

## Neptune Beach Candidates

### Written Questions

*What is your long-term and short-term visions for Neptune Beach?*

Neptune Beach has a broad spectrum of residential options, and a thriving and important commercial component. Some of the short-term issues that need to be addressed are aging infrastructure, drainage, and transportation. It is critical that we address these issues to ensure that any long-term vision is attainable. Issues which, while often out of sight, contribute enormously to the quality of life in our community.

Long-term, I think Neptune Beach should maintain its overall residential character while encouraging businesses to become established and thrive. Businesses are a very important part of the tax base for our community, and we should welcome entrepreneurs and people with a dream of owning their own business.

Our codes need to be updated to reflect changing realities for residents who wish to make improvements in their properties. This applies to both single-family and multi-family properties. The code should continue to account for the differences in the residential neighborhoods in Neptune Beach, but residents in all zoning districts have expressed frustration to me about challenges they have faced in making improvements to their properties. The changes will take time, and need to involve extensive community input so that our code meets residents' needs while preserving the uniqueness of Neptune Beach.

I fully support the 35-foot height cap in Neptune Beach.

I will work to make it easier for people west of Third Street to have access to the ocean and the Town Center, including better sidewalks and bike lanes, additional bicycle parking at beach access points, and safe crossings of major streets such as Penman and Third. Florida Boulevard west of Penman is a prime example of an area where such a plan would be particularly welcomed by residents, and bring the Neptune Beach portion of the East Coast Greenway more in line with that national project.

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

I've been involved some important community projects including working as part of the leadership team that successfully preserved the St. Johns River Ferry. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Beaches Division of the Jax Chamber, and have chaired the division's public policy committee for the past three years. In that role, we have looked at issues relevant to the business community and how they affect residents. We have worked with local governments to advocate for some of those businesses where appropriate.

On a personal level, I have for several years maintained a community-based website to provide information to residents largely concerning the workings of the local governments of all three beach communities. I've attended city council and city commission meetings for several years, and through that experience have developed a deep understanding of the issues important to residents. I approach issues without a pre-conceived idea or a point of view. Every story has multiple sides, and it is important that all voices are heard.

My business experience has given me insight into the budgeting process. I have developed and maintained extensive departmental budgets, managed employees, negotiated with vendors and created strategic plans both individually and as part of a team.

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*What solution(s) can you suggest regarding the parking challenges at the Beaches Town Center that would be fair to the residents of Neptune Beach since their tax dollars already pay to maintain the public rights-of-way?*

I think the current mobility plan that is in development by the City of Neptune Beach will be a viable solution to at least some of our parking issues, though there are still a lot of questions that need to be answered, including resident parking. The biggest challenge appears to be turnover of parking spaces, and the parking kiosk system has the potential to create that turnover, along with generating revenue for the city.

We will never be able to build enough parking spaces to assure that everyone who wants to park near Town Center will be able to find a space close to their destination. Town Center merchants should continue to be encouraged to direct their employees to the designated employee parking lots. And making the city more walkable or bikeable will also help that issue.

The program that provides “Beach Buggy” service to Town Center should be extended west of Penman. Currently, the residents who could most easily walk or bike safely to Town Center have the best access to alternatives, while those west of Penman, who may be the least able to walk or bike that distance safely, have little recourse but to drive and try to find parking.

I am in agreement with the proposal to allow Neptune Beach residents to register for a resident parking permit that will allow them to park in certain areas for a reduced rate. Some amount of free parking for residents would be my preference. We also need to be very mindful of the parking creep into nearby residential neighborhoods that is sure to occur when the program is implemented. Again, these are some of the many questions that need to be answered, and it will be incumbent on the parking professional that will be hired by the city to bring ideas to address them to the job.

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*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 Neptune Beach residents?*

The parking fees mentioned above will help offset some of that revenue loss. As a lifelong fiscal conservative, I am opposed to ad valorem tax increases. An exception might be a special assessment for some specific infrastructure or other necessary project with a specific sunset date.

A government has never taxed its way to prosperity, and Neptune Beach is no exception. The City Council’s role in the budgetary process is one of oversight, so I would review all budgets and meet with the City Staff to ask for justifications about spending. I would also carefully review all projects, particularly those that do not address critical issues, to be sure that the

taxpayer's money is being spent wisely and to the benefit of the entire community. It will be important to prioritize projects to assure that essential services such as public safety and infrastructure are addressed and not left by the wayside.

The city should also continue to pursue grants for some projects. Those can include infrastructure projects such as the state grant that was awarded recently for drainage, as well as for parks and other quality-of-life projects.

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*Please describe the difference between a mixed-use development and a planned unit development and whether you favor one over the other and why?*

While both include a mix of uses including residential, commercial, entertainment and others, a PUD includes a regulatory component that allows for development that meets overall community standards for density and land use that may not necessarily meet existing zoning codes. PUDs are generally developed as a single project, while a mixed-use development may be more piecemeal and include multiple developers over time. The PUD is essentially an overlay district, which does not necessarily appear on a city's zoning map, but is created at the time of the application.

Both promote the kind of walkable, bicycle-friendly communities that are desirable in urban environments and are often preferred by a variety of demographic categories. Each type of development has its advantages and its drawbacks, and a preference for one over the other would need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

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*In your opinion, what actions should the city take to mitigate sea level rise and storm water runoff?*

As I have explained previously, bringing our drainage up to par will help ease the storm water runoff issues. Mitigation of sea level rise is a daunting task for a city the size of Neptune Beach, but we can all individually do our part to work towards a sustainable community and environment.

We should also continue to work with state and federal officials to be sure that our beaches and dunes are healthy. Those are our first line of defense against storm surge, and their preservation is vital should appreciable sea level rise occur.

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*Do you support moving city hall to another location? Why or why not?*

I have long said that the current location of City Hall is not the highest and best use for the valuable piece of property on which it is located. A more central location with adequate parking would be preferable.

That said, I would not support a plan that would move City Hall in a way that costs the taxpayers money. The plan should at the very least be revenue-neutral, and revenue-positive would be the best scenario. We do not need to move City Hall and the public safety building for the sake of moving them.

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*Do you support changing the five way stop into a roundabout? Why or why not? If you support it, where will Neptune Beach's portion of the cost come from?*

The plans for a roundabout at the five-way intersection are in their very preliminary stages. I would support a plan that helps ease traffic congestion in that area, but I have not seen any alternatives other than the roundabout. I know roundabouts work in many places, but I have heard from many residents along Forest Avenue, Florida Boulevard and Penman Road who are concerned that the traffic would be worse, at least at certain times of the day. A constant flow of traffic on Florida Boulevard fed by a roundabout could have a detrimental effect on the ability of residents who live off Florida Boulevard to turn onto the street. A great deal more study needs to be done before I could fully support the conversion of the intersection into a roundabout, and alternatives should be presented.

If such a plan comes to fruition, the city should look for creative ways, such as bond issues, grants or other such instruments to defray the city's portion of

the cost. The reconfiguration of that intersection will be a major infrastructure project, and all avenues for funding should be explored.