

8-8-14

**2014 Beaches Watch
Jacksonville Beach Candidate Questions**

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When answering the questions, please provide specifics as well as supporting data and facts wherever possible.

- 1) District Issues:
 - a. In your opinion, what are the two most important issues for your district that you would address as a city councilor and how would you propose they be addressed?
- 2) Crime/Public Safety:
 - a. In your opinion, what are the most important crime/public safety issues in Jacksonville Beach and what should be done to address them? Please be specific.
 - b. Are there other options besides hiring more police officers you would support to improve public safety in the downtown area?
 - c. What specific concerns do you have regarding public safety outside the downtown area?
- 3) Alcohol ordinance:
 - a. What is your opinion of the alcohol ordinance requiring any business that sells alcohol to obtain a permit to sell alcohol after midnight?
 - b. If elected, would you vote to repeal or modify this ordinance? If so, please be specific about any changes you would support.
- 4) Parking:
 - a. What is your opinion on paid parking in the downtown business district? Please be specific.
 - b. What changes would you like to see made to improve the parking situation in the downtown area?
- 5) Central Business District Vision:
 - a. What changes would you propose to accomplish the community's vision of a safe, walkable and family-friendly environment in the Central Business District?
 - b. What kinds of businesses and developments you would like to see in the Central Business District? What, if anything, would you recommend be done to encourage those businesses to come to Jacksonville Beach? