



2020 Atlantic Beach COMMISSION Candidate Written Questions

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Qualifications and Motivation: What qualifications in terms of education, experience, and prior community service do you bring to your candidacy for public office? Please explain what motivates you to run for office at this time?

I graduated from Episcopal High School in 1980 and went to the University of Alabama Birmingham for my undergraduate degree. I attended University of Alabama School of Medicine where I received my MD. I attended residency in Birmingham 3 years and served as Chief Resident in Family Medicine my last year of residency. I moved home to Jacksonville and have been in private practice with Baptist Primary Care for 26 years.

During these years I have taken care of thousands of people from all walks of life. I think this lifelong experience as a family physician is invaluable as I am an expert at listening to people and their concerns and taking action on their behalf to help them achieve their best life. I have always been involved in my children's lives and here locally. I have volunteered numerous hours at Atlantic Beach Elementary. I have served as Student Advisory Chairman and volunteered my time on the FBE Board making decisions to benefit all of the children of Atlantic Beach Elementary School. I have also been involved in Habitat for Humanity, building homes. I have started and been a part of a local bible study for the past 20 years in Atlantic Beach. I have always served others. My children are older now and I am more available than ever before, so I decided to run for Atlantic Beach, seat 3 because I love my hometown.

Priorities: What is your number 1 priority to address during your tenure on the City Commission. Why is this your number one priority. Please be specific.

I want restore the quiet, residential quality of life to Atlantic Beach and its neighborhoods. I have witnessed Atlantic Beach evolve over the past few years to a much busier town now with safety, parking, and sanitation issues all decreasing the quality of life for its citizens. I will listen to the residents and vote on their behalf. I have made my living caring for others and fighting for their best interests. Unfortunately, there are many like me who feel they have not been heard by our current commission. That is why I am stepping up to serve all

of Atlantic Beach residents. To be crystal clear, it is a quality of life issue I am most concerned about.

Budget: In the event of a budget shortfall, would you consider a millage increase to maintain levels of service? If not, what specific items in the budget would you recommend adjusting? What specific strategies would you suggest to raise additional funds? Please be specific.

The Charter clearly expects the commission to set City policies. Day to day operations are the job of the City Manager. That being said, I would expect the City Manager (or Deputy City Manager because we have both?) to offer the Commissions thoughtful options on what to implement or table excess and be conservative in spending. During this current crisis, I would not consider raising the mileage rate. Knowing that our home values have increased 7% and our property tax revenue is up close to \$500,000, I would consider decreasing the mileage rate to give Atlantic Beach Residents a little help after Covid and all we have been through financially this year. Ideally, the financial environment would be managed effectively so there was no budget shortfall and the city live within its means. That being said, there are a lot of extra things we could not spend money on from past March until next year. I would start with looking at the current budget and trim any excess not needed for essential business and try to build our reserve back up for the next emergency. This is how I run my family finances and it makes sense to me. Do not spend when you are in a crisis.

Charter Amendment: The proposed Atlantic Beach Charter Amendment will extend the Mayor's term of office from two to four years, reduces the number of allowable consecutive terms for the Mayor from four to two terms, and limits any Mayor holding office as of November 2022, who has served two consecutive terms, to one additional consecutive four-year term. What is your position on the proposed Charter amendment? Please be specific.

I will vote NO on the proposed Charter Amendment. Ultimately, it's the Atlantic Beach citizens' decision. This allows them to pick the majority of the commission every two years. If they don't like the direction the commission is going, they get to vote for it every two years. If a mayor is doing a good job and has the support of the citizens they will be reelected or possibly, not challenged. This is why I decided to enter the race. I want to bring balance to the current commission and represent those voices that are not currently being listened to.

In-house Attorney: Would you support hiring an in-house city attorney? Why or why not?

I would look into contractual options that will allow you to pay the attorney you need when you need them, for the work they do on a case by case basis. For example, I sometimes need the advice of a specialist in my profession. I would not want to hire a Neurologist for a heart issue.

Land Development Regulations: Describe specifically any changes to the Atlantic Beach Land Development Regulations you would support. What would you aim to accomplish by these changes?

This is the topic I have heard most complaints on in meeting new voters and campaigning. I understand the City employed a consultant to re-write the land development codes that are now being implemented. I have heard from developers and builder residents alike that it is very difficult building in AB. I would reach out to that group and ask for suggestions on what would improve the relationship and make it more amicable for both sides to work together for the citizens. I believe the City of Atlantic Beach has moved the control away from residents building and put the burden of the failures on the residents. I would like to see the permeability ratio go back to 50/50 and swimming pools return to 100% permeability. I realize we are far from that, but that is the direction I would vote for.

