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Town Council candidates tout experience, backgrounds at Citizens Association forum



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The four candidates contesting for Town Council seats in the Feb. 3 town election faced off at a debate Thursday hosted by the Citizens' Association of Palm Beach at the Four Seasons Resort.

Wendy Victor, who is challenging Robert Wildrick for the seat being vacated by Susan Markin as of Feb. 10, said beach erosion and public safety are the two most important issues before the town.



Daily News Photo by Lee Hershfield
([enlarge photo](#))

Laurel Baker, at the podium, outlines the rules for the candidates at The Citizens' Association of Palm Beach candidates forum Thursday at the Four Seasons Resort.

"We need more sand and more groins," said Victor, a Via Tortuga resident and former landmarks preservation commissioner. If the beaches aren't protected, "we don't have an island."

Victor said she's a longtime supporter of the Palm Beach Police Department. She attended the Citizens' Police Academy, founded the Emergency Response Team and volunteered on the hurricane hot line.

• [Jack McDonald, Susan Markin trade barbs at Four Seasons mayoral debate](#)

"I'm on the executive board of (Palm Beach) Crime Watch and have donated to it," she said.

Wildrick, a Nightingale Trail resident who retired in December as CEO of Jos. A. Bank Clothiers, said he started as a loading dock worker 40 years ago and climbed to the top of the company. As CEO, he added 3,000 American jobs, more than doubling the workforce, and built about 350 of the chain's 463 stores, he said.

"I understand zoning and have worked with community leaders," he said.

He said he's running because he wants to help the town solve key problems such as improving the quality of its water supply and getting eroded beaches restored.

"I've been so frustrated with the things that haven't gotten done," he said. "We know about all our problems. When's it going to get done? The sand is washing away. The pipes are deteriorating, and that's a \$15 million expenditure."

Dr. Richard Pollock, an endodontist with a practice in Virginia, and William Diamond, a former New York City official and former chairman of the town's Government Impact Review Panel, are contesting for the council seat being vacated by Denis Coleman.

Pollock said he would bring an analytic sensibility to the council.

He named beach erosion, water quality, port expansion, town management and public safety as priorities.

"We must recognize previous failed attempts and recognize the staggering costs" of beach renourishment projects, he said. "Sand on the beach will not do it. We need revetments, breakwaters, sea walls and groins."

He favors water conservation and creation of a desalination plant to convert brackish water into drinking water. He said he opposes port expansion, and would "run the island like a business with an efficient budget."

Diamond said he has the knowledge, background and experience to be a councilman.

Diamond was Mayor Jack McDonald's liaison to the City of West Palm Beach and the Port of Palm Beach. In that capacity, he argued against proposed development along Flagler Drive and the port's plans to expand.

"I'm a fighter for you, Palm Beach," he said.

Diamond touted his experience as a young deputy commissioner under then-New York Mayor John Lindsay, and as a regional administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration for 11 years under Presidents

Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Diamond also was commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services under New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

"I have had the confidence of two presidents and two mayors of one of the biggest cities," he said.

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