

Beaches Watch 2019 Duval Candidate Questions

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1. Interlocal Agreement:

- a. What is your opinion of the interlocal agreements between Jacksonville and the three beaches municipalities?

I've checked in with elected officials in the beaches communities about their feelings on the interlocal agreements, while there is concern that they may be dated or certain aspects may be unfair, there is wide spread concern that if they were to be revisited that a new agreement could be less favorable. In 2014 the City of Jacksonville's Task Force on Consolidation concluded that education about the agreements was the main problem and recommended mandatory education of City of Jacksonville employees.

- b. Are there any changes to the agreements you would suggest?

I find it concerning that one beach city has a better deal on tipping fees than the other two. Fairness to all of our beaches cities is important.

2. Mayport Village:

- a. What is your vision for the future of Mayport Village?

I've lived across the river from the Village of Mayport on Heckscher Drive for over 20 years. As the former Vice President of the Friends of the St. Johns River Ferry, I'm convinced a redeveloped Mayport is imperative for the long term sustainability of the Ferry. Mayport has always been a restaurant destination. We need to build on that proven strategy. We need to redevelop the docks and include them in a Riverwalk that connects restaurants, a boutique hotel and ultimately traveling boat exhibits.

- b. What is your plan for bringing your vision to reality?

A Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) for the Village that also includes enough of the western side of Mayport Road south of Wonderwood that will produce enough tax increment to be significant was proposed in 2015. I served on the Technical Advisory Committee to that effort. We need to re-boot the CRA.

- c. Are you willing to vote for additional funding for dock construction and/or development costs at the Village of Mayport?

Yes!

- 3. Penman Road:** Penman Road is a heavily utilized roadway by all the beaches communities and has a myriad of problems from traffic flow to pedestrian and bicycle safety. What is your plan to ensure that adequate planning and resources are dedicated to Penman Road?

Penman Road is an important north – south corridor that keeps traffic out of residential neighborhoods. It also important to insure pedestrian safety and provide for bike lanes on Penman Road. I use it often to visit my daughter and her husband, and since they have a baby due in May I expect to use it even more. I have previously served on the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan Advisory Committee, which recommends projects for

funding. Penman Road has \$6.41 million allocated for 2019-20. The work of the NFTPO will be one of my major priorities.

4. **Dredging the St. Johns River:** Both the St. Johns Riverkeeper and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have stated that dredging the St. Johns River will increase storm surge and flooding at the beaches and Jacksonville without a mitigation plan in place. What mitigation plan, if any, would you support to protect the beaches communities and Jacksonville?

The impact of dredging should be included in our resiliency planning. A Phase II Storm Surge Study was not performed by the ACOE as part of their preparation for the dredge as it was in other port communities such as Charleston. We need this study to truly anticipate the impact of channel deepening. It would be irresponsible to deepen the channel without plans and funding for mitigation in place.

5. **Resiliency:**
 - a. How would you support the beaches communities in their efforts to address resiliency and sea level rise?

The City of Jacksonville and the three beaches communities can not develop their resiliency plans in a vacuum. Each government's plan effects the others, particularly in managing stormwater. Developing an actionable resiliency plan focused on flood mitigation will allow us to compete for federal funds to prepare our community for the sea level rise that is occurring and anticipated. As a grant professional who procures this funding for cities and counties in Florida I know how important it is to have the information needed to compete for these federal funds.

- b. Would you support City of Jacksonville continued funding of beach renourishment and, as a result of a disaster, City of Jacksonville funding of dune restoration?

Yes.

6. **Communication:** What, if anything, would you do to improve the City of Jacksonville's communication and relationship with the beaches municipalities?

Beaches residents elect six members of the Jacksonville City Council – District 13 and the five At-Large Council members. I think convening those members along with the Mayor of Jacksonville and elected officials of our beach communities for regular conversations about the needs of the beaches would be of great benefit to everyone involved.

7. **Beach Visitors:** Spring and Summer holidays, especially July 4th, bring a great number of people to the Beaches, straining the resources of all three communities. What suggestions do you have for Jacksonville to assist the communities in shouldering that burden?

Our first responder resources need to be available to our beach communities during the spring and summer. The City of Jacksonville should share the burden of enhanced security for Memorial Day and 4th of July weekends.

8. **July 4th Fireworks:** Will you support continued funding assistance of \$25,000. By the City of Jacksonville for the July 4th fireworks at Jacksonville Beach

Yes. As a native of Jacksonville, fireworks at the beaches are an important tradition that need to continue with assistance from the City of Jacksonville.

9. **Other issues:** What other specific issues that affect the beach communities top your priority list?

I've lived on Heckscher Drive, east of the Intracoastal Waterway, for over 20 years – so I regard myself as a beach resident too. Both my daughters have chosen to make the beaches their home, and my older daughter and her husband are expecting a baby in May. I have spent the last 10 years working as a volunteer and a professional to help insure the future of the St. Johns River Ferry. I've served as Vice President of Friends of the Ferry and as a Ferry Ambassador. I wrote the grants that yielded \$11 million in funding that some credit with saving the ferry. Keeping the A1A connection along the coast of North Florida is vital for my neighborhood and Mayport. But it's vital for the all of our beach communities too. I didn't really appreciate how many people driving down from the northeast for the winter detour off I-95 in Nassau County to begin their drive down the coast on A1A. If the ferry was ever closed, those drivers would not leave I-95 until Butler Blvd and would likely skip all of our beach communities. The economic impact of this would be tragic. I will take up the mantle of leadership on the ferry that has been borne by Councilmen Bill Guliford and John Crescimbeni on the Council, as they retire this year.