

Candidate Information

1. First name * Patty
2. Last name* Sheehan
3. Campaign Website* Voteforpatty.com
4. Campaign Facebook * Patty Sheehan
5. Campaign Twitter* N/A
6. Campaign Instagram *N/A
7. Please list the LGBTQ+ organizations you are affiliated with and any donations you have given. *

Come Out With Pride, Zebra Coalition, The Center, Hope and Help, Gay Officers Action League, Pride Chamber, Equality Florida, Orlando Youth Alliance, Orlando United Resource Services. I have donated to all of these organizations. I was a member of Rainbow Democrats many years ago.

8. Please summarize your history of community involvement. This may include city boards, civic associations, non-profits, etc. *

I served as Secretary, Vice President, and President of the Colonialtown Neighborhood Association. I was on the original Orlando Regional Pride group that produced the first Pride Parades. I am the founder of Wheels for Kids, and we have donated over 2000 bicycles to the children of Reeves Terrace. I am a swan docent at Lake Eola Park. I volunteer with Green Up Orlando. I donate my Bad Kitty art work on murals, dumpsters, and storm drains in our main streets. I am a member of Elks Lodge 1079. I serve on the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and am the Metroplan alternate.

9. Please summarize the work you have performed in the past five years to further LGBTQ+ rights.*

Ensured continued funding for the Orlando United Resource Services for counseling for Pulse survivors and victims families. Redesigned Lake Eola bathrooms in our renovation plans to single stalls to combat Gov. Desantis horrible bathroom legislation targeting the transgender community. Supported all user restrooms at City Hall. Installed memorial at Greenwood Cemetery to all victims of Pulse massacre. Worked closely with The Center to secure CDBG funds for renovations.

Assisting Zebra Coalition in finding location for permanent supportive housing for youth. Assisted small businesses targeted by anti-drag bill with support and resources from Equality Florida.

10. Please list other endorsements you have received. *

Equality Florida, Central Florida AFL-CIO, Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association, Mayor Buddy Dyer, Congressman Maxwell Frost, Orlando Professional Firefighters Local 1365, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 25.

About Your Campaign and LGBTQ Issues

11. What motivated you to run for this position?*

I was on the Board of the Rainbow Democratic Club. We had registered a lot of voters at LGBTQ events. There were enough voters to be competitive in District 4 where I live. I was encouraged to run. I said, "only if you help me raise the filing fee." We had enough pledges from the room that night. I ran the first time in 1996 as the first openly gay candidate. I missed the runoff by less than 100 votes. I decided to take it more seriously, run a lot harder, and went to the Victory Fund training. I won in 2000 with 54% of the vote and have been elected ever since. This will be my seventh term. I love my job and finding solutions to help residents and businesses.

12. What does being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?*

I am a staunch advocate. I nearly lost my job when I went to the March on Washington in 1993. It happened to many of my friends as well. When I was elected to City Council employment protections and protection in public accommodation and housing was among the first ordinances I worked on. We have added gender identity and expression as well. It's nice to have allies, but there is no substitute for having our place at the table. I was thrilled to participate in the first marriage ceremony at City Hall. But months later I became the voice for our community after the worst mass shooting to date that impacted the LGBTQ community at Pulse. Fighting for our rights is my life's work.

13. Have you attended an LGBTQ+ Pride Month celebration or Orlando's Come Out With Pride? *

Yes

14. Have you attended or supported a drag show or drag performance in our community? *

Yes

15. How would you ensure that your office acknowledges and celebrates the LGBTQ+ community?*

My office is a haven and safe place for the LGBTQ +community. I was the first to release proclamations celebrating our organizations and LGBTQ people. Now the Mayor's office has a liaison, as does OPD. I brought the HRC index to the Mayor's staff to make that happen. We offer assistance to LGBTQ people who are reluctant to contact other offices, and we refer people for assistance to other government offices. There are rainbow and trans flags in my office every day. And we have worked with local artists to install artistic murals celebrating the LGBTQ + community and have painted over hate messages by nazis that recently defaced them. We live by example that a diverse and welcoming community is the best!

16. Will you ensure that you and your staff receive competency training on the LGBTQ+ community, emphasizing unconscious bias?*

Yes

17. Would you condemn instances of hate speech in your organization and the community at large? *

Yes

18. Legislation from Tallahassee has caused a sharp increase in discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community in Orange County. How would you go about reducing discrimination in your District or local community? *

I worked with OPD to create safe spaces training and stickers that are in local businesses. I work closely with Chief Smith whenever there is a crime involving the LGBTQ+ community. We have a liaison to the LGBTQ community at the Orlando Police Department. I was present at Plaza Live when Gov. Desantis tried to shut them down and was very vocal that there was nothing lewd about the drag performance. Then I worked with the businesses to strategize to fight the legislation, which is now unenforceable pending decisions in the courts.

19. There is a lack of knowledge when it comes to the transgender community. Sometimes, the services offered in public offices are often unfamiliar with the needs of the transgender community. What actions would you take to ensure that the services your office provides will be cognizant of the needs of the transgender community? *

My police liaison went to national training at the Gay Officers Action League and then was able to bring the training to Orlando to explain why someone's gender may not match their ID or driver's license. We then assisted TSA at the airport with this training. I know to reach out when I don't know the answers, and consult with trans advocates when needed. I think it is horrible that trans children are being denied life saving services and medical care by state government.

