

## Jacksonville Beach Candidate Written Questions

- 1. How will you address the budgetary shortfalls caused by the loss of the Better Jacksonville Plan, as well as the proposed amendments that change property tax exemptions? What is your plan to preserve the levels-of-service for Jacksonville Beach residents?**

It should be noted though that in Calendar year 2017-2018, the Jacksonville Beach total assessed value increased by \$260,596,192 or 7.8%. This represents that the City will have a net increase of taxable revenue anticipated for in 2019 for Jacksonville Beach of approximately 1.5 million dollars or 6% more than 2018. Furthermore, this taxable revenue is 21% larger than the actual taxable revenue for Jacksonville Beach in 2016.

Based upon statistics provided within the City of Jacksonville Beach 2019 Budget Summary, if amendment 1 is passed, this will represent an approximate loss of \$600,000 in taxable revenue.

Due to our property values increasing here at the beaches, our taxable revenue has increased in excess of any shortfall that will be caused as a result of Amendment 1. Furthermore, single family homes are regularly getting sold at higher prices, renovated or reconstructed thus allowing our Beaches taxable value to continue to increase.

That being said, at the local level, it can be very difficult to control the taxing requirements at the larger state levels and within our larger Duval County. Furthermore, our taxable revenue is only a portion of the overall revenue that the City of Jacksonville Beach generates. So, there can be multiple instances that could create obstacles and hindrances that may negatively impact our quality of life out here at the Beaches.

Our local government needs to be ready to make tough decisions if and when unforeseen conditions impact our community. Additionally, our City Council and City Manager's office should be prepared and in front of any obstacles that may come at us from the other taxing agencies.

**2. What are Jacksonville Beaches' infrastructure needs when it come to sea level rise and resiliency and what would you propose to address these issues?**

Sea level rise and resiliency is a key consideration and concern of my campaign, especially due to the fact that I live in the Sanctuary Community here in Jacksonville Beach. My community had over 70 houses flood during Mathew in 2016 and then at least 6 flooded a second time in Irma in 2017.

Earlier this year, during the Neptune Beach Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Panel, which I assisted in putting together; I spoke with Garrett Avery, a resiliency expert out of Manhattan New York. Garrett stated that industry experts anticipate that sea levels to rise within the next 30 years. Although 6 inches or more may not fully generate that large of an impact in Jacksonville Beach at the ocean due to our dune system, it has a significant opportunity to negatively impact those who live on the intracoastal waterway.

Jacksonville Beach infrastructure needs, as it relates to resiliency, start with maintaining and properly reinforcing our dune system. After this, the City needs to pay special attention to the back of house of our community, which are homes adjacent to or near the intracoastal waterway. Our city should consider to continue to grow and expand our overall stormwater management system for larger storm events .

Lastly, it is my opinion that our City should re-evaluate how we currently handle stormwater on new residential home building. Currently, when new single family homes are developed, and/or major renovations are constructed, the City requires gutters on all projects. These gutters are then connected to plastic pipes which are directed to the roadway and back of curb. This places all stormwater runoff from a roof into the street and directly into the City drainage system.

My concern with this current practice is as follows. Instead of stormwater being treated and handled on individual residential homes, the water is immediately drained into the City system placing more burden on the City, which in turn impacts the lower lying communities during heavier rain events.

It is my recommendation that these gutters should connect to individual smaller swales on the sides of homes, or into a perforated pipe that is underground, and located within a smaller granular basin. In each of these options, during most storm events, the majority of run-off from the roof would percolate directly into the ground on one's own property, and not infiltrate the city system. This would help to reduce the burden on the lower lying areas and other easily flooded areas in our city.

Lastly, maintenance is of utmost critical concern and all stormwater should be regularly checked, cleaned and properly maintained within the City.

