

2017 Beaches Watch

Atlantic Beach Commission Candidate Questions

Name of Candidate: Mitchell R Harding

Phone Number: 904 352-6064

Email Address: harding4ab@gmail.com

Website: _____

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

1. Important Issues:

- a. What are the two most important issues for your district that you would address as a City Commissioner? **Infrastructure Upgrades and Commercial Corridor Zoning.** How would you propose they be addressed? **First in last year's budget as well as in this year's proposed budget I have introduced line items to allocate money for Infrastructure Improvements to Curbs, Drainage, Sidewalks and Public Roads to address the lack of attention to the Marsh Side district in prior years. We still have Septic Systems in our Marsh Side neighborhoods that we need to address and insure the Wetlands are protected and improve city services to our residents. The zoning of our Commercial Zoned districts needs to be addressed to realign the zoning to match the Warehouse/ Industrial structures found throughout our Commercial district. We have a majority percentage of our businesses jumping through hoops to get Use By Exceptions that they should not be required to apply for them. The businesses are consistent with the type of structures they are moving into and aside from regulating the negative effects of these businesses such as noise, hazardous waste, pollution and excessive light we should welcome and reward these businesses for opening in Atlantic Beach.**
- b. In your opinion, what is the most important issue that should be addressed for the entire community of Atlantic Beach? **Continue in the Preservation of our Natural resources and Tree Canopy** What action would you propose? **We as a Commission have recognized the need for and adopted an Environmental Stewardship Committee to ensure the protection of our Natural Resources and Tree Canopy.**

2. Zoning codes: What aspects of Atlantic Beach zoning codes are not functioning and what would you do about it? **I think that most of our zoning needs to be looked at and updated regarding allowable uses and to ensure they are in compliance with our Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations. There are a lot of our allowable uses in the different zoning classifications that are too broad and contain too much room for misinterpretation.**

3. Citizen participation: Citizen Participation in the government process is key to good government. What would you do to increase citizen participation in Atlantic Beach government? **We have a lot of Community Involvement in our City Government and encourage citizens to serve their City with service on one of our many advisory committees.**

4. City staffing: Staffing has been an issue recently. What would you suggest to improve the process of attracting, hiring and retention of quality city staff? We are well on our way to replacing staff member vacancies which have occurred due to many different reasons most of which can be attributed to hiring the wrong people for these positions in the past. I think the overall City Staffing issue will be much improved upon the hiring of qualified, professionals who realize the importance of Customer Service as City Staff's primary mission.
5. Seminole Road South Gate: Should the city open the Seminole Road south gate into Hanna Park? No Please explain your answer. The City of Atlantic Beach, through its commissioners, looked into this issue in late 2014. Concerned citizens came out in record numbers to several open public hearings and at two separate council meetings. The last of those meetings was documented by local television stations, and our Atlantic Beach friends and neighbors made their opinions clear. AB citizens love their neighborhoods and are determined to conserve and preserve the character, charm, tree-lined roads, and safety that our cul-de-sac community provides. I support the vast majority of my constituents who have made decisions about where they live and play and ride their bikes and walk to our beaches, based on the fact that Seminole Road has been closed to Hanna Park for the last 45 years.
6. Mayport Road Corridor: What would you like to see happen in the Mayport Road Corridor? I voted to approve the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to ensure redevelopment of our Mayport Corridor for both Commercial and Residential redevelopment. We still have to consider the administrator of the CRA however I believe having definite funding available to fund economic development is crucial to the successful redevelopment of the Mayport Corridor.
7. Parking: How would you address the parking problems at the Town Center and the beach accesses? We have recently proposed a Parking and Safety Advisory Committee to address parking and Safety concerns throughout the city as well as working with the Town Center to address parking there. I believe at some point we have to think outside the box to maximize the use of Low Speed Vehicles, Bikes and scooters as well as finding ways to deal with an increased influx of visitors to our city. Off Site parking, shuttles and looking at maximizing the available parking in currently designated beach parking areas have been discussed.
8. Budget: The Homestead exemption on the November ballot may result in reduced revenues for Atlantic Beach. How would you propose the city economize or raise revenue to cover the shortfall if the Homestead exemption is approved? We are on pretty solid ground financially at this point and I understand the additional exemption will bring about a pretty sizable reduction in our projected revenue. We will have to adjust and adapt the budget to meet this challenge.
9. Quality of life: What do you think is the most important quality of life issue for Atlantic Beach at this time? Please explain. It truly depends on where you live in the city. On the Marsh Side of Atlantic Beach we are truly lacking in issues ranging from lack of Infrastructure, Paved streets, drainage Sidewalks and in some areas the lack of City Sewer services. We must continue to address these issues with Infrastructure Improvements to correct these deficiencies. Storm Water drainage, Flooding, sidewalks and streets in Aquatic Gardens, Royal Palms areas and then in our south Seminole Road areas we need to look at Infrastructure Improvements.
10. Are there any other issues you would like to address? Please explain. We as a Commission over the past two years have had to deal with some pretty difficult and controversial issues. It has always been my goal to investigate and decide on these issues with relevant, factual, and thorough consideration. I have performed these tasks with courage, integrity and always made

the decision that I felt is in the best interest of the City Of Atlantic Beach and its citizens. It has been my honor to serve you