

Meet Brian

I am a fifth-generation Lee Countian, born in Fort Myers in 1963. I was educated in our local school system and graduated from Fort Myers High School. I went on to receive my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Florida in Construction Management and spent the first decade of my professional life in the construction industry. In the mid 1990s, I became a town planner and enjoyed working in both the private and public sectors.

Like several ancestors before me, I became a public servant after being elected as your District 2 County Commissioner in 2006. My father, Charlie Bigelow, held this same office in the 1980's, while my great-grandfather, William Bigelow, served on the Fort Myers City Council in the late 1800s. All three of us are descendents of the first chairman of the Board of Lee County Commissioners, William Towles. We share the family tree with Jacob Summerlin, well known cattle rancher in his day and the namesake of today's Summerlin Road.

When I ran for office, my platform for change in county government was very clear:

1. I believed we were being overtaxed, thus increasing the size of government relative to the population it serves. Reducing our tax burden and the cost of county government has been a high priority while serving as your county commissioner. I have been **Thinking Different-Lee** about taxes and cost of government; today we are taxing less and spending a lot less.
2. For decades, our natural environment's water and habitat quality has been suffering. I have consistently championed a stronger, more aggressive defense of these fragile eco-systems. Because I am **Thinking Different-Lee**, I have fought against those that pollute, including the county itself. Much work is left to be done, but our mandatory recycling program and stiffer fertilizer regulations are a good start.
3. And, thirdly, I believe that our county's long-range growth management plan has not contained suburban sprawl, causing us to consume rural and natural lands unnecessarily. I was the first to call for a moratorium and a new long-range plan for southeast Lee County (DR/GR lands south of Lehigh Acres) where rock mining threatens to destroy our farming heritage and the largest tracts of our pristine natural environment. And, because I am **Thinking Different-Lee**, I've called for a new plan for the "Lee Plan" – our long-range growth plan, which is now over 20 years old.

In my first two years, each of my core beliefs was consistently challenged by county management. Admittedly, it hasn't been simple or easy, and yet in each case, despite county management's efforts, significant positive changes – including replacing the county manager - have taken place. These changes will significantly improve our quality of life.

I seek a second term in office so I can continue improving plans and policies that will set a better course for the future of our county.

As people continue moving here, I do not want to see our beloved Lee County become another east coast of Florida. Instead of building more and more roads in rural areas leading to more distant development, and building expressway overpasses on top of interstate highway overpasses, I am promoting a more positive vision for our future.

I am ***Thinking Different-Lee*** about our future. Cutting-edge town planning techniques can orient future residential and commercial development close to fast and convenient light-rail lines and other forms of public transit. This would reduce our collective dependence on the automobile while making living here more affordable. It would reduce our carbon footprint, make us healthier individuals, and give our natural environment a chance to survive.

Our existing communities have established characters that will continue, but if we are willing to be ***Thinking Different-Lee***, much of our future development could be built in underdeveloped areas, or replace obsolete shopping centers, or upgrade blighted areas. We can provide access to jobs, shopping and entertainment without making everyone rely on cars for each and every trip. Wouldn't we want these options not only for ourselves to enjoy, but for future generations as well?

If you agree with me, I would be honored if you would vote to allow me to continue serving as your District 2 Commissioner for another four years.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian".