

# Lakeland mayoral candidates differ on key issues

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LAKELAND, Fla. — Two people are looking to be the mayor of the City of Lakeland and the race is heating up.

ABC Action News obtained a police report filed this week by incumbent Bill Mutz saying dozens of campaign signs were stolen, but the mayor said it's not the signs that get you elected.

"Experience matters so what I want to continue to do is provide the same public service that I've been able to do the first four years," Mutz said.

Mutz is seeking a second four-year term and is facing political newcomer Saga Stevin. He is not accusing her of stealing the signs.

Stevin grew up in Lakeland but lived in Minneapolis for the last two decades. She said the city needs new leadership.



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"I decided to run for mayor because I saw a lot of things happening in Lakeland that I saw happen in Minneapolis that brought down the destruction of Minneapolis," Stevin said.



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The Lakeland City Commission just approved a budget, that includes body cameras for the police department, for the first time. Stevin disagrees with the move.

“As the public, you’re going to have to give up a lot of personal privacy if the officer comes in the cameras on, whether it’s a domestic dispute, whether it’s a crime scene,” Stevin said.

Mutz voted in favor of body cameras.

“A tool that provides wonderful daily accountability in terms of the way citizens are interacted with and a confidence across citizenry that people are interacted with similarly,” said Mutz.

Census data showed the Lakeland metro area had the second-highest rate of population growth in the country. Mutz said affordable housing needs to be addressed with this rapid growth.

“If we get the housing resolved we can continue to work on the job growth at a more accelerated level. And the other thing we want to do in that regard is work alongside Polk County Public Schools on our educational systems,” Mutz said.

For Stevin, Lakeland’s biggest need is more police personnel.

“I want Lakeland to be the safest city in America. I want our response times to be absolutely quick for fire and for paramedics as well as police, so I think that is the top issue,” Stevin said.

Election day is Nov. 2 and voting by mail is already underway.

