

## 2016 Beaches Watch Jacksonville Beach Candidate Questions

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When answering the following questions, please provide specifics as well as supporting data and facts wherever possible.

1) Crime/Public Safety:

- a. In your opinion, what are the most important crime/public safety issues in Jacksonville Beach and what should be done to address them? Please be specific.

We have a serious crime problem AND a serious public safety problem in Jacksonville Beach. These two issues are not always one in the same, as we saw with Hurricane Matthew. The majority of crime is property related or tied to the over consumption of alcohol. These crimes include rape, battery and theft. There are many steps that we can take as a community to greatly reduce these types of crimes, some of which are addressed in the following 2 parts of this question.

I feel that theft is a crime of opportunity and that working together as a community is critical for reduction. We should know our neighbors and be watching out for them. I have recently put this concept into action by creating the 'Jacksonville Beaches Lost, Found & Stolen' Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/JBLFS/>). Within the last week we have gained over 800 users and created an avenue to draw community attention to these ongoing problems (It's also a great way to find lost pets).

As for the alcohol related crime, I believe that there is a direct correlation between the overconsumption of alcohol and these crimes. Obviously, you reduce the first, you will reduce the other. Easier said than done, right? Nothing has changed to greatly curtail these problems over the last 4 years. Placing Band-Aids by implementing unenforceable ordinances has had little positive effect and has only opened the door to unnecessary exposure to litigation by the City/taxpayers. These attempts to impose micro level restrictions on businesses in efforts to create a 'family friendly' area has obviously backfired. The REAL solution to these issues is tied to the implementation of an intelligent economic strategy. This macro level solution will create a thriving Central Business District (CBD) that will be safe and fun for people of ALL ages. This strategy has proven successful throughout Florida in areas such as Delray Beach. I will discuss this plan in more details in following questions.

As for non-crime related public safety, it was apparent during the week of Hurricane Matthew that the City of Jacksonville Beach was greatly unprepared. Our City employees, first responders and Beaches Energy worked hard and did a great job following the directives that were being formulated by leadership 'on the fly'. I believe that the City of Jacksonville Beach needs to have a comprehensive and detailed hurricane/emergency preparedness plan. This plan should be readily available. This information should be updated monthly and tested yearly for any flaws.

- b. Some candidates have said Jacksonville Beach needs more police officers and the police officer salaries should be increased. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.
- i. I agree that, currently, we need more police officers. This is so we can remove the amount of forced overtime being imposed and allow for the officers to interact with the

public in a manner that will develop a caring and trusting relationship. Once crime is reduced through revitalization, the number of officers could be reduced through attrition.

- ii. I agree that police officer salaries should be increased. The 1% raise this past year was inequitable.

- c. If you support hiring more police officers and/or increasing police officer pay, how would you propose the City pay for these costs?

First responders should be the first to benefit from the tax revenue generated as the result of the implementation of an intelligent economic strategy for the CBD.

## 2) Parking:

- a. What is your opinion on paid parking in the downtown business district? Please be specific.

Jacksonville Beach residents should not have to pay for parking in public lots. Even though this is currently the case, it is unknown by the majority of the residents. If this was known, I believe that residents would use the lots more often and patronize CBD businesses.

- b. What changes would you like to see made to improve the parking situation in the downtown area?

I would be interested in looking at some alternatives to what is currently being done. For example, when charging for parking in city owned lots, the companies that run the lots should propose to the city during the RFP process a 'supply and demand' pricing option at premium times. The city should share in the additional revenue generated from this option.

I am a proponent of a mixed use parking garage in the CBD, HOWEVER, I am completely AGAINST the City's proposed location for this garage in the 'Ritz' paved parking lot on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. We do NOT need to bring more traffic to the heart of the CBD, which should be a pedestrian and bicycle friendly area. I would propose that this garage be located in the block between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N and 2<sup>nd</sup> St N & A1A. The entrance to the facility should be from A1A and the exit should be on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N by the signalized intersection. Currently, the City is planning to construct an overpriced surface lot in this block. Why would the City spend tax dollars to build a new surface parking lot, when the City is going to remove an existing surface lot to build a parking garage a block away? This does not add up either financially or from a planning perspective.

Many people have suggested putting the parking garage on the West side of A1A but that could be difficult because it would be outside of the CRA funding zone.

## 3) Central Business District (CBD):

- a. What changes would you support to achieve a safe, walkable and family-friendly environment in the Central Business District?

I have many innovative ideas that will transition the CBD to a safe, walkable area for all ages. Many of these changes are being addressed in other questions. However, other key components not mentioned elsewhere would include A) the suspension of vehicular traffic during peak times allowing for café style seating and better pedestrian access. B) The creation of a 'Sunday Family Fun Day' in the Seawalk area.

- What kinds of businesses and developments would you like to see in the Central Business District? What, if anything, would you recommend be done to encourage those businesses to come to Jacksonville Beach? Please be specific.

We desperately need locally owned, mixed retail and true higher end restaurants (like 11 South). The only way to make these businesses sustainable is to implement an intelligent economic strategy. This strategy would include the construction of a mixed use parking garage off 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, a public/private partnership mixed use premium level hotel and the revamping of the events at the Seawalk Pavilion. We do not need to

reinvent the wheel; we need to replicate what has been successful elsewhere, for example Delray Beach.

Included in the original Vision Plan for the CRA were business development initiatives and private/public partnerships that the City has avoided at all costs to date. We should review these ideas and replicate other strategies that have proven successful elsewhere.

4) Sign Ordinance:

- a. What is your opinion of the city's current sign ordinance? Please be specific and explain any changes you would like to see made to the sign ordinance.

Through having an in-depth discussion with Terry DeLoach, a 20 plus year member of the Jax Beach Planning Committee, I learned a lot about this ordinance. We agreed that this ordinance wasn't perfect, but we were at a place where we could build from it without making critical mistakes. Similar to the solution to the CBD problems, we need to see what has proven successful elsewhere and trust in the local experts to develop the proper balance between advertising and visual pollution.

Hopefully, it is evident that I took great care in the development of my logo and signs in the attempt to reduce the negative impact on the viewing public. I believe that historically, political signage has been nothing but visual pollution. Designed to draw the greatest amount of attention without consideration to negative impacts. My signs were specifically designed to deliver a message in an attractive manner, while greatly reducing the impact to the viewing public. This is the mindset I'd take toward the sign ordinance.

Additionally, I am NOT a fan of electronic signs that can be overly bright and change messages too quickly. These are distracting to drivers and can potentially reduce surrounding property values.

5) Height Limit:

- a. Do you believe more highrise buildings (buildings that exceed the 35 foot height limit) should be allowed to be built in Jacksonville Beach? Yes or No.

No, unless as intentionally included in the referendum, the residents (through another referendum) deem that it's in the best interest of the community to make changes to the limit by voting to make changes. THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF THE RESIDENTS, NOT THE MAYOR NOR THE COUNCIL.

- b. Please explain your answer to (a).

I believe that absolutes are typically not a good idea and that the residents of Jacksonville Beach are very intelligent. They should be the ones making that decision.

- c. If elected, would you take any actions to change the height limit that was approved by 76% of the voters in 2004? If so, what would you change?

As explained above, I would not bring forth any action that would change the existing height limit. However, if the residents chose to make changes, I would follow their wishes.

- 6) Events: What is your opinion of the current special events policy and are there any changes you think should be made? Please explain.

I think we need to scrap the current special events policy and start over. The City has created a monster that is a complete disaster. There are too many 'friends' of the city with their hands in the mix. Most of these events are dependent on vast alcohol sales to fund the venture, creating another situation where over consumption of alcohol occurs and alcohol related crime is potentially generated.

I have researched and communicated directly with St Johns County and their staff that run the St Augustine Amphitheatre. They have developed an amazing venue that directly generates over \$4 million annually to St. Johns County and creates hundreds of millions of dollars of positive impact to the community. I suggest we consider replicating aspects of their successful

event structure. This will bring high level national touring acts to the Seawalk Pavilion, tourists that will spend real money in our community, reduce the over-consumption of alcohol, reduce forced overtime by our police force, raise home values, solve many of our problems in the CBD and generate tax dollars so we can support our first responders and quality of life resources.

- 7) Outdoor music: Do you support changing the ban on amplified outdoor music and sound at businesses? Please explain your position.

I believe that there is room for improvement on this issue, where common sense can be used.

- 8) Since Jacksonville Beach is built out, do you support or oppose increasing the number of town houses and multifamily housing units in traditional single housing unit neighborhoods? Please explain.

We should attempt to maintain charming neighborhood characteristics while ensuring that a maximum population density is not exceeded. On that topic, I don't agree with the continued granting of most variances. It seems counterintuitive to have zoning restrictions if you are going to grant excessive variances. Either change the zoning so the public will be informed or stop making all the changes.

- 9) Jacksonville Beach Fire Department: Do you support the Jacksonville Fire Rescue Department (JFRD) taking over the Jacksonville Beach Fire Department? Please explain.

Having the endorsement of the Jax Beach Fire Fighters has allowed me the opportunity to discuss this issue in detail with many people who will be personally affected by this decision. It is extremely disheartening to me that our amazing team of Jax Beach fire fighters have been put into this difficult position by the current mayor and City, which is making them lean toward wanting to leave and face losing seniority, as opposed to staying where they feel unwanted.

JACKSONVILLE BEACH MUST SUPPORT ALL OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS! Through unfair negotiations and the lack of investment in training, equipment and personnel, the City has created a horrible situation for the people who we trust with our public safety and well-being.

I would support whatever decision that this outstanding lifesaving team would make, but I would highly encourage them to NOT leave and allow the Jax Beach community to treat them with the respect and dignity that they greatly deserve. These and the other first responders will be at the top of the list of those that will benefit from the tax revenue created by the economic strategy we implement in the CBD.

- 10) Communication:

Jacksonville Beach has tremendous problems with the lack of transparency, openness, accessibility to the public, accountability and technology. I believe that these old school policies have remained in full effect with the intentions of keeping the public, both residents and businesses, in the dark. Creating avenues for 'behind closed door' deals and facilitating an agenda focused on cronyism that is to the great detriment of this community.

I find it unacceptable that the current mayor has allowed this to continue, has fostered these activities and has even allowed the City to further the activities that circumvent Sunshine Laws.

These are the basic reasons why we have not progressed further as a City. It's impossible to attract outside investment in our community with a closed door, secretive mentality.

- a. What could the city do to improve communication with the citizens of Jacksonville Beach?

The City could do many things to improve communication with the citizens, seeing that currently there is very little. We have to strive to create a technologically advanced, transparent government with readily available information to our citizens.

All city council meetings, board meetings and workshops should be streamed live to the public and a copy placed online for future viewing.

We must allow the council members AND NOT ONLY THE CITY to have access to the City email addresses tied to the council members' names. This practice of the City filtering emails that the public believes is going straight to council members has to stop. Once filtered, the City forwards those emails, deemed important, to the council members PERSONAL email addresses. Thus, creating the potential of massive Sunshine Law circumvention. All City business should be stored on a safe City owned server and not outside of it (except for disaster recovery purposes).

I highly disagree with the practice of 'one on one' council briefings between the City and the council members. If the dissemination of information and the explanation of that information is critical, the public should have full access to that information. Recently, the City has begun these 'one on one' briefings with the CRA and I have refused to participate in them, because I believe that it goes against the spirit of the Sunshine Laws and that it's a blatant attempt to create consensus and circumvent Sunshine Laws.

b. What would you do to promote communication with your constituents?

Utilize technology and applications that would use push notifications. I feel as though the more information that citizens have the greater the sense of ownership they will demonstrate towards their community. Also, I would actively use social media such as Facebook to communicate with constituents like I did during Hurricane Matthew.

I have received many extremely positive messages about my social media postings during the storm. Here's just one example:

*'My family evacuated and your posts on FB made us feel like we were home. Thank you for showing great empathy towards all citizens in JB. The actions you have taken in the last few days alone is something the current "leadership" in JB should embrace and to be a standard. You stood out in a time of need and as they say true colors show in times like these. Thank you for your true leadership.'*

Patrick,  
9:06pm Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

c. There used to be public council briefings prior to the City Council meetings. Public Council briefings are no longer being held. Do you support resuming this practice? Why or why not?

Repeated answer from above:

Yes, resume them and stream them live online.

I highly disagree with the practice of 'one on one' council briefings between the City Manager and the council members. If the dissemination of information and the explanation of that information is critical, the public should have full access to that information. Recently, the City has begun these 'one on one' briefings with the CRA and I have refused to participate in them because I believe that it goes against the spirit of the Sunshine Laws and that it's a blatant attempt to create consensus and circumvent Sunshine Laws.

11) Are there any other issues you would like to address if elected? Please explain.

- a. Acquisition of the Jax Beach Pier from the City of Jacksonville and review of management. The pier is a critical asset to our community and its potential has not come close to being realized, because Jacksonville is concerned about its downtown, NOT Jax Beach.
- b. Implement a greater level of accountability to our citizens by doing annual reviews of ALL key City personnel, including the City Manager.

- c. Reduction in unnecessary exposure to litigation and waste of taxpayer funds due to poor management decisions. The amount of tax dollars wasted on outside counsel and settlements due to poor decisions by City staff is very high.
- d. I'd also like to address the lack of attention given to impacts to residents and businesses during all phases of roadway construction projects. These negative impacts to the public are not being considered to the extent they should be during design. Additional plan notes and specifications should be added to the construction contracts to reduce these public impacts. During construction, the City must start enforcing the full contract documents. Currently, the City lets the contractors get away with not doing many things that are called out to be done in the contract. This leaves the City and taxpayers open to unnecessary litigation, unsafe construction conditions and the corruption of the low bid contract process.
- e. Update the Engineering Department of Public Works.
- f. The procedure used for determining the prioritization of projects that are done through the CRA needs to be revised to allow members of the CRA and Council to have input.

### Qualifications

I have the experience, education, and proven success in running a growing business. My specialty is getting projects done while functioning in a partnering environment with the public, contractors and the facility owner. These qualifications include:

- Current member of the Jacksonville Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) – Appointed by the Jacksonville Beach City Council on June 17, 2013.
- Licensed Florida Professional Engineer (P.E. # 53941) – Civil Engineer, specializing in infrastructure development and construction management.
- Business Owner (50+ employees) – AE Engineering, Inc. is a Civil Engineering company that specializes in Construction Engineering & Inspection (CEI). Major clients include the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), Palm Beach County, City of West Palm Beach and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). AE Engineering takes the role of the owner's agent. As an agent, we are tasked with **ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent prudently**, construction projects are completed within contract time and on budget, while being built per contract documents. We are selected based on our teams' qualifications, NOT low bid.
- Active Senior Project Engineer on many types of construction projects throughout Florida with over 50 projects completed, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Florida (2000 and 1994). Specialty in Construction Management and training in Urban Development.
- Full academic scholarship to Santa Fe College
- Graduate of FICE/FTBA Leadership Academy.
- 22 years of combined experience working as a State of Florida Employee for the FDOT and working successfully as a consultant for the FDOT.
- What is most important is my overwhelming love for this community. I believe that working together, we can seize the opportunity to make a real difference to the quality of life for everyone living and working in our City. We can do this with prudent management, while lowering the total tax burden on our residents and businesses.
- I pledge to NOT pursue ANY contracts with Jacksonville Beach or use the position of Mayor for the financial gain of AE Engineering, myself or as a lobbyist for a third party.