

2016 Beaches Watch

Neptune Beach Mayor Candidate Questions

Name of Candidate: ELAINE BROWN

Phone Number: 904.318.5904

Email Address: _____

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

- 1) Please tell us about yourself, explain why you are running for the office and briefly describe your experience and qualifications for the position.
- 2) What do you feel are the most important issues facing Neptune Beach at this time and what would you do to address these issues? In your response, please include how you would ensure adequate funding to address the issues.
- 3) Budget: Since Neptune Beach only receives 14% of property tax monies, Neptune Beach continues to struggle to balance its budget and maintain essential services.
 - a. What, if anything, would you propose be done to reduce expenses?
 - b. What, if anything, would you propose be done to increase revenues?
- 4) Parking: The Beaches Town Center is plagued with parking problems.
 - a. What is your solution for the Town Center parking problems?
 - b. Do you support paid parking? If so, where would you put paid parking?
- 5) Crime & Public Safety: What public safety issues would you like to address if elected?
- 6) Neighborhood issues: In your neighborhood walks, what issues have you observed that exist:
 - a. East of 3rd St.?
 - b. West of 3rd St.?
 - c. What should be done to address them?
- 7) What changes, if any, do you think should be made in the development and/or renovation processes for:
 - a. Residential properties in Neptune Beach?
 - b. Commercial properties in Neptune Beach?
- 8) Communication: What will be your policy to promote and encourage communication with the residents of Neptune Beach?
- 9) In your opinion, does anything need to change in regard to Neptune Beach boards and committees? Please explain.
- 10) What do you aim to accomplish by the end of your term for:
 - a. the residential areas of Neptune Beach?
 - b. the commercial/business areas of Neptune Beach?
- 11) Are there any other issues you would like to address if elected? Please explain.

SEE CANDIDATE RESPONSES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

BEACHES WATCH QUESTIONNAIRE

ELAINE BROWN

904.318.5904

- 1. Who I am and why am I running:** I have lived in Neptune Beach for 33 years. Our children attended Beaches Schools and we quickly learned to appreciate the Neptune Beach quality of life and have been involved in the community from the beginning. I am running for the office of Mayor because I feel strongly that my experience can benefit our city. I have been involved in many charitable organizations from March of Dimes to Sulzbacher Center. More recently appointed and elected leadership positions have provided experience valuable to my community. I am a past Jacksonville City Council member and past president of the Council. I am past President of the Northeast Florida Regional Council, past char of The Beaches Chamber and I am the former Chair of the Task Force to “Save our Ferry”. In addition I have co-Chaired the recently FDOT approved effort to designate 40 miles of our Coast as a scenic highway, “Ocean Islands Trail”. Experience teaches you how to get things done in the system.
- 2. In no particular order some of the issues facing Neptune Beach:** Town Center Parking. I would work with the Merchants Association as well as Atlantic Beach to explore parking options such as meters, parking garage, shuttle to Town Center from K-Mart. Funding would consist of partnerships, general fund and grants. Infrastructure rehab and improvements. Grants that can stretch the budget such as the recent grant request to St. Johns River Water Management that could save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars in waste water treatment to lower Nitrogen or working in partnership with other beaches cities on sewer improvements that has already resulted in over a million dollars in savings giving us the opportunity to do additional improvements to storm water drainage. K-Mart redevelopment: Neptune deserves a better product than this shopping center and by working with the owner developer to include greenspace and additional parking for Town Center we can have an improved shopping area with many benefits to our commercial district. City Hall Relocation: This is certainly an opportunity for both City Council and citizens to explore opportunities that could benefit the city’s future. Jarboe Park Improvements: This wonderful park is in need of many improvements to serve our population and those improvements could take place thru grants, private funding and general fund budgeting.
- 3. Budget.** A. Of the cities \$4.7 million dollar budget 48% comes from ad valorem taxes. I would join the council and city staff in remaining alert to any opportunities for savings and stretching our lean budget. B. I would propose a greater effort be made to apply for specialty grants, private partnerships as well as additional revenue from the county when appropriate.
- 4. Parking.** With new restaurants opening the problem will continue to grow unless we address ideas such as metered parking and a garage as well as shuttle from K-mart.

This is a shared problem with Atlantic Beach and the Merchants Association and all idea should be explored. B. Paid parking in the form of meters and a garage should be analyzed and looked at for future revenue.

5. **Crime and Public Safety.** If elected I pledge total support to an excellent police department. Neptune Beach is one of the safest communities in North Florida. Public safety also includes pedestrian crossing across 3rd St. especially at Town Center and we need to insure we are exploring safety measures that include pedestrian safety.
6. **Neighborhood issues.** East of 3rd: Seasonal traffic, drainage, permitting difficulties for improvements and remodeling. Each lot is unique and requires a different perspective to encourage improvements of some of the “beach blight”. A review of the code to address permits and remodeling will improve these properties. West of 3rd: permitting issues for remodeling and improvements, street paving and park improvements. C. Working with police on traffic and parking and calling for a review of the permitting process. Property owners should not face roadblocks as a way of doing business. By helping property owners improve their properties we help our entire community.
7. **Residential improvements or renovation.** A review of the procedures for permitting and variance applications leading to a process that is user friendly, professional and encouraging to homeowners. Commercial properties: Businesses should find a professional and encouraging attitude from our City, successful businesses add to the revenue of the city and help keep our taxes down.
8. **Communication:** I will hold set hours to meet one on one with our citizens and businesses. Our elected officials welcome input from citizens. Meetings and workshops are open and the staff is accessible. I believe in neighborhood walks with police and staff and will always be available for neighborhood meetings.
9. **Fresh faces and fresh ideas.** I would make sure we limit terms and give attention to balanced representation from all areas of Neptune Beach. In addition I would implement appointments be made by both Mayor and council members to boards.
10. **Accomplishments.** A. Masterplan for Jarboe Park and renovations, continued improvements in infrastructure upgrades to address drainage, surfacing of roads and a completed review of residential permitting procedures leading to amendments and a user friendly process for renovation and property improvements. B. Improvements in parking problems in Town Center. Professional and improved permitting process. If City Hall is moved a master plan for the commercial area to include parking solutions and revenue sources. Updated and upscale shopping area at the K-Mart location
11. **Most have been covered in the answers above but a continued dedication to beautification and quality of life issues that effect our city.**