

2017 Beaches Watch

Atlantic Beach Mayor Candidate Questions

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

1. Important Issues: In your opinion, what are the three most important issues for the entire community of Atlantic Beach that should be addressed? How would you propose they be addressed?

As Mayor of Atlantic Beach my opinions and decisions are based on two fundamental concerns: Public Safety and Quality of Life. Based on those capstone ideals our most pressing issues are Parking in and around our community, Pedestrian safety and enforcement /review of Zoning Ordinances that protect our citizens rights.

Parking: Review all allowable parking in our city with a view to accessibility while protecting the rights of property owners.

Pedestrian safety: Continue the review of pedestrian patterns by soon to be selected City manager and the newly appointed Chief of Police.

Zoning Ordinances: Complete review of enforcement and code to ensure Atlantic Beach remains a friendly and safe place to for residents and local business.

2. Zoning codes: What aspects of Atlantic Beach zoning codes are not functioning and what would you do about it?

See answer to #1 above

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?

I absolutely agree that citizen participation is key to good government. That's why, in my first term as Mayor, I enabled the creation of the Environmental Stewardship Committee with its "Tree Canopy sub-Committee" and the Parking and Pedestrian Safety Committee.

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?
Getting qualified staff in the right place is critical to any entity that wants to achieve their goals. Staffing has always being assessed with those goals in mind. In the case a municipality the City Manager is the primary hiring agent. I believe the process in place today to review and attract those focused on success will enable Atlantic Beach to meet its Public safety and Quality of Life short and long-term objectives. See answer to Question #1 above.

5. Seminole Road South Gate: Should the city open the Seminole Road south gate into Hanna Park? Please explain your answer.
The Seminole South Gate is owned and controlled by the City of Jacksonville (COJ). Additionally, COJ has no plans or interest in opening this gate. I agree with this position based on my concerns for Public Safety and Quality of Life should the gate be opened.

6. Mayport Road Corridor: What would you like to see happen in the Mayport Road Corridor?
The ideal solution would be establishing a "Community Reinvestment Act" zone for the area. This would require a partnership with the City of Jacksonville who has taxing jurisdiction over the entire corridor and currently has no interest in this idea. Going it alone, Atlantic Beach's smaller tax base alone would produce the funding needed to make noticeable improvement. In the meantime work will continue, together with FDOT, with programs to improve appearance and Public Safety.

7. Parking: How would you address the parking problems at the Town Center and the beach accesses?

See answer to #1

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?
The State of Florida may well succeed in passing this ballot in November over the objection of many Mayors around Florida, including myself. The budget impact to our City could be as much as \$300,000 reduction in tax collections. This is a budget decision that should be left to citizens and their hometown elected officials. That is why I have been such a strong supporter of "HOME RULE" for Florida cities.

9. Quality of life: What do you think is the most important quality of life issue for Atlantic Beach at this time? Please explain.
I will work to make sure our Quality of Life remains high by supporting our schools, protecting the natural beauty of our City including our Beaches, Parkland, Tree Canopy and pedestrian ways while supporting business ventures within our borders that provide opportunities to our citizens. This includes supporting our police officers and first responders.

10. Are there any other issues you would like to address? Please explain.

Since the COAB Charter change in 2015, the Duval County Canvassing Board assumed the city's election Canvassing Board responsibilities.

After my election as Mayor in 2015, my search for cost savings uncovered an opportunity similar to the above. We should investigate moving our election cycle to match Duval County. This could save our city \$22,000 to \$25,000 in the cost of running the election. But, more importantly it could raise voter turnout engaging more of our citizens in local government.