

Beaches Watch

2021 At-Large Group 3 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 believe they work well as-is, providing the three beaches municipalities and Baldwin the autonomy they need and the support from the City of Jacksonville they've earned.
- b. Are there any changes to the agreements you would suggest or support? I was on the most recent City of Jacksonville Charter Revision Commission and reviewed the agreements in detail. I suggested no changes then. However, if the leadership of any of the beaches communities want to discuss changes to the agreement or the Charter, I feel that, along with the D13 Council representative, the At-Large Council members should be ready to discuss those changes as well.

2. Mayport Village:

- a. What is your vision for the future of Mayport Village? I treasure the history and heritage of Mayport Village and would work to both preserve and expand it. It is an inseparable part of our First Coast heritage. It has the potential to be a vibrant part of our community as a commercial fishing area as well as with tourism, retail and residential areas.
- b. What is your plan for bringing your vision to reality? I know there is a group of committed residents, businesses and leaders that are already engaged and I would work to see how I could support their efforts to revitalize this important area. Other leaders, including Chris Hoffman, Director of the Beaches Museum and Mayor of Jacksonville Beach, have committed their careers to preserving beaches history and I would rely on them as a resource as well.
- c. Are you willing to support additional funding for dock construction and/or development costs at the Village of Mayport? Yes, if it makes fiscal sense for the City, the Village and taxpayers.

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 proper resources are dedicated to improve Penman Road? I would work with Councilman Rory Diamond, also a supporter of mine, to ensure we address some of the remaining safety and traffic flow problems along Penman. I know this has been a major beaches issue for years and that Penman Road is one of the few projects at the beach to benefit from the Local Option Gas Tax. It is important to see this project through completion and improve this traffic corridor.

4. St. Johns River:

- a. 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 and Jacksonville? The mitigation plan needs to be what the Army Corp of Engineers recommends, and it will be. This has been an issue the City has considered for several years. I support – and have always supported – the responsible deepening of the port to attract post-Panamax shipping and more logistics and manufacturing jobs to Jacksonville. Every neighborhood, including the three beach communities will benefit from this. And perhaps when

continued growth occurs down Hecksher Drive, the Mayport Ferry will be self-sufficient and no longer in need of taxpayer subsidies.

- b. What, if anything, would you do to protect the health of the St. Johns River? I served on the City's Environmental Protection Board for 8 years, including the final year as Chair. The river needs to continue to be our top priority and we must continue to encourage smart growth, tributary clean-ups and river accessibility.

5. **Resiliency:**

- a. How would you support the beaches communities in their efforts to address resiliency and sea level rise? Yes, 100%. I am on record supporting the City's resiliency study and subsequent creation of a resiliency office several years ago and support the Administration's hire of a Chief Resiliency Officer last year.
- 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, if it makes fiscal sense for the City, the beaches and the taxpayers.

6. **Communication:** What, if anything, would you do to improve the City of Jacksonville's communication and relationship with the beaches municipalities? I have a strong relationship with Councilman Rory Diamond and all three Beaches Mayors. My boys went to school at Jacksonville Beach Elementary and my wife's office is in Atlantic Beach. My election alone would improve the communication and relationship with the beaches municipalities.

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? The City of Jacksonville should consider all support as required, particularly law enforcement support. I have the endorsements of Congressman Rutherford, Sheriff Williams and the Fraternal Order of Police in this race.

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.

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

Three specific issues: Public Safety, Jobs, Strategic Growth & Development.

Public Safety - A recent JSO study found that we are a few hundred officers short of the number necessary to provide safer communities across Jacksonville. The Beaches police departments suffer similar officer shortfalls ... and the ability of JSPO to augment Beaches police departments is affected as well. This gap will widen as our population swells if we do not focus on it now. We need to hire more police, not defund JSO.

Jobs - We are rapidly approaching 1 million people. We have had great success attracting financial firms downtown. We need to leverage that success and attract manufacturing and logistics businesses as well, with middle class jobs, to keep our economy strong.

Strategic Growth – We have incredible natural resources in the river, ocean, and available space for growth. We also have a strong geographical advantages at the north end of the state, intersection of 95 and 10, etc. We need to work closely with developers to ensure that we grow smartly – improve downtown, repurpose more dilapidated areas in other neighborhoods, improve neglected infrastructure in our northwest side.

If elected, I will work to ensure that, amidst this growth, Jacksonville emerges as the top destination in the Southeast for families and business. If done strategically, this growth will benefit the beaches communities as well as all of Northeast Florida.