20. During a town hall in your District, a constituent describes being gay or transgender disparagingly. How would you constructively respond in this situation? *

It has happened, and I say, "I represent all my constituents, which include gay and transgender people. Just because you don't understand someone else's circumstances, it doesn't mean you have the right to demean them. I choose love. I wish you would consider doing the same."

21. How would you respond to a person intentionally misgendering a transgender or non-binary person? *

Everyone has a right to respect. Please respect my friends right to their identity. It is SHE or THEM.

22. Orange County continues to embrace urban sprawl despite a plethora of data that links urban sprawl to severe strains on our housing, employment, healthcare, and public transit systems (to name a few). What are your thoughts on Orange County's growth? *

I am on the City Council for a reason. I believe an urban environment is the most efficient and effective way to deliver services. I wish I could get others to see our point of view. Believe me, we do try.

23. To expand upon the prior statement, what could Orange County do regarding development that would better serve the communities in your District? *

The most impactful would be to institute a grid pattern in transportation instead of cul-de-sacs that dump out onto clogged arterials. Connection is a good thing! And while people may complain about cut-through traffic, we all need to share the roads.

City of Orlando Commissioner Questions

24. What steps will you take to increase your office's visibility with the LGBTQ+ community, including encouraging voting participation? *

I have been registering voters for many years, and understand the importance of our participation. I do feel my being an openly gay elected official does inspire LGBTQ+ people to participate. I also encourage members of the LGBTQ community to apply for and serve on city boards.

25. As a City of Orlando Commissioner, how would you support creating an LGBTQ+ Advisory Board that would directly link the City of Orlando and the LGBTQ+ community? *

We have an OPD liaison to the LGBTQ + community and also in the Mayor's office of multicultural affairs. I would support such a board.

26. According to research, 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ+ (Source True Colors United). What immediate actions would you take as a City of Orlando Commissioner to reduce and prevent homelessness amongst LGBTQ+ youth? *

I am working with the Zebra Coalition to provide permanent supportive housing for the youth. The funding is there, but we just had a real estate deal fall through. We are currently seeking another location.

27. Where do you believe the focus should be for Orlando in preparing for and preventing the damaging effects of climate change?*

We have an active office of sustainability. Our new buildings are LEED certified. We are installing solar as well. We have a solar Co-op to help residents install solar panels. We recently required commercial buildings to meet sustainability standards as well as install EV charging stations. It was controversial, but important to lead on in Orlando. We also just opened a fast charging hub in downtown that can accommodate 21 vehicles. We are also working with OUC to help low income residents access the benefits of energy efficiency and solar. I also drive a EV, and am the first city commissioner to do so.

28. A 2021 study found that the Orlando metropolitan area has the 8th highest wage gap in the nation. The estimated hourly wage is \$12.94, but the wage required to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Orlando before the COVID-19 Pandemic is \$23.60. What actions would you take as City of Orlando Commissioner to decrease this wage gap and promote affordable living in Orlando?*

I support living wage and rent control, but we are frequently pre-empted by state government whenever we try to pass progressive legislation. I believe the best way to empower local government to help people is to get a constitutional amendment to stop state pre-emption. Local control would enable municipalities to help our constituents.

29. As a City of Orlando Commissioner, what actions would you take to help struggling parent(s) and make Orange County an affordable place for families? *

LIFT Orlando and many renovation projects are underway for affordable housing. But Orlando can't do it alone. Affordable housing must be a priority regionally.

30. Despite mental illness among adults and children being at an all-time high, Florida ranks next to last on per capita spending on mental health programs. What are your immediate and long-term plans for addressing this epidemic in Orange County? *

Orange County does have more resources than Orlando, but we do support many community service organizations that assist individuals with mental health resources.

31. The Florida Republican Party is passing legislation that strips away LGBTQ+ rights, starting with our children. These shamelessly discriminatory bills force LGBTQ+ families to reconsider their future in Florida. What would you tell the parents of LGBTQ+ children in your District who feel they must leave Florida to protect their children? *

Unfortunately, they may have to leave because these laws are hateful, directed at the most vulnerable. But the rest of us have to stay, and vote, and create change in state officials so Florida is a welcoming place again.

32. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health found that 45% of LGBTQ+ students seriously considered suicide, and 1-in-5 LGBTQ+ attempted it. How would you lead on this issue and work to decrease these statistics during your term in office?*

We have already made sure Orlando programs will continue to provide resources to our LGBTQ youth. My office interacts with and supports these great kids. I am horrified how their affirming resources are

being targeted.

33. What are the top environmental concerns you are seeing in your District, and what solutions do you plan to bring forward if you were elected? *

Lake interconnect projects are underway to combat flooding. Lift stations are being retrofitted with generators to minimize sewage overflows into lakes.

Additional Questions

34. Is there anything else you want us to know about why the Rainbow Democrats should support your candidacy?

I was an early member and support the mission of the organization. I appreciate your consideration.