

## Engineer Joins Royal Palm Council Race

By STEVE PIKE  
Town-Crier Online  
November 16, 2007



Royal Palm Beach Village Council candidate Tinuade "Tinu" Pena wants to look at the present in order to secure the future for residents of Royal Palm Beach.

Pena, a civil engineer, is running against Martha Webster and David Dangerfield for the council seat vacated in July by the resignation of Barbara Isenberg. The Jan. 29 election will decide who fills the seat through March 2009.

Born in Washington, D.C. and raised in her father's native Nigeria, Pena moved back to the U.S. when she was 19 and enrolled in Cochise College in Douglas, Ariz., near her uncle's home. She left school to enlist in the army and ended her five-year commitment in 1999. She later moved with her husband and son from Colorado Springs, Colo. to Royal Palm Beach. The couple, who divorced earlier this year, also have a young daughter.

Pena, who attained the rank of sergeant in the military, was a missile repair specialist and served on bases in Hawaii, Colorado and Kentucky.

"I worked in TOW/Dragon missile repair, mainly electronics, as part of the support element to infantry units," Pena said. "I got to go out in the field with the grunts and get dirty. It was a very unique experience. I don't regret ever going into the military."

A graduate of Florida Atlantic University, Pena is a design engineer for a Jupiter-based civil engineering company. She said she plans to use that background as a blueprint for her goals on the five-member council.

"I understand what it means to put a community together," Pena said. "I have the technical background to look at tables and make sure we're developing the right way. We need to have a strategic plan to make sure we're not overdeveloping and creating some of the same issues that are in Fort Lauderdale. I commute every day and see what goes on with our traffic."

Fixing the traffic dilemma is part of Pena's "sustainable community" platform. "I cringed when I saw the new development across from the high school [PortoSol] because of the impact it's going to have on traffic in the neighborhoods around it," she said.

"Looking at what impacts our present infrastructure is essential," she said. "But let's also look at it for generations to come and not for what might be OK for us right now. Let's take a step back and evaluate other alternatives to what we're doing so people don't feel pressure to move out of Royal Palm Beach. A lot of people don't want to live in a community where it's difficult to get in and out."

The 34-year-old Pena also wants to establish a resource center to help attract and keep small businesses in Royal Palm Beach.

"Whoever is interested can use the resource center for research," she said. "That develops economic growth as well. We definitely want to support small businesses in Royal Palm Beach. We have to support these people who live in the community and pay their taxes here. If you support them, you support the community."

In addition, Pena wants to look at ways for the village to become more environmentally friendly.

"For developers, let's look at ways they can implement for 'green' design," Pena said. "When you consider a parking lot, for example, are you going to use pervious pavement that allows water to run into the ground? You can consider 'green' roofs to catch rainwater. We need to start looking at the need to be part of the 'green' that's moving forward."

Pena said she would offer a fresh outlook as part of the council. "As a young individual coming from a different generation, I want to bridge the gap in the community to what's old and what's new," she said. "We need to start looking for next generation of leaders. I think I'm one of them." "Because of the delays, we've taken a lot more careful approach to engineering, with more focus on risk reduction," Driscoll said. "When we deploy it, we want to make sure it works."

It also gets them past the heavier seas of December and January, allowing initial testing to begin in calmer months.

Although harnessing ocean energy has been considered for more than a century, no system has been installed in the Gulf Stream for more than a few hours.

The initial three-blade test turbine will be about 10 feet in diameter. It's connected to a main mooring buoy anchored to the ocean floor and a twin-hull observation and control buoy.

It will be placed in the Gulf Stream about 15 miles off the shore of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, where the blades will be driven by the 6 mph flow of the Gulf Stream.

The goal is to have 3,000 turbines working in underwater unison to power up to 50 percent of Florida.

Driscoll's team also is working on another proposal to earn state grant money for a project that will pull cold water from the bottom of the ocean for cooling homes and businesses.