

2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS / CANDIDATE PROFILES

Candidate Profile: Mandy David

Windermere Town Council - Incumbent

VoxPopuli By: Michael Shen | VoxPopuli Intern



Mandy David
Windermere Town Council - Incumbent

Public Service

Windermere Town Council, 2021-Present

Occupation

American Sign Language Interpreter, JFD Communications, 2010-Present

Education

Homeschooled, General Education Development Degree, 1993

In a crowded field with four other candidates, Mandy David, 48, is making the case for why Windermere voters should give her a third term on the Windermere Town Council, saying she's capable of making the tough choices.

"We're doing what's best for the town and the residents and sometimes you have to make those hard decisions," said David, who heads JFD Communications, which provides American Sign Language interpreting services. "But I'd like to be able to continue making those for the best interest of everybody."

David is a West Orange native who lived in Ocoee and Pine Hills before moving to Windermere in 2010. Married with two adult children, David ran for town council in 2021 because she wanted to represent her outlying Windermere neighborhood, The Manors. She currently serves as the town council liaison for the Food Truck/Farmers Market Selection Committee and the Parks and Recreation Committee.

David said her re-election message is to continue "being that liaison" between the town council and residents.

"If I'm the right candidate, I'd love to stay on and do that. And if I'm not, I understand, but I think my record for the last two terms can stand for itself, so I hope the residents see that," she said.

David is running against fellow incumbents Tony Davit and Tom Stroup and first-time candidates Jessica Lee and Frank Krens for three open seats in the March 11 election. This is the town's first contested election since 2021. The election is nonpartisan. Council members serve two-year terms and are unpaid.

The final day to register to vote in the municipal election is Feb 10. Early voting takes place daily, March 3-7, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Supervisor of Elections Office, 119 Kaley Street, in Orlando. The deadline to **request a vote-by-mail ballot** is Feb. 27 by 5 p.m. Vote-by-mail ballots must be turned in at the Supervisor of Elections Office by 7 p.m. on March 11. Voting on Election Day will take place 7 a.m.-8 p.m., at Windermere Town Hall, 520 Main Street.

Building bridges

When asked about her proudest accomplishment over her two terms, David didn't name one. Instead, she said there are several unresolved town matters such as road maintenance that need to be addressed. On further reflection, David said she wanted to continue "building that bridge that I hope I've been building since my first term."

David said residents are particularly concerned about the "500 Block," part of the **Downtown Redevelopment Project** being built on Main Street and Sixth Avenue, which will house a boutique Ace Hardware store and an upscale wine shop-tasting room, and the **Windermere Water Master Plan**. She said officials such as herself need to help advance these infrastructure projects by "just being able to do what we can do on our end to make sure we can get those funded and get them going in the process." She added that funding from the Florida legislature is the major roadblock right now.

When asked about other major town projects, David didn't provide much explanation or detail. VoxPopuli asked about the **Windermere Ward Trail**, a multi-phase plan to develop multi-modals paths within the town; the **West Second Avenue Drainage and Roadway Improvement Project**, which plans to improve and add drainage infrastructures; and the effect that the recently passed Florida Amendment 5, which requires an annual adjustment for inflation on homestead exemptions, might have on the town's budget.

David also declined to respond to questions about ongoing litigation between the town council and seven residents over five **historic bathhouses** in the lagoon at Palmer Park. Nearly two years ago, she **voted** with the 4-1 majority to end the residents' right of way lease to the land leading to the contested structures.

The town council has steadily increased its legal budget to litigate the matter. In fiscal year 2022-2023, the town council budgeted **\$85,000** for legal services but spent **\$138,227**. For 2023-2024, however, the town budgeted **\$100,000** and spent **\$314,830**. For the **current fiscal year**, which began Oct. 1, the budget is \$225,000. The matter is headed for a non-jury trial in August.

Town construction and renovations

David said she was deeply disappointed about the pavilion project near Main Street and Fifth Avenue that fell through last year. The Foundation for a Healthier West Orange (FHWO) initially provided a \$1 million grant to the Rotary Club of Windermere to conduct the project, but after considerable resident **opposition** about loss of green space, noise, traffic and parking, the town voted to halt the project in **July 2023** and **attempted to repurpose** the grant money to fund the town hall renovations. FHWO pulled the grant last February. The town is now funding its own **renovations**.

"That was hard. That was tough. That really hurt. I was not happy with that," David said. She said the town council is still "figuring out the numbers" of what needs to be paid back. According to the town, **\$95,621.58** is owed the Rotary Club of Windermere. However, the Rotary Club maintains it is due an additional **\$150,589.19**.

In **November**, residents also voiced concern about Phase I of the **Town Hall Restroom and Renovation Project**, set to begin later this year, which will add a bathroom building adjacent to Town Hall. Several residents questioned the bathroom location and the timetable for renovations. Other than the bathrooms in local businesses, the town has no public restrooms downtown. Portable toilets have been leased and located by town hall for the next year.

David supported locating the bathroom building close to town hall to take advantage of its lighting for safety.

"You don't want anybody tripping, you don't want anyone falling over, you know, missing the curb cut and all this," David said. "I think it's important because if you don't have it, it can always cause problems down the road later."

David, who **voted** in December in the majority to approve the renovation project, said she plans to address resident concerns by "talking it through as we go." She said she believes the town council found consensus over bathrooms with residents by adding a family restroom to the building, which she said many residents sought. David's husband is disabled and she said he finds it easier to use the more spacious family restrooms than restrooms with multiple stalls.

Residents First

Throughout her tenure as a council member, David has supported preserving Windermere largely for residents while limiting access to non-residents.

During a town council meeting last May, David voted with her fellow council members to deny a zoning variance to sell wine by the glass for **Solvino**, an upscale wine shop-tasting room that has plans to open in the new building under construction on Main Street and Sixth Avenue. The town council cited overwhelming community opposition to having another downtown business serving alcohol — state law allows Solvino to pour samples, so they will bring the total to six — and that Solvino would attract more people to the quiet town.

"Our town is small. We're quaint. And we don't like a lot of people coming in," said David during the public meeting where residents made it clear that Solvino's owners, who reside in the Windermere-adjacent subdivision Keene's Pointe, are not from Windermere. (David's subdivision, The Manors, was once also not part of Windermere until the town annexed it in 2001.)

"You should get to know your town, get to know the people that you want to do business with and do business in, before you just come in and ask for things," she told VoxPopuli

Starting in 2021, the council began to tackle residents concerns about "unacceptable behavior," vaping, alcohol and noise in **Lake Street Park** and **Lake Down Park**. A **photo** included in one of the town's presentations shows a large group of teens, mainly boys, some Black and Brown, in the water, on the dock and on the roof overhead. David mused on limiting the hours the park is open to the public and restricting parking to residents only in a **July 2023 workshop**. The town **increased signage and installed security cameras** and considered paying back its Florida Recreational Assistance Grant — between \$130,000 and \$140,000 — in order to make the park private. Ultimately, in **August** the council approved fencing and a gate access system for both parks.

But it's a different story with the **Chaine du Lac annexation**, decided by **Feb. 4 referendum** among registered voters in the Chaine du Lac neighborhood — something that didn't sit completely well with Windermere residents who were left out of the voting to bring 51 more homes into the town.

David defended excluding current Windermere residents because of the size of Chaine Du Lac. "It's such a small community, it's not a big community," she said. "It's not anything that's going to bring in any more traffic or any more people into anything that aren't already doing it."

She said if Windermere had petitioned Chaine Du Lac to be annexed or if there had been significant resident resistance, she would have supported opening up the vote to town residents, but, because the **neighborhood itself initiated** the proposal, she said she understands why the vote should be solely for its residents.

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