

Sequoia FELTON



for Sarasota City Commission - District 1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEQUOIA DENISE FELTON **JOINS DISTRICT 1** **SARASOTA CITY COMMISSIONER RACE**

Enters with backing of community leaders Willie Charles Shaw, Fredd Atkins, and Jetson Grimes

“In Sarasota, the land of art, culture, philanthropy, and second homes that cost millions of dollars...the per capita income in North Sarasota’s Newtown community is \$13,019” reported Jetson Grimes, founder of the Greater Newtown Redevelopment Corporation, to the *Herald Tribune* in January of this year.

The economic outlook for Sarasota’s working residents remains bleak as rents and homeowner insurance rates have increased at a far faster clip than the salaries of the service workers required to support a prospering and livable Sarasota for all.

“Community stewardship is about listening to, advocating for, and taking care of constituents,” said former District 1 commissioner and three-time city of Sarasota mayor Willie Charles Shaw, “if we work together, we can build a better future for everyone by not displacing the very workforce needed to make Sarasota work”.

Said Shaw “I encouraged Sequoia Felton to run because her life experience shows she knows the value of hard work, has the spirit to overcome challenges, the energy to represent public interest with zest, and the integrity and compassion to lead from the heart, mind, and soul”.

Originally from Oneco, in Manatee County, Sequoia Felton was raised by her grandmother, a corrections officer, from the age of 1 until her death in 2001 when Felton was 15.

Felton took on responsibility for helping to support and educate her 5 younger siblings, working as an expediter at the Longboat Key Club & Resort, followed by 7 years at Plymouth Harbor as an environmental technician.

The 38-year-old Felton earned her degree at Suncoast Tech in 2019, and served on the city of Sarasota’s Human Relation Board. She is a member of the Black Caucus and a volunteer at The Harvest.

She currently works downtown, and often commutes home to Newtown on a Veo. Says Felton “Like all of my neighbors, I have a vested interest in safe, shaded multi-modal transportation and clean streets!”

Shared spaces, common ground, and building bridges -- both literal (to The Bay to provide safe passage across 41 for pedestrians), and metaphorical (among Sarasota’s diverse fabric of communities) -- are focal issues for Felton’s campaign.

Her central issue however, is neighborhood housing. According to Felton “to make the ‘live, work, and play’ concept work in the real world, we need housing that working people can afford. We have lost much of what was affordable housing to short term rentals or gentrification. I will prioritize human scale housing that creates community.”

The promise of community preservation is what drew Sarasota’s first African American mayor, Fredd Atkins, to support Felton’s campaign. Over the last 4 years, says Atkins “District 1 has been left behind, overshadowed, ignored, and displaced. We simply can’t afford this kind of careless neglect anymore, or Newtown will go the way of Overtown” (now the Rosemary District).

“We need to work together and come together to move Sarasota into the future together – that is why I’m backing Sequoia – because I know she will work hard to give us a respected voice again on the Sarasota City Commission,” said Atkins.

More information about Felton can be found on her website: Sequoia4sarasota.com



Sequoia Denise Felton - official candidate photo

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Jetson Grimes, Sequoia Denise Felton, and Willie Charles Shaw

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