



2020 Jacksonville Beach MAYOR Candidate Written Questions

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1. **Qualifications and Motivation:** What qualifications in terms of education, experience, and prior community service do you bring to your candidacy for public office? Please explain what motivates you to run for office at this time?

For over 40 years, I have owned a real estate business in Jacksonville Beach. Prior to that, I taught biology & science in the Duval County Public School System. I was elected to serve two terms on the Jacksonville Beach City Council and the last four years, I served as Mayor Pro Tem. In addition, I have been appointed to several boards in Jacksonville, some of which are the Planning Commission and chaired the Water/Sewer Expansion Authority.

2. **Priorities:** If you are elected Mayor, what are the three most important issues you would address during your term and how would you address them? Please include how you would ensure adequate funding to address the issues.
 - 1) Involving citizens more in decisions that affect them. No additional funds needed except for maybe more staff time to conduct citizen workshops on issues.
 - 2) In light of the economic downturn caused by the Pandemic, I would like to see the City be more proactive in making it possible for businesses to rebound. Again, very little additional funds should be required.
 - 3) Balancing the budget without increasing taxes. Because of the economic downturn, the City will be faced with a shortage of funds in certain business-related tax areas. We need to analyze where there is waste and cut back to provide adequate funds for essential services such as Police and Fire protection. Citizens have to live within their means and the City should strive to do the same.
3. **Budget:** In the event of a budget shortfall, would you consider a millage increase to maintain levels of service? If not, what specific items in the budget would you recommend adjusting? What specific strategies would you suggest to raise additional funds? Please be specific.

In a budget shortfall, I would do everything possible to avoid a millage increase. If the City is struggling, the citizens probably are also and the additional taxation would increase their

struggle. We should first look at non-essential services for cuts. We should also evaluate our departments to see if there are ways to consolidate to cut expenses and to postpone projects to a later time when the economy is better. Also, we should actively seek grants and other available funds for special services including in Parks & Recreation.

4. **Charter Amendments:** What is your position on the following proposed Jacksonville Beach charter amendments that will be on the General Election ballot?
 - a. **Amendment 1:** A super majority vote is required to remove the City Manager.
Yes
 - b. **Amendment 2:** A super majority vote is required to remove the City Attorney.
Yes
 - c. **Amendment 3:** A voter referendum is required to eliminate Beaches Energy or Police Department.
Absolutely, yes
 - d. **Amendment 4:** Clarifies that, except for purposes of inquiry, no City Council member or appointed board member can interfere with the performance of the duties of a City employee who is under the direct or indirect supervision of the City Manager.
Yes
5. **Coastal Resiliency:** Going forward, what actions does Jacksonville Beach need to take to mitigate flooding vulnerability and sea level rise?

We need to continue to work to improve our drainage systems. The grants we received from the State have been helpful but it is an ongoing challenge to continue the progress and expand to other areas of our City.

As for the sea level rise, we need to be aware and take advantage of any grants or studies on this, such as Atlantic Beach did. I would be open to any suggestions or concerns the citizens have on this area.

6. **Growth Management:** While you are in office, Jacksonville Beach will be updating the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.
 - a. What specific changes do you want to see made to the Comprehensive Plan? Please explain your proposed changes and why you recommend these changes.

The Comprehensive Plan is so “comprehensive”, it would be difficult to address it in a brief format. I would be happy to discuss any specific issues with anyone who has thoughts or concerns.
 - b. What specific changes do you want to see made to the Land Development Code? Please explain what specific aspects of the Land Development Code are not functioning and what would you do about them.

One of my goals is to review our Land Development Code and solicit input from our citizens as well as developers and builders to reach a balance that doesn't infringe on the rights of existing neighbors as well as maintain the rights of the subject property. As with the Comprehensive Plan, the LDC is so lengthy, it would be

difficult to address the details in a brief manner. Again, I would be open to any concerns or questions anyone may have.

7. **Crime & Public Safety**: What are the most important crime & public safety issues in Jacksonville Beach and what should be done to address them and fund them? Please be specific.

One of our biggest challenges is that we have a population of approximately 24,000 residents and a police force for that number. However, because we are a beachfront community that provides lots of parking, we attract numerous people from all over NE Florida as well as out-of-state visitors. Fortunately, we have redevelopment funds for our CBD which helps with providing supplemental police presence. We need to continuously assess the situation to make sure we provide adequate funding for our police.

Another safety issue which is related to the previous assessment, is the gangs that come from other areas. We need to maintain close relations with neighboring police departments to share information relating to this and become proactive in preparing for potential problems.

The vagrant population in our community is another issue that concerns citizens. We need to work closely with Mission House and other such agencies in Jacksonville to try to provide rehab and job placement counseling to these people. We also need to involve our police and get input and suggestions from them.

8. **Downtown**:

- a. What do you propose be done to promote and encourage new business and redevelopment to achieve the community's vision for a safe, walkable, and family-friendly downtown area?

We need to promote more family-friendly events such as the monthly art walk, the monthly car show, Deck the Chairs, etc.

- b. What kinds of businesses, developments, and improvements would you like to see in the downtown Central Business District? Please be specific.

We need to promote and attract upscale restaurants, boutique shops, art galleries, etc. With the opening of new hotels in the CBD, we have an opportunity to re-define the area. If the City is pro-active and works closely with our businesses and citizens in implementing our Downtown Vision Plan, we could change the look and feel of the area in a positive way.

9. **Strategic Plan**: With input from citizens and businesses, the Jacksonville Beach City Council is developing a vision and strategic plan for Jacksonville Beach.

- a. What is YOUR vision for the future of Jacksonville Beach?

My vision is to have safe streets and neighborhoods where citizens take pride in their homes, parks and beach. Our parks and recreational areas would be clean and well-maintained. There would be ample places for our youth to participate in sports and outdoor activities.

For the downtown area, my vision is to have an area that is safe and attracts citizens of all ages and interests, such as St. George St. in St. Augustine.

b. If you are elected, what would you do to achieve that vision?

The City Is currently working with the citizens and businesses to develop a strategic plan. Because of the Pandemic, this process has taken longer than anticipated. We should continue the sessions to hear the input from all areas of our City. We should also be pro-active in seeking and applying for grants that would benefit our City and provide additional funding for special projects that would be cost-prohibitive for our budget.

10. **Vacation Rentals:** Would you change anything in the current Jax Beach vacation rental regulations? Please explain what you would change and why.

The City's ordinance on Vacation Rentals was a good compromise between those who oppose vacation rentals and property owners who derive their livelihood from the rental of their property. The registration of those properties is needed. Some of the other requirements, such as the retrofit of sprinkler systems in some properties is excessive and needs to be re-evaluated. Also, the process and inspections are confusing to many property owners. This needs to be simplified to gain more compliance.

We also need to evaluate the cost of hiring an outside firm to monitor those who are not registered compared to the return in funds we receive in fees, inspections, registrations, etc.

11. **Campaign Pledge:** Will you make a pledge to carry out a campaign based on issues and facts and renounce the use of name-calling and inuendo? What will you do if such literature (for instance by mass mailings) is distributed?

My platform is to run on my experience and knowledge and not on bashing my opponent.

12. **Other issues:** Are there any other issues you would like to address if elected? Please explain.

As has been stated in some of the previous responses, I will work to make sure that citizen input is actively sought out on issues that directly affect them. Also, the same for businesses. We often make rules they do not know about until after it is passed.

Also, because of the Pandemic caused downturn in the economy, I would work to make the City more business-friendly and try to provide assistance in providing emergency easing of restrictions, as long as it does not affect the safety or well-being of our citizens. Because of my 40+ years of business experience, I have been through several recessions and had to adjust to survive and thrive. Many shops and restaurants are facing this because of the mandated closings.

Some other issues that are on my agenda are:

- a) Expand lifeguard coverage to all areas of our beach (this summer, the South portion of our Beach had no lifeguards)
- b) Expediting the rebuilding of our beach walkovers, especially the handicapped accesses
- c) Developing awareness programs for Beach goers relating to trash on the beach, plastic bags & other plastic bottles/containers
- d) Explore ways to use the tax increment funds in the South Beach Redevelopment areas to make needed improvements and expand services for the area
- e) Continue to work with the County, State and Federal governments on Beach Renourishment and dune protection
- f) Work more closely with the City of Jacksonville to expedite areas under their purview which includes
 - 1) the Penman Rd improvements
 - 2) rebuilding of the Pier
 - 3) Mike McCue Boat Ramp improvements & re-working the 2nd Ave N access to the park, including trimming of overgrown bushes that infringe onto the street
 - 4) the maintenance of Ponte Vedra Blvd from 3rd St to the county line