I do not believe in storm water mitigation by having residents handle the flooding problem by putting swales in their yards is the responsibility of the residents. There are many examples of government overreach in my opinion. We need to all get the same answer from the City!

Most of those voting for the current direction of the Commission are in newer homes where they do not face these challenges that older home owners do. The citizens deserve more control on what they want to do on their properties.

Parking: Are the present parking arrangements in the Town Center and beach accesses adequate for residents and visitors? What changes (if any) do you favor?

Paid Parking at Town Center has not worked properly since its installation. I intend to get to the bottom of it and hope to find a palatable solution for residents, visitors and business owners.

Beach access parking is a major problem citywide for visitors and residents of Atlantic Beach. Currently, many non-residents are coming to Atlantic Beach for its free parking because the other Duval beach towns charge for parking. I have outlined my plan on my website Docwatersofab.com. Discount costs for financially needy beachgoers and paid parking for those nonresidents of Atlantic Beach. Before any of this moves one step forward, an honest, accurate count of current beach parking in AB is necessary to establish what is there and keep beach renourishment funding. I believe we exceed what is needed for this currently. Our beach accesses have become overcrowded in certain areas. I would like to see the Commission acknowledge the problem and address it. There are many sensible options.

Parks: What changes or improvements would you like to see made to Atlantic Beach parks?

It appears that maintenance of current park facilities and improved security could be better supported. I have heard that maintaining the depths of the reservoirs in AB could help with storm water runoff. I am in favor of creating reservoirs in parks if it will benefit the enjoyment and storm water runoff, too. I would like to leave trees and grass alone and maintained. Lighting in some parks would be a nice addition. I would like to hear recommendations from the experts.

Public Safety: What are the most important crime & public safety issues in Atlantic Beach and what should be done to address them and fund them? Please be specific

This is a very important issue lately. Because of the growth of both the city of Jacksonville and the city of Atlantic Beach, we are seeing more crimes on our streets. The COAB adopted the Saferwatch App before Covid and it has not worked properly since March for me and my neighbors. Many inquiries have been made. The app itself stated "SaferWatch Alerts are based on certain types of activities taking place within the city and at the discretion of the City as to when SaferWatch Alerts are sent out". I have found another app Spotcrime that has an alarming number of complaints that are not reported on SaferWatch app. This is concerning.

I would like to see the current AB Police supported in enforcing the current rules. I 100% support our police. I will support them as a city commissioner and help them do their job. Public Safety is of the most importance for all of Atlantic Beach. I will be happy to give numerous examples if needed.

Resilience: What are the Atlantic Beach infrastructure needs when it comes to sea level rise and resiliency and what would you support to address these issues? It is my understanding that the City has a well thought out plan in working with the sea rise issue. The City infrastructure has had a plan for maintenance needs and hopefully can be fully funded. Though sea level rise is an important issue for the future, our budget shortfalls now take priority so any financial resources we have now should be focused on addressing that shortfall at this time.

Campaign Pledge: Will you make a pledge to carry out a campaign based on issues and facts and renounce the use of name-calling and inuendo? What will you do if such literature (for instance by mass mailings) is distributed?

I have and will run a clean campaign without involving my opponent in any of these negative ways. I would hope we all would do the same.

Before ever announcing to run for Commissioner seat 3 of AB, I called my patient/ friend of 20 plus years who is also my political opponent to let her know I was running against her. It was the right thing to do. We discussed running our campaigns on issues and facts and that is exactly what I have done. As far as negative mass mailings being distributed, I would not support that. However, it goes beyond mass mailings.

The Beaches Watch Forum has always been a non- partisan non-profit group that citizens have typically trusted to determine who they are going to vote for and that is why I am here today. Some "forums", as well as some political social media pages, are setup with a guise as "neutral" when they are obviously one-sided. Their sole purpose is to propagate criticism for some candidates and support for others and I believe citizens need to be aware of these antics. I hope this will end and we can run on issues we will fight for and let the best person win.

Other issues: Are there any other issues you would like to address if elected? Please explain.

It has been said that I will be “too busy to do my job as a physician and won’t have the time to represent the citizens of AB”. I have never done anything less than 100%. Ask my friends and family. It is true I am a busy physician with a hugely successful practice that I have built over the past 26 years.

I chose to run for Seat 3 because I believe my opponent, if elected, will be more of the same “moving the ball forward” as she recently stated. She has no issues with the current commission, and I do. We will vote alike in a few ways and very different in most. I believe our current commission needs a little balance.

I want a vote that counts to speak up for those who need to be heard. I have not been involved in politics before that should not be used against me. I have work ethic like no other. I have supported my three daughters and wife to allow her to do be involved and volunteer for our family. Now my children are grown and I control my schedule so I am willing to step up.