

Sherry Steffans – Candidate for Grand Island Town Board

Responses to Resident Questions

Dear Residents,

I apologize for the wait, as I was away this weekend. Thank you for your questions — I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on these important community issues. Please feel free to reach out with any follow-up questions or ideas.

Question 1: New York State Parks and West River Parkway

High/Low Mowing Policy: I understand residents' frustration with the current high/low mowing policy. While the intention was environmental sustainability, it has created side effects — like overgrowth that attracts rodents and reduces visibility and walkability along the parkway. As a Town Board member, I'll work with New York State Parks to review data on pest and insect impact, and advocate for a balanced maintenance plan — one that protects pollinators and wildlife but also prioritizes safety, cleanliness, and community use. We can explore a seasonal mowing schedule or community advisory input to find that balance.

Shoreline Maintenance and Invasive Species: Protecting our shoreline is protecting our island's identity. Invasive species like phragmites and water chestnut are taking a toll on both the ecology and the look of our waterfront. I'll push for joint maintenance agreements between the Town, State Parks, and local volunteer groups to ensure regular cleanups and responsible vegetation management. I also believe in educating and empowering homeowners — making resources and permit guidance easier to access so residents can help maintain their frontage without unnecessary red tape.

Dock Permitting Process: I've heard from many residents how difficult and time-consuming the dock permitting process has become. As a board member, I would advocate for a streamlined, transparent process with a single point of contact to guide homeowners through state and federal requirements. We can also work with the Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Parks to publish clear timelines, checklists, and digital applications so residents know exactly what's required and how long it should take. My goal is to make it easier — not harder — for responsible property owners to enjoy and maintain access to the waterfront.

Question 2: Long Road Development

I believe development must serve the residents who live here — not just outside interests. While economic growth is important, massive warehouse projects west of the Thruway bring serious concerns: increased traffic, safety risks, drainage issues, and long-term environmental impact. I support responsible, well-planned development that aligns with our town's comprehensive plan and preserves Grand Island's character. Before any large-scale project

moves forward, there must be complete transparency, updated traffic studies, environmental impact reviews, and genuine community input — not just after-the-fact approvals.

Wetlands and Drainage Protection: Grand Island's wetlands and drainage systems are part of what make our island unique — and they must be protected. I'll push for strict enforcement of wetland protection laws, require independent environmental reviews, and demand developer-funded infrastructure improvements — not taxpayer-funded fixes after the damage is done. As someone with a background in health and community safety, I understand how water management affects more than property — it impacts public health and the environment. We need prevention, not reaction.

Noise and Light Pollution: Residents deserve peace and quiet — not industrial noise and light invading their homes at all hours. I'll advocate for stronger noise and light ordinances, enforceable through updated zoning codes and modern technologies. The Town should also conduct post-construction inspections to ensure developers follow through on mitigation promises — because accountability shouldn't end once a project breaks ground.

Question 3: Traffic and Safety

As a Town Board member, I will push for a comprehensive traffic safety review in partnership with the Grand Island Police Department, Erie County, and New York State Parks. That includes improved signage around crosswalks, collaboration with State Parks for enforcement, and traffic calming measures like narrowed lanes or raised crosswalks where speeding has become chronic. Most importantly, I'll make sure residents' voices are part of the solution.

Question 4: Property Reassessments

Property taxes should be fair, transparent, and based on accurate values — not unpredictable swings that burden longtime residents. I do not believe Grand Island should rush into another reassessment within four years. Homeowners have faced too many too close together, and it creates unnecessary instability. Instead, I support a formal review of the most recent reassessment process — to identify where inequities occurred, improve transparency, and ensure accountability. Once we have a clear picture of what went wrong or where values drifted off course, the Town Board can make a data-driven decision about what the best path forward is — without putting residents through another full reassessment cycle. I also believe the Town should provide better communication and support to residents — especially older homeowners — so no one feels left behind or forced to navigate complicated appeals alone.

My commitment is to ensure Grand Island grows responsibly, fairly, and with full transparency. I will always listen, ask tough questions, and make decisions based on what's best for our residents and neighborhoods.