

Commissioner Diana Finegan

Why I Am Seeking Re-Election

Serving as your County Commissioner and Board Chair has been a great honor. Growing up in Citrus County, I learned early on the values of hard work, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, and looking out for your neighbors. My commitment to our community hasn't changed since my days leading CASA or helping with our family businesses: I am here to fight for the everyday taxpayers, protect our unique way of life, and ensure our county government remains transparent, fiscally disciplined, and accountable to you.

We are at a critical crossroads. Growth is coming down the Suncoast Parkway, and we must manage it proactively rather than letting it manage us. I am seeking re-election to ensure that our long-time residents aren't priced out of their homes, that our pristine natural resources are fiercely protected, and that our infrastructure keeps pace with growth without burdening your pocketbooks. During this next term, I will continue my commitment to fiscal accountability and government transparency. I will continue my work on our wastewater projects to protect both the environment and your wallet. I will hold the line with developers who are not in the best interest of Citrus County. I will continue to bring a business-minded, "taxpayer-first" approach to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), standing firm against unnecessary spending and always listening to the people who make Citrus County home.

1. Campaign Contributions

Campaign contributions should never dictate policy, period. While campaigns require resources to communicate a message, my vote on the BOCC is not for sale. Everyday citizens may not have the means to write large checks, but they have the ultimate currency: their voice and their vote. I balance these interests by maintaining an open-door policy and focusing strictly on the merits of every issue. My record shows I vote for what benefits Citrus County families, not special interests.

Too often, we see developers and others donating to campaigns, then those same people bring projects before the Board of County Commissioners. Governing myself, I do not accept campaign contributions from developers or anyone I think may have upcoming business before the board. I feel so strongly about this matter that I would support a state initiative to further regulate campaign contributions.

Experience/Action: I will not accept any contributions from developers during my campaign.

2. Serving Both Seniors and Younger Residents

We do not have to sacrifice one demographic to support another. Protecting essential services for seniors—like senior centers, transit, and quality healthcare—is non-negotiable. Simultaneously, we attract a younger workforce by fostering a pro-business environment that creates high-skill, high-wage jobs so our children don't have to move away. Expanding youth sports fields and recreational options also ensures Citrus County is a vibrant place for families to plant roots. I've been working to expand field space in existing parks so that every kid gets to play. This is a benefit to our community, paid by impact fees. Having kids in sports is a benefit to citizens of all ages. Organized sports teach children teamwork, leadership, dependability, and responsibility. We want our young people to grow into good, community-minded adults.

Experience/Action:

- 1. My work has resulted in several new playing fields added to our park system, paid by impact fees and not your tax dollars. I'm also spearheading a sports complex project that will create a positive economic impact. It will be paid by impact fees, tourist dollars, and private donations.**
 - 2. Having 18 years of grant-writing experience will be helpful in obtaining private funds for the sports complex.**
 - 3. Citrus County provides a variety of services to seniors. I have voted to maintain services for seniors and have spent time visiting people's homes with Meals on Wheels.**
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3. Protecting Foundational Taxpayers

Our long-time residents built this county, and they must not be pushed aside by rapid development. I protect our foundational taxpayers by voting against property tax increases and scrutinizing the county budget to eliminate waste. Growth must pay for itself, and currently, it does not. New developments should bear the infrastructure burdens they create, rather than shifting those costs onto the backs of long-time residents who have paid their dues for decades. A prior board voted to do away with concurrency, but I have been a vocal proponent to bring it back. Concurrency is a growth management regulation requiring that essential public infrastructure and services must be adequate and available to support a new development project before permits are granted. Simply put: the development can only happen if our county can handle the load. If not, the developer would not be granted permission for the project unless that developer paid for the necessary infrastructure.

Experience/Action:

- 1. After a meeting with our State Senator, I set a meeting with our County Administrator, staff members, and the FDOT. The FDOT will help guide the county to reestablish the concurrency requirement. This requirement will be added to the county's comprehensive plan and should be brought before the Board of**

County Commissioners this fall. I will be voting in favor of reestablishing concurrency in our comprehensive plan.

2. **The county's Septic to Sewer projects are an important part of the county's infrastructure. The property owner's share for the projects was a heavy financial burden for each affected property. I worked with our staff, board, and legislators to completely change our grant processes, secured more money for the active projects and wiped out the assessments for the property owners. This additional money resulted in savings of up to \$6,000 per property. Upgrading infrastructure should not result in a heavy financial burden to our current residents.**
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4. Growth Management and Oversight

The Land Development Code (LDC) and community master plans are promises made to property owners, not minor hurdles for developers to bypass.

- **Oversight Improvements:** We must enforce strict adherence to our comprehensive plan and ensure quasi-judicial hearings are transparent, giving residents ample opportunity to voice concerns.
- **Addressing LDC Modifications:** Wholesale changes to the LDC shouldn't be a regular negotiation. While flexibility is sometimes legally required to avoid costly property-rights lawsuits, I treat our code as a shield to protect existing neighborhoods. Developers seeking comprehensive plan amendments must clear a very high bar of showing a clear public benefit to the existing community, not just their bottom line. As an incumbent, my record proves that I have NEVER voted to change a community's masterplan. People ask, "What is 'smart growth'?" The answer: Stick to the plan! We have a Comprehensive Plan and a Land Development Code. We need to strengthen both the plan and code so that there are no "on-the-fly" negotiations with developers.

Experience/Action:

1. **I requested and attended the meeting to bring back concurrency so that developers must pay for the needed infrastructure or the development is denied.**
 2. **I will be voting to have concurrency added back to the comprehensive plan.**
 3. **I have NEVER voted to change a community's masterplan.**
 4. **I brought forth, and got passed, a transparency ordinance so that lobbyists must disclose meeting with commissioners and the content of the meeting.**
 5. **I brought forth a "no-clear cutting" ordinance idea to the board and I'm currently working with staff on the language.**
 6. **I brought forth and got passed the moratorium on data centers. Also, I have met with a variety of people and experts to work on strict language to prevent hyperscale data centers in Citrus County.**
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5. Increasing Traffic and Public Safety Issues

The Suncoast extension at CR 486 has significantly altered traffic patterns, and Pine Ridge is feeling the squeeze. I have worked hard to find millions in the budget for infrastructure and to support our deputies. I maintain a strong relationship with the Sheriff's Office to advocate for targeted traffic enforcement, speed monitoring, and increased visibility along high-risk corridors to ensure the safety of Pine Ridge residents.

Experience/Action:

- 1. I've helped address speeding and traffic concerns in other communities by reaching out to the Citrus County Sheriff's office and the county's Public Works department.**
 - 2. I have an open-door policy with the people I serve and a boots-on-the-ground approach. As Pine Ridge evolves, I will be ready to look, listen and help devise solutions if or when issues arise.**
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6. Equestrian Safety

A successful collaboration between our State Representative and the BOCC relies on leveraging local insights with state funding. Because Pine Ridge boasts unique, major equestrian crossings, we need a unified front. I support working with our state lawmakers to secure Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grants or legislative appropriations for advanced safety measures, such as high-visibility pedestrian/equestrian-activated flashing beacons (HAWK signals), proper signage, and traffic-calming designs on Pine Ridge and Mustang Boulevards.

Experience/Action:

- 1. Good relationships and experience working with lawmakers**
 - 2. Vast experience bringing stakeholders and workgroups together. I spent many years as the CEO of CASA where I spearheaded groups and action teams.**
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7. Road Paving Improvement

Pine Ridge contributes significantly to our county's tax base, and its residents deserve to see a return on that investment. I have aggressively advocated for restructuring our road program, successfully shifting over \$7 million into road paving this past year. We must continuously review outdated funding formulas—like the "low density variable"—that inadvertently penalized larger-lot residential communities, ensuring that heavily traveled subdivision roads are prioritized based on actual deterioration and safety. The implementation of the county's new Pavement Management System, used in conjunction with staff oversight, will provide a better approach to fixing the roads in Pine Ridge.

Experience/Action:

- 1. Voted to remove the density aspect for Pine Ridge with the old system**
 - 2. Voted for the new Pavement Management System**
 - 3. Pavement Management System has resulted in an 83% increase in road resurfacing**
 - 4. Advocated for addition money for road resurfacing; found \$7 million in the current budget to be added to road resurfacing without raising taxes**
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8. Preserving Pine Ridge Natural Resources, Bird Sanctuary and Ecosystem

Pine Ridge's identity is rooted in its environment. A meaningful collaboration involves a three-way partnership: the Pine Ridge POA provides local stewardship, the BOCC provides land-use protections and zoning oversight, and the State provides conservation resources. I support forming a joint working group to map critical ecological zones, ensuring our local tree mitigation funds and state conservation programs help preserve the community's unique bird sanctuary status and native wildlife corridors.

Experience/Action:

- 1. Voted to protect Pine Ridges's masterplan and zoning**
 - 2. Spearheaded and working on an ordinance with staff that will protect trees and prohibit wholesale clear cutting**
 - 3. Spearheaded "Beautify Citrus" which is now being funded by fines and helps to plant additional trees**
 - 4. Established working relationships with various conservation groups**
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9. Water Resources and Growth

Protecting our Florida aquifer, springs, and long-term water supply is a top priority. As a BMAP stakeholder, I have consistently voted for environmentally friendly ordinances and worked closely with state leaders to secure millions in funding for advanced wastewater projects, preventing nutrient pollution at the source. Developer impact fees must be maximized and explicitly earmarked to fund utility expansions and water-conservation infrastructure, ensuring new construction pays for its own water footprint. Wastewater projects are important, and at the same time, shouldn't be a financial burden for our residents. Throughout my time in office, I have worked to restructure how the county applies for wastewater grants, eliminated county fees, and wiped out assessments, saving property owners thousands of dollars. My goal is to protect the environment *and* the people I serve.

Experience/Action:

1. **Worked and successfully changed how the County applies and receives grant money for septic to sewer projects**
 2. **Brought forth motions and had the board pass eliminating county fees**
 3. **Restructured current and future projects saving property owners \$6,000 each**
 4. **Currently serving the Springs Initiative Board with other BMAP stakeholders**
 5. **Currently serving on our local water authority board**
 6. **Participant and author during Save Our Waters Week**
 7. **Votes against projects that may harm our water resources**
 8. **My efforts and attention to water resources resulted in over \$26 million in additional funding.**
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10. Funding Essential Services

As our population increases, public safety and infrastructure cannot lag behind. We must fund these expansions through a combination of smart fiscal management and impact fees. Taxpayers should not bear the entire burden; developers must pay their fair share through updated impact fees for fire, EMS, and law enforcement infrastructure. By keeping county government lean, we can redirect existing revenues toward essential services without raising your taxes.

Experience/Action:

1. **Voted to raise impact fees for new growth to pay its fair share. Impact fees were substantially raised last year for all existing categories.**
 2. **Successfully lobbied in Tallahassee and organized a team effort with the Sheriff and Superintendent of Schools to receive state funding for a Public Training Safety Facility. That effort resulted in \$1.5 million this year.**
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BONUS QUESTION: Extension of Government or Constituency?

Once elected, a leader must absolutely view themselves as an extension of their constituency. Government does not generate wealth, nor does it possess inherent wisdom—it exists solely to serve the people. My job is to represent you and work hard to protect your tax money, property rights, freedom, safety, our environment and way of life.

My approach is grounded in being accessible and accountable. I am not a career politician; I am a neighbor who has the ability and experience to step up to serve. When I sit on that dais, I don't look at how to expand government power; I look at how to protect your hard-earned money and your property rights. If a policy does not benefit the everyday citizens who elected me, it does not get my support. I am your voice in Citrus County, not the government's voice in your backyard. My priority is: Putting You First!