

2016 Beaches Watch Neptune Beach Mayor Candidate Questions

Name of Candidate: Robert D. "Bob" Shimp

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Website: _____

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

Beach Watch Neptune Beach Mayoral Candidates Questionnaire

Name: Robert D. "Bob" Shimp

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1) I am your neighbor, a Beaches home owner of 40 years, a husband for 45 years, father of 3, and grandfather of 2. By profession, I was a teacher and coach for 34 years and a police officer for a brief time. I was proud to have served with the 201 Artillery Unit in West Virginia and 3rd 20th Special Forces Florida National Guard. I am also a Member of St. Paul's Catholic Church and a member of American Legion post 316.

I was on the City Council from 1997-2002 as both Councilor and Vice Mayor. I am past President of the North Florida Technology Association, a graduate of Army NCO Academy, have had basic and advanced classes for government by the Florida League of Cities, and most of all, a teacher and coach.

I am not afraid to speak out about citizens rights.

I am running for Mayor because I feel the City of Neptune Beach is making it difficult for middle class people to afford to live here by changing codes that make it harder to improve our properties.

2) The main issues I am running on are as follows:

a. Protecting Property Owner Rights:

To preserve proper owners' rights, I would Initiate a "Grandfather Clause" which will enable property owners to have the same rights that were in effect when the property was purchased to be in effect until the property is sold. This will be a slow but fair way to make changes to Neptune Beach.

b. I'm also concerned about the City's selective enforcement of the codes,

I would stop selective enforcement of the codes whereby, one person is given a ticket for an infraction and another person, also not in compliance, is not. I believe that the City must be proactive and fair in the enforcement of all codes. However, codes that are being selectively enforced or not enforced should be reviewed, revised or, if necessary, repealed.

c. Safety is becoming more important day by day. Our police department should cross- train with the other law enforcement agencies in this area.

d. The Budget:

Budget Workshops should include more input from the citizens. This may require additional workshop meetings but, I feel, that an informed citizenry is very important when decisions are made that affect them. In addition, the Budget should be done by Line Item.

I am against initiating any new projects unless they are placed in the budget. This should include the maintenance for the project, as well.

All of my issues will save money for the City except for Police Training

3) We must stop all unnecessary projects that are not in the budget. New projects must be carefully reviewed to see if there is money in the budget, before, not after, they are started. This is why citizen input is important at Budget Workshop Meetings.

More grant writing by city staff could help to supplement the budget.

Making the City more customer friendly by helping citizens to improve their properties, will increase property values, which will, in turn, increase tax revenue without raising taxes.

Instead of selling City Hall, it may be more financially beneficial to lease the property. All options should be explored to maximize potential revenue.

Over time, more use of solar power at the city yard will help to save money.

4)

a. It's easy to ask what the city can do about parking in Town Center. But all parking areas, except on the city's public streets, belong to one person. Past councils helped cause this problem by reducing parking by 50% to accommodate business owners.

We should encourage the Town Center Agency to ask their employees to park out of the Town Center area and that includes City Hall workers.

b. The problem with paid parking on public streets within Town Center is that it will cause visitors to park in the surrounding residential areas.

The solutions must come from the business and property owners of Town Center because, the truth is, until the parking problem causes a decline in business, there will not be a cure.

5) Our police department has improved 1000% since appointing a new Police Chief. But, I feel we can do even more by patrolling all of the city. Creating Zoned areas could be explored. I would work with the Chief to find the best way to proceed.

6) and 7) As I've walked the neighborhoods, I have found that both sides of 3rd Street are concerned with Property Rights. They have complained of the problems they've had while attempting to improve their properties and feel "City Hall" is adversarial.

This is why Property Rights are such a big issue for me.

However, there were concerns specific to each area:

a. West of 3rd Street:

*There is a concern by residents who live east of Penman, between Florida Blvd. and Seagate, that there is no safe way to bike or walk to the beach. They must either cross Penman and go to either the light on Florida or Seagate, or ride on the berm of the road which can be very dangerous, especially for families with kids.

*This is also true for children walking to all Neptune Beach Schools from that area.

*The residents directly north of Fletcher H.S. are concerned that when the DOT widens and places bulkheads on the drainage ditch, the trees that currently buffer the noise from Fletcher will be removed.

* Problems exist with some neighborhoods that have been developed which stems from the practice that allows Builders to develop neighborhoods in which neither the city nor the developer is responsible for the roads in the development.

b. East of 3rd Street

* Non-conforming lots east of 3rd Street present multiple problems for property owners.

* Parking by non-property owners and visitors is a problem for residents with large city easements or setbacks that they maintain.

* Some Renters complain that many landlords do not clean, inspect, or repair the units of their properties before renting to the next tenant.

7) a. and b. I believe that the city needs to be more customer friendly when either **residential** or **commercial** properties need to be upgraded and/or improved upon. This should be done, case by case, based upon what was allowable when the property was purchased.

8) Communication is vital to keeping citizens informed and is imperative when the City is about to make a changes that will directly affect them. This can be done in more than one way or in many ways. A robocall, door hanger (as was done when streets were paved), mail outs in the water bill, email or other electronic devices, etc... should be explored.

I will also canvas areas of the city by walking and asking for opinions and advice.

9) I think that the duties and responsibilities of all boards must be reviewed. This is not to say that anything needs to be changed. Since there are term limits for elected officials, so must term limits be enforced for board members.

The city council should always have authority over any decision made by the boards.

10) Property Owner Rights

Grandfather Clause

Rights of our Citizens

Open Budget with public input

Safety

Increase in both residential and commercial property values

Projects done by grant money

K-Mart shopping center rebuilt

11) We don't live, nor do most of our citizens want to live, in a "Gated Community". Codes should not be passed that restrict property owners from improving their properties and, if they are passed, a "Grandfather Clause" should be in effect to protect the rights of property owners until that property is sold.

Neptune Beach is a bedroom community and a great place to live. We must keep it affordable and always reevaluate the Inter-local Agreement with the help of our sister cities.

Neptune Beach deserves elected officials who are dedicated to preserving our quality of life rather than those who would use Neptune Beach as a stepping stone to a political career.

I believe I am the person who's only goal will be to serve the citizens of Neptune Beach.