are being realistic about our spending. Taxpayers already face a heavy burden so we need to come up with innovative ways to bring in additional revenue into our city. We need to cut costs where we can but must ensure we are adequately funding critical city services such as public safety and water treatment. Right now, the City's tax revenue is overwhelmingly supported by residents' property taxes. We need to balance it out by making Delray Beach more attractive to businesses, so they can offset residents' burden.

COLLABORATION

I couldn't agree more. Collaboration is something Delray Beach desperately needs right now. Solving issues will require collaboration with all stakeholders including city residents, businesses, experts in their fields, and other state and local organizations. There are ways to address affordable housing, reduce traffic, attract young families, while simultaneously preserving our history, keeping sensible height limits, and maintaining Delray's village-by-the-sea charm. I chose to serve because I know I have what it takes to bridge the gaps in our community.

In my 6 years on the Palm Beach Soil & Water Conservation District, I worked with Arthur R Marshall Lox National Wildlife Refuge, Mounts Botanical Gardens, the PBC School District, the County, state legislators, and the FL Department of Agriculture to create brand new educational programs for PBC students, conserve hundreds of millions of gallons of water per year, and educate residents on drinking water issues right here in Delray Beach. I believe that relationships and partnerships are key to solving residents' needs and resolving dysfunction.

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Having diverse workplaces is essential to a representative government. I support women in our workforce and in positions of leadership because it leads to more equal outcomes for our community as a whole. We can incentivize this by considering and implementing child care and parental leave policies to ensure mothers have support when they need it.

WORKPLACE CULTURE

This would be an area that I would reach out to the Women's Chamber of Commerce of PBC for counsel and insights. From the city employee perspective, it would be important for me to review any employee satisfaction surveys or other information showing current culture. It's no secret that the City of Delray Beach has struggled with retention lately and fixing that culture is a top priority of mine. I'd also like to have a disparity study performed, so we can see where our shortfalls are and address them.

OUR COMMUNITY

The wrong direction, which is why we need a change in leadership. We have a voting majority on the Commission more focused on vendettas and division, than healthy relationships and residents' needs. We have unprecedented turnover at city hall, we're in many avoidable lawsuits, and we've been fined by the Department of Health for water issues. It's time for a change.

I understand that Delray Beach is a collective of diverse and unique neighborhoods with their own priorities and perspectives. Whether it's the growth management needs of our Western neighborhoods, seasonal flooding along our intracoastal, or sorely needed restoration of blighted areas, I'll be your voice on the Delray Beach city commission.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

N/A