



WESTON COMMISSION ELECTION

MEET THE CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE COMPILATION

NOVEMBER 2024



As the heartbeat of the local business community, the Weston Florida Chamber of Commerce, alongside its Government and Legislative Affairs Committee, presents this Candidates Questionnaire compilation, to share the perspectives of all candidates vying for open positions in the current election in the City of Weston.

At the core of our mission as a chamber of commerce lies a commitment to fostering an environment where businesses can thrive and economic vitality can flourish. In the spirit of informed decision-making, we believe it imperative for our members and community stakeholders to have access to the insights and ideas proposed by those seeking to shape the landscape of our city. It is essential to underscore that the Chamber remains steadfastly non-partisan, and refrains from making any candidate endorsements. Occasionally as issues arise, the Chamber may take a position on policy only as it pertains to the business community as a whole.

Our goal is to provide a platform for dialogue and informed civic engagement. This compilation serves as a tool to ensure that the voices of the business community are heard and considered in the democratic process.

All candidates were provided the same questions and given the same amount of time to submit their answers. The answers provided herein are presented in their entirety. Edits, if any, were limited to spelling and formatting. Candidates are listed in the same order as they are presented on the city's qualifying candidates report page.

Name: FABIO A. ANDRADE
Office Sought: COMMISSION
SEAT1



Why are you running to be elected to this office?

I am running for City Commission because the community has asked me to step up and represent them. I have lived in Weston for over 28 years and understand the need to have a Commission that is not beholden to special interests. My only interest is to continue to serve the Weston Community and represent them on the dais.

I have had the honor to be appointed and serve on several bipartisan committees at the City, County and State levels. I have been invited by U.S. Presidents to the White House to represent our business community. I was invited by President Obama and Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman to partake in the US/Colombia Free Trade Agreement discussions. It's important to note that in order to participate in these events you have to be vetted and pass a security clearance and I did without any concerns.

I look forward to continuing to meet many of you and hearing about the issue that matter to you the most! Thank you for the opportunity!

What are the three most pressing issues that the City of Weston is facing right now?

After speaking with over 1,000 residents, the top issues that Weston Residents care the most about are:

- Public Safety – ensure Weston remains a safe place to live!
- Park Preservation and activities for our seniors and teenagers
- Fiscal Responsibility

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What are your plans to support sustainable economic development in Weston?

Economic development requires collaboration among a diverse array of stakeholders, including residents, the business community, and various levels of government—city, county, state, and federal. I have the experience to unite these stakeholders, making it easier for us to address crucial issues and topics for the City of Weston.

As a commissioner, I will prioritize sustainable economic development through targeted legislative initiatives.

Together, we can foster a thriving economy while safeguarding the green spaces that make Weston such a beautiful place to live, work, and play. I am committed to ongoing collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure that our policies reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

What are your plans to support the success of small businesses in particular in Weston?

The Weston Business Chamber is the most important business organization in town and needs a collaborator and uniter on the Commission—someone who is committed to listening to and addressing the concerns of its members. Also someone is will bring the necessary bipartisan stakeholders together to address the ideas and concerns of the Weston business community.

I am dedicated to continuing to support small businesses and I understand the unique challenges they face. Through the nonprofit organization I co-founded, we have worked closely with small businesses for over 23 years to ensure that Weston is a thriving community for both families and business owners.

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As a City Commissioner, I will actively represent the interests of small businesses by reviewing local ordinances to identify opportunities for reducing barriers and streamlining processes. I also plan to facilitate public engagement events tailored to business owners to gather their input and ideas to enhance our local economy. The Weston Commission needs experienced leaders who truly understand the challenges small businesses face, and I believe I am the best candidate for that role.

For instance, during the 2020 pandemic, I united 27 Chambers of Commerce to create the Florida Business COVID Task Force, assisting families, businesses, and the community during a critical time. We need more unity and less division to create solutions that benefit our beautiful City of Weston!

What experience or qualifications do you have that make you suited to serving the interests of the business community?

With over two decades of experience in business management and community engagement, I am well-equipped to serve the interests of the Weston business community. My strong background in collaborating with local businesses has allowed me to develop the skills needed to bring all stakeholders together, ensuring that the voices of Weston's businesses are heard and their needs addressed.

As a resident of Weston for over 25 years, I have worked closely with mayors, city commissioners, and city staff (past and present), gaining a deep understanding of the local landscape. My involvement in various community organizations such as the Weston Charter Commission appointed by Mayor Peggy Brown, the Broward Transportation Committee appointed by Martin Kiar and the Florida Dental Board appointed by the Florida Governor among others, has enriched my perspective on the challenges facing businesses, enabling me to advocate effectively for solutions that benefit our community. Furthermore, as the Founding General Manager of JetBlue at the Florida International Airport (FLL) I was responsible for engaging with key city, county

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and airport stakeholders to ensure the airline could launch flights from FLL, which we now know the positive impact having that prominent airline has had for job creation and tourism to our region. Additionally, I was also part of the leadership team that brought an international air carrier to FLL and expanding flights to and from Latin America. I am committed to using my experience to foster a thriving environment for all businesses in Weston, ensuring that our community continues to flourish. Together, we can foster a prosperous future for the Weston Business Chamber and the businesses it represents!

What plans, if any, do you have to make doing business in Weston easier or more successful?

