

South Florida Sun-Sentinel



By **SUN SENTINEL EDITORIAL BOARD** | Sun Sentinel
PUBLISHED: February 18, 2026 at 3:28 PM EST

Seat B: Marc Wigder

Incumbent Marc Wigder has two challengers who are closely aligned with opposition to One Boca, businesswoman Meredith Madsen and Save Boca founder Jon Pearlman.

Madsen owns a skincare company, Sunshine & Glitter, and is one of only two candidates interviewed who opposes the police station referendum. She said it's needed, but the price is too high.

She also opposes One Boca, citing the council's initial failure to get public input.

Of a dozen candidates for four Boca Raton seats, Pearlman is the only one who declined to answer a concise two-page Sun Sentinel questionnaire. He said it had too many questions.

He also declined to take part in an online editorial board interview. We hope that Pearlman's disdain for connecting with voters is a rookie mistake, because if he wins, it is not a good sign for residents.

Wigder, 54, elected without opposition in 2023, holds an MBA from Yale and is owner and CEO of The Greenhouse Companies, a real estate business focused on sustainable development.

Upon election, Wigder divested his company's Boca business interests to avoid conflicts. He chairs the city Community Redevelopment Agency and Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.

Wigder is an early supporter of the One Boca redevelopment. This editorial board has strongly criticized other public-private partnerships between cities and developers, and has serious reservations on One Boca.

If Tallahassee succeeds in slashing property taxes, Boca faces enormous challenges to pay for city services. "Cities are going to have to get more creative," he told the editorial board. One Boca may be the wrong deal for the city, but Wigder's experience would be needed more than ever to find solutions.

Wigder has raised more than \$130,573, dwarfing Madsen's \$610. But the untraceable PAC money that darkens the race for mayor is not evident in Wigder's fundraising; nearly 90% of his campaign funds are loans to himself. Pearlman is effectively self-funding. He loaned his race \$62,400 of \$62,900 raised.

The political volatility in Boca Raton is high, which means incumbency may be an albatross for Wigder.

Save Boca may have enough insurgent support to carry Pearlman to victory, but that would be a mistake.

After his own petition drive failed, Pearlman worked to keep One Boca off the March 10 referendum, Boca Magazine reported. He has alienated allies, and Madsen said she was frozen out of the Save Boca group when Pearlman decided to run.

"Don't fall for his lies," warned Joe Majhess Jr., another harsh development critic who was briefly a council candidate.

Pearlman, whose records show he has never voted in a Boca Raton city election, told the Coastal Star he is too busy to draw up plans if he wins. That suggests to us that his interest is mostly bombast and opposing development.

Most Boca Raton council candidates have never held office, and substantial turnover appears likely.

Madsen has sound ideas, and for voters who strongly oppose Question 2, we highly recommend her over Pearlman. But with so much inexperience, Wigder's thorough grounding in city issues provides needed balance.

The Sun Sentinel recommends Marc Wigder for Council Seat B.

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