

Milissa Holland Bio

Milissa Holland was elected to the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners in November, 2006 and made history as the Board's first female Commissioner.

In November, 2008 Ms. Holland was elected the first female Commission Chair and represented the Board at the local, state, and national levels, always looking out for the best interests of the residents of Flagler County. On June 18, 2010, the closing date to qualify as a candidate for the November, 2010 election, Ms. Holland was declared the winner of that election as an unopposed candidate for a second four-year term as a Flagler County Commissioner.

Commissioner Holland served on the Board of Directors of the prestigious organization 1000 Friends of Florida. This organization promotes healthy urban and natural places by wise management of growth change. It educates, advocates, negotiates and, when necessary, litigates to protect Florida's high quality of life. It has the technical knowledge and access needed to ensure that public and private decisions lead to livable communities.

On April 12, 2010 Secretary of State Kurt Browning appointed Ms. Holland to a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Museum of Florida History. This Board generates financial support through fundraising for museum exhibitions, programs, and facilities, and encourages public awareness of museum resources. In making the appointment, Secretary Browning said of Commissioner Holland: "Your strong motivation for preserving Florida's history, your interest in public education, as well as your willingness to become engaged in the mission of the Museum of Florida History, eminently qualifies you for this position."

Ms. Holland was asked to join the Urban Land Institute, North Florida District Council in 2009. The District serves 34 counties offering its members numerous programs and events focused on industry related topics including infrastructure, sustainability, place-making and more.

Ms. Holland founded the James F. Holland Foundation, named after her father who served on the inaugural City of Palm Coast Council. The mission of the Holland Foundation is to "Grow Hope in the Children of Flagler County" and its focus is to raise funds and initiate programs which benefit the children and youth of Flagler County through the formation of partnerships with local, state and national agencies and organizations. The Flagler County Sexual Assault Task Force, an inter-disciplinary team that is focused on promoting awareness, education, and prevention of sexual abuse, and the Holland Foundation Working Group for Special Needs Children are both umbrella entities working to accomplish the mission of their parent organization.

In response to distressed economic conditions nationwide in the late 2000s, Commissioner Holland spearheaded an annual effort to ensure that citizens in Flagler County are provided-for during the holiday season. The "Feed Flagler" initiative began in 2009 as a result of Ms. Holland's efforts, consisting of a broad consortium of local leaders working together to build social capital and a sense of community. Feed Flagler has grown each year since its inception, now providing a free traditional Thanksgiving dinner at eleven locations throughout the county for all residents who wish to attend. The initiative also features a non-perishable food drive which supports the provision of a week's worth of groceries for residents, free flu shots, and a variety of other social services. Feed Flagler has provided over 6,000 Thanksgiving meals to Flagler County residents, over 1,000 boxes of groceries, and has distributed over \$7,000 in excess donations to two food banks in the county.

As a Flagler County Commissioner, Holland worked tirelessly toward a dynamic vision for the future of Flagler County.

During her tenure as Commission Chair, the Board adopted a five-year (2010-2015) Flagler County Strategic Plan which set forth a vision for a higher quality of life for every resident of the community. The Strategic Plan envisioned a diversified economy with a higher median income for residents; protected and conserved natural resources; cherished and nurtured arts, culture, and education; and local governments working collectively on enhanced services in law enforcement, transportation, and utilities. As a result of her leadership, regular meetings throughout each year were instituted between elected officials from the County, each local municipality, and the school board to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. These meetings have resulted in the sharing of services and costs where feasible and appropriate, allowing taxpayer dollars to be directed to other much needed services for Flagler County residents.

Holland was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to the Flagler County Future Committee, the group charged with re-writing the County's Comprehensive Plan. This Plan determined growth patterns in Flagler County for future years and was completed in 2010. On the Future Committee, Ms. Holland brought the same vision of responsible long-term growth, including preservation of the community's natural resources and the enhancement of the community's quality of life, which she has had the privilege to enjoy for over twenty years.

As the Board's representative on the Northeast Florida Regional Council, she recognized, promoted, and protected Flagler County's position as a contributing partner in the region. She took a prominent role in the Council's Reality Check Project, which brought together seven counties, including Flagler, and three-hundred leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to discuss, analyze, and develop growth scenarios for the region through the year 2060.

Ms. Holland also served on the Regional Council's Legislative Committee. She was elected by representatives of six other counties to Chair the creation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee. Recently, the Regional Council invited Ms. Holland to speak on a panel on Democracy at Jacksonville University.

Commissioner Holland represented the BOCC on the Workforce Development Board of Flagler and Volusia County. This Board strategically targets employment and training programs designed to assist dislocated workers, disadvantaged job seekers and the region's current workforce to develop and/or enhance occupational skills to enter, re-enter and/or remain competitive in the current workforce environment. The goal is to bring more people into the workforce, particularly young adults and residents with particular barriers to employment.

Additionally, the Workforce Development Board strategically targets business incentives and economic development initiatives that are intended to sustain and enhance growth opportunities within the small business sector by building and maintaining effective links with small businesses and their representative organizations. There is a belief that facilitating industry workforce development through industry and training partnerships will advance learning and make workplace and industry skills development less costly and more consistent, accessible and flexible. These initiatives will ensure that Flagler County residents can secure needed jobs.

She was appointed to serve on the Governance and Coordination and Community Livability, Environmental Stewardship and Mobility Advisory Groups to the Department of Transportation 2060 Steering Committee. These advisory groups develop initial draft goals, objectives and implementation strategies for consideration by the Steering Committee as it creates a vision for the future of transportation in Florida and drafts the goals, objectives, and strategies necessary to achieve that vision.

Commissioner Holland was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to represent Flagler County on the Regional Transportation Committee. This Committee was established by a bill passed by the Florida Legislature, and her representation assured Flagler County's transportation needs were articulated and considered.

Ms. Holland also served as Chair of the Tourist Development Council (TDC). She was a member of the 2009 Tourist Planning Committee which was charged with developing a three year strategic marketing plan for tourism. During her tenure, new policies were developed by TDC and the BOCC ensuring wise expenditure of bed tax dollars, focusing efforts to further develop and promote the niche markets for ecotourism and sports events. She worked closely with the Vice President of Tourism Development in an aggressive education initiative to introduce key stakeholders, intragovernmental agencies, local government and the community to the importance and economic benefits of tourism.

Through Ms. Holland's leadership with the Vice President of Tourism Development, on behalf of the TDC and BOCC, the efforts in tourism marketing brought increases in bed tax collections, occupancy levels and marketing results over and over. Since the launching of the 2010 -2012 strategic plan a strong foundation has been built for continued success.

Commissioner Holland also represented the County Commission and Flagler County residents through her appointments to the following committees and boards:

Scenic A1A PRIDE Committee (Liaison) University of Florida Partnership for Water, Agriculture, and Community Sustainability at Hastings Advisory Committee St. Johns River to Sea Loop. She enjoys many social activities and extensive community service through her membership in the Palm Coast Elks #2709 and the Irish Social Club. Milissa Holland was born in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1971 and moved with her family to Flagler County in 1987. She is the mother of three children.

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