To make doing business in Weston easier, I would focus on legislative measures that reduce bureaucratic hurdles. I would also engage with local businesses through town hall meetings to gather their feedback and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that our policies are responsive to the needs of the business community. Having worked closely with the business community in Weston, I recognize the need for the City Government to host educational workshops for small businesses in collaboration with the Chamber and other business organizations. These workshops will provide a clear understanding of local ordinances and how to operate effectively in Weston. Topics will include the permitting process and business signage (two issues that business owners have expressed challenges with), and we can invite key stakeholders—such as business owners, community officials, and landlords—to share valuable information and tips. Increased engagement from the Commission is essential to support our local businesses.

What plans do you have, if any, to support the shortage of workforce housing that affects businesses and education?

This is an important issue that needs to be handled on a Regional basis to build relationships with neighborhood cities to find solutions that help all communities West of Broward. Stakeholder discussions and involvement are vital to this process, as they ensure that diverse perspectives are considered and help create effective strategies to tackle the workforce housing shortage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT FABIOAANDRADE.COM

Name: ROLANDO CHAVEZ
Office Sought: COMMISSION
SEAT 1



Why are you running to be elected to this office?

I'm running for the Weston City Commission because I'm passionate about ensuring that our community continues to thrive as a safe, family-friendly, and vibrant place to live. As a father of three young children, I want Weston to remain a place where families can enjoy excellent schools, beautiful parks, and a high quality of life. With my background in law and auditing for the Department of Homeland Security, I believe I can bring a unique skill set to ensure responsible budgeting, transparency, and smart planning for our future.

What are the three most pressing issues that the City of Weston is facing right now?

The three most pressing issues facing the City of Weston right now are:

1. Financing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan— with the recently approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a critical issue is how to secure funding for these enhancements without overburdening taxpayers. The plan includes major projects to improve park facilities, expand recreational offerings, and enhance community spaces, but implementing it will require careful financial planning and possibly new revenue sources.
2. Managing Redevelopment and Growth—as Weston is nearly 100% developed, the focus is shifting to redeveloping aging properties and managing growth in a way that preserves the city's character. This includes revitalizing older commercial areas and balancing new development with maintaining Weston's aesthetic appeal and green spaces.

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3. Maintaining High-Quality Public Services Amidst Rising Costs—as the cost of services continues to rise, the city must find ways to maintain its high-quality public safety, infrastructure, and community services. This challenge involves ensuring budget efficiency, planning for future needs, and making strategic decisions to keep Weston a premier place to live while managing financial sustainability.

What are your plans to support sustainable economic development in Weston?

To support economic development in Weston, I plan to focus on three key areas:

1. Revitalizing Aging Commercial Areas—as Weston is nearly fully developed, I will prioritize revitalizing and modernizing existing commercial spaces to attract new businesses. This includes updating infrastructure, enhancing aesthetics, and offering incentives to encourage property owners to invest in their properties.

2. Supporting Local Businesses—I want to create a more business-friendly environment by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and ensuring small businesses have access to the tools they need to grow and succeed. One of the complaints I often heard was the challenges of business to get through the permitting process. This needs to be improved.

3. Attracting High-Value Industries—I want to attract businesses in sectors such as healthcare, technology, and professional services that align with Weston’s highly educated workforce and values. By promoting Weston as a vibrant, business-friendly community, we can create high-quality jobs and ensure long-term economic stability.

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What are your plans to support the success of small businesses in particular in Weston?

To support the success of small businesses in Weston, I would implement the following strategies:

1. Streamline Permitting and Licensing— I would work to simplify and expedite the permitting and licensing processes to make it easier for small businesses to start, expand, or renovate without unnecessary delays or costs.
2. Create a Small Business Resource Network—Establish a small business advisory group to connect local business owners with resources such as mentorship programs, business development workshops, and networking opportunities to help them grow and navigate challenges.
3. Promote and Engage: Actively promote local businesses through social media and city events, following the example of Commissioner Chris Eddy, to increase visibility and encourage residents to support local establishments.

By reducing barriers and providing targeted support, we can help Weston's small businesses thrive and remain a vital part of our community.

What experience or qualifications do you have that make you suited to serving the interests of the business community?

My background in law, accounting, and real estate uniquely positions me to serve the interests of the business community. I hold a double major in Accounting and Political Science, and I'm a licensed attorney who has worked as a government auditor for the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General, where I analyzed complex budgets and ensured financial efficiency. Additionally, as a licensed realtor, I understand the local real estate market and the economic factors affecting property values and business development

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These experiences have equipped me with strong analytical skills, fiscal responsibility, and an in-depth understanding of the regulatory landscape—qualities that are essential for supporting business growth and ensuring a stable economic environment in Weston.

What plans, if any, do you have to make doing business in Weston easier or more successful?

I would prioritize making Weston more business-friendly by leveraging technology, expanding resources, and creating a supportive network. First, I'd revisit the online portal that was intended to simplify business interactions with the city—however, from what I've heard from some the portal makes it more difficult to communicate with the city. Secondly, I'd establish a "Business Start-Up Assistance Program" that offers guidance and mentorship to new and expanding businesses, ensuring they have the tools to thrive from day one. Lastly, I would host an annual business roundtable to keep an open dialogue between the City Commission and local business owners, fostering collaboration and addressing any issues quickly.

What plans do you have, if any, to support the shortage of workforce housing that affects businesses and education?

Addressing the shortage of workforce housing is critical to supporting our local businesses and schools, as employees need affordable housing options to live and work in the community. I would explore strategies such as offering incentives to developers to include workforce housing units in new and redevelopment projects. Additionally, I would advocate for zoning reforms to allow for more diverse housing types, such as townhomes or duplexes, to create more affordable options for teachers, first responders, and local workers. Ensuring a variety of housing options helps attract and retain a stable workforce, benefiting the entire community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT CHAVEZ4WESTON.COM