

# Lawanna Gelzer

Special Election for City of Orlando District 5

13 Questions from Spectrum News 13

1. Why are you running? If elected, what would be your top goals as city commissioner?

I'm running because I believe I can make a difference and bring integrity leadership and especially accountability back to the district for the constituents. My 40 years of community service has prepared me with experience and equipped me with the know how to achieve those goals.

- A. Economic Development helps to create higher paying wages and better jobs if managed responsibly. I would work together with major employers and the tourism/hospitality industry to come up with a plan to boost revenues, increase wages, develop new housing availability, and integrate better transportation solutions. District 5 is in need of better representation who can deliver the results to actually improve quality of life, raise the standard of living throughout district 5 and tap into the economic potential.
- B. Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements in the City of Orlando, as well as Orange County and Central Florida. This would include investments in commuter rail, LYNX, and a focus on East-West connections and options for the workers to be more efficient.
- C. Climate and Environmental (creating stronger climate and environmental equity polices, "Green" development and projects, energy conservation, etc.)

2. Downtown Orlando was recently impacted by the law that bans public sleeping. How can District 5 meet the needs that arise as a result of the law's passage?

Laws that criminalize homelessness are needlessly cruel and fail to properly address the issue. The answer is, has been and will always be to increase attainable housing. If people need to sleep, we need to make sure it's somewhere where they can have a roof over their heads, for the sake of safety and basic human dignity.

3. What is your view on the current state of safety in the downtown area? What would you do to address safety concerns downtown during peak bar/restaurant hours?

Safety is a concern everywhere, not just downtown. We must work to ensure that our people have places to go, food in their stomach, and somewhere to sleep, all things that have the greatest impact on crime.

Amid those downtown safety concerns, there have been several new initiatives to make the culture and business makeup of downtown more family friendly. How do you balance this new vision for downtown while continuing to support existing downtown businesses?

Orlando has always been family friendly, and business downtown will be enriched by the extra customers that this approach will bring. You need to look no further than money small business makes at any spring festival, or any DR. Philips event to confirm that. Bringing in more families will allow business to flourish during hours outside of Saturday night, and bring growth to the area.

4. There are a number of affordable housing developments in District 5, but there is still a great need for more affordable housing. What ideas do you have to help those in need of an affordable, sustainable place to live despite options that are seemingly already there?

The reason there is such a need for affordable housing (besides the low housing supply) even with all of the new projects is because though the houses are affordable, they are not attainable. We need to work on making the housing attainable to those in the district so that the houses built here house the people who live here. We must make sure that our plans address the immediate displacement needs, but also that the housing remains attainable the future.

5. While making way for many new businesses in Creative Village, some long-time residents have expressed concerns that historic Parramore has been erased. What will you do to ensure that the history remains intact and that Parramore proper is not forgotten?

The heart and soul of Parramore will always be the people. If we want to keep Parramore, we must use policies to empower the people. By helping locals find housing, raise and educate their children, and start new small businesses, we can keep the soul of Parramore.

6. District 5 will be home to a new \$500 million entertainment complex across from the Kia Center, which will include a hotel, retail space, housing, and parking, scheduled to open in 2027. How do you ensure this doesn't just drive tourism, but also has a positive impact on other businesses and the residents of District 5?

We need to make sure that business that thrive in Parramore, hire in Parramore. Not only that, but we need to ensure that it also promotes Parramore. This means not just hiring those who live in the district, but also promoting the local small business in the area to the new influx of tourist. The city has worked tirelessly to build the complex in opposition to the community, I will work even harder to make sure that it becomes a part of the community.

7. How would you eliminate the food desert in District 5 and bring nutritious options to residents?

To answer this, we need to ask the question, why are there no full groceries store in Parramore. No Walmart, no Publix, nothing. That needs to change, but it doesn't end there. We have been building modular community gardens, where people can not only have space to grow their own food, but also access to the food we grow. And this brings us to point number 3 which is working with the local free kitchens and pantries to help food insecure families get the high nutrient food they need. Nobody should go hungry, not with the amount of prosperity we see around us.

8. How would you change the perception of the Parramore community when it comes to crime?

The perception of crime in Parramore is exactly that, a perception. There is no greater amount of crime here than anywhere else in the city. That being said, the best way to address crime is to address the underlying causes of crime, which include, lack of opportunity, inequality, low education, and housing insecurity. BY addressing these we can tackle the issues of crime in our city.

9. We often talk about engaging youth in the community in an effort to address crime. What is your plan to engage parents? Will you include them in any initiatives to making the community safer for youth in the area?

I have worked tirelessly to support families in the area who suffer from the consequences of violence. Over and over again, the programs and policies we suggest fall on deaf ears, but even still we have been able to implement programs across the district to help parents in distressed situations. We have scienced back,

evidence-based programs like Functional Family Therapy, ready to go if I'm elected

10. You have two areas in District 5, the Orlando Gasification Plant and Griffin Park Homes, that were subject to pollution and air quality concerns. What are your plans to clean up District 5?

The environment has always been near and dear to my heart, and a passion I have worked on for years. We have made some powerful allies along the way, including the EPA who has given us grants to launch our air quality studies. We have found multiple previously undocumented superfund sites and make all of our findings transparent and available online.

You can see me featured by the Huffington post here- [environmental injustice-bad air in orlando huffpost \(youtube.com\)](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/environmental-injustice-bad-air-in-orlando)

11. What would you do to increase accessibility to parks and other recreational activities for youth?

We can modernize access to recreational activities by using websites, apps, and social media to increase awareness of events, and even streamline the process of creating new ones.

12. If suspended Commissioner Regina Hill is reinstated, do you plan to run against her when the seat is up for reelection in 2025? This is a question for the community not me. If the community asks, I will answer the call.