### 3. Do you agree with the current parking solution? Why or why not?

In my opinion, our City has not been overly successful with the parking solutions in the downtown core. Simply put, Downtown Jacksonville Beach has not become the family friendly, mixed-use, multi-generational area that our City has envisioned since the vision plan was developed in 2007.

There are many arguments and discussions as to why Downtown Jacksonville Beach has not succeeded as envisioned, but this question is about parking. Please reach out to me to discuss Downtown Jacksonville Beach Further if you have any additional questions at [joeknowsjaxbeach@gmail.com](mailto:joeknowsjaxbeach@gmail.com) or via my web-page at [www.voteloretta.com](http://www.voteloretta.com).

Two necessary aspects into making Downtown Jacksonville Beach both relate to parking.

1. Parking Garages
2. Centrally Located Metered Parking

**Parking Garages:** The City of Jacksonville Beach has an exorbitant amount of surface parking lot, either public or private sector parking. Looking at an aerial, it appears that almost 33% of Downtown Jacksonville Beach is surface parking lot. Surface parking lots are a significant economic deterrent to the desired smart growth for our community, and these also can become a significant burden on our police. Surface lots allow for loitering of not so great people while they mull out-side their car looking to create problems.

A good portion of this parking is on government controlled lands. It is my strong recommendation that in order to continue positive and smart growth of our downtown area, we need to construct a parking garage and/or multiple ones. This will then allow areas where surface parking exist opportunities for re-development to include the mixture of uses that our City covets so much.

How does this get accomplished? There are two ways.

Option 1, is that the City constructs, maintains and operates the parking garage on their own, then sells and/or leases other lands to developers for new uses that create the downtown establishments our residents are looking for.

Option 2 is that the City places an RFQ out for a Public/Private Partnership in which the City will either sell and/or place a long term lease to a developer for them to develop portions of City lands specific for development patterns desired by the City, along with equivalent parking to that which was lost from the surface lot. This option has proven to be successful throughout many City's nationwide.

**Metered Parking:** An advantage of metered parking is that technology has grown so well where there can be a meter box or two for a larger parking lot, where each parking space is striped and numbered. This then allows for the City to know who exactly is parking in our lots, and for how long. Furthermore, we can gather additional data such as license plates which can proved for additional police protection.

Metered parking will also go a longer way to put additional police presence back on our streets versus rolling through out non-metered parking lots. Currently, one police officer must work overtime to go back and forth between our municipal lots on weekend nights. It would be a better use of our City's budget to pay our police officers overtime for more specific value than monitoring our parking lots.

**4. Please explain what personal and/or professional community service experience has prepared you to serve as an elected official for the citizens of Jacksonville Beach?**

After moving to Jacksonville in 2001, I purchase my first house in the north end of the “Hill” in November of 2002. Within a year of moving into the community I became a part of the Non-Profit Neighborhood Associated, Pablo Renewal in Duval East, Inc. (PRIDE). Later, I also got involved with the Rhoda L. Martin Cultural Heritage Center. In each of these non-profits, I had great learning experiences from all facets of people with different religion, race and economic backgrounds. I assisted with numerous non-profit events and later was the PRIDE president for a few years in the later 2000’s.

In 2006, I was appointed by our City Council to the City of Jacksonville Beach Board of Adjustments (BOA). I served on this board for a 10-year period and was the chairperson for the board at least 2 times. The BOA handles variance requests for the City. During my time, I easily reviewed more than 1,200 different properties that came before the board. Sitting on this board gave me great understanding of the difficulties and hardships the average homeowner goes through to make simple modifications to their home such as building a pool. Furthermore, it helped me to understand how portions of our land development code are inconsistent with many existing residential properties here at the beaches.

In 2012 – 2014, I assisted the Beaches Habitat Neighborhoods Committee. During this time, the neighborhoods committee created development opportunities for more than 100 affordable homes in Atlantic Beach, FL. Professionally, I was the project manager for the OceanGate Residential Community in Atlantic Beach.

Working with Beaches Habitat and the PRIDE neighborhood, all helped to me fully understand the greater good in all that we do and help me to maintain myself as a humble person.

In February of 2015, I was appointed to the City of Jacksonville Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) by Mayor Alvin Brown. In September of 2018, I was appointed to my third term on the DDRB by Mayor Lenny Curry. I was the Chairperson for the DDRB from July of 2017 through August of 2018. The DDRB is the design review and approval board for all projects that are located in the three Downtown Jacksonville Community Redevelopment Areas. Projects that have been approved during my time frame include ones such as “The District”, Baptist South-Bank Expansion, Lofts of Lavilla and many others.

While on the DDRB, I work hard and strive to have great collaboration amongst all parties to make sure approved projects are the best for the City of Jacksonville, while also being economically feasible for these developments to get built. Lastly, my time sitting on the DDRB has provided me direct relationships and contacts with many of the local and national design individuals, developers, City of Jacksonville Council persons, and local land-use attorneys.

I have been a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), North Florida Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) since 2014. ULI is a large network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land-use experts throughout the USA and world. The Urban Land Institute provides leadership in the responsible use of land, promotes healthy and green living, and strives to create sustainable thriving communities.

ULI Technical Assistance Panels brings local, statewide and national experts in the real estate, planning and development fields together to collaborate on complex land use and/or specific site planning issues. I have acted as Chairperson for the ULI TAP program since August of 2016. Over the past 4 years, we have completed numerous TAPS including ones performed by Neptune Beach, Nassau County, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, COJ Downtown Investment Authority, the Episcopal Cathedral of Jacksonville, Jacksonville University and the City of Tallahassee, FL.

## **5. What differentiates you from your opponent?**

I am a 17-year resident of Jacksonville Beach. I have been a home owner for 16 years this November. I currently own two-homes, one in central Jacksonville Beach and one in Southern Jacksonville Beach. I served on a local board for the city more than a 10-year period.

Professionally, I am a land planner and landscape architect. I work on land development projects from as small as 5,000 square feet to 1,000 plus acres. Locally, I have worked on numerous projects at the Beach, including Paradise Key, Jax. Refrigeration Office Building and others. I have a very strong understanding of the City of Jacksonville Beach Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan. I truly understand land-use and zoning, along with strong site design. Furthermore, I have very good relationships with many of City of Jacksonville Beach employees, within the Planning and Public Works Departments. I also have a very strong understanding of engineering, stormwater and infrastructure, all that which are of utmost importance here at the beaches.

I manage and run the local Jacksonville office of Genesis. Genesis is a 100-person full service design firm that includes civil engineering, landscape architecture and planning services with three prime offices in Jacksonville, Tampa and Tallahassee. We also have additional Construction Engineering and Inspection Staff for roadway projects in additional Cities throughout the state. I have been employed with Genesis for over 17 years. Local Revenues have ranged during low times through peak times of 750K in revenue to 3+ million. In 2017, I managed projects totaling more than 1.25 million in overall revenue and on pace in 2018 to match and exceed this number.

Collaboration is an integral part of my profession. On a daily basis, I work on public and private sector projects. On a public sector project, I need to meet the needs and goals of the local municipalities, while creating unique and successful projects. Furthermore, we have to work with key stakeholders and the surrounding neighborhoods to make sure that all parties are taken into consideration. I have managed and coordinated multiple design charrettes to gain consensus and collaboration with local communities and/or stakeholders.

On the private sector, I work on development projects where I need to meet the goal and financial requirements for my clients, while also working with the governmental municipalities to meet the local requirements for each project type. Lastly, when projects require rezoning, I must present before boards such as a Planning Commission or City Councils to gain approval on these projects. In certain situations, these projects will require local stakeholder / community meetings to explain the projects and gain local support.

Typically, when I get involved new boards or organizations, professionally or non-profit, it is not uncommon for me to get placed into a position of leadership within a short amount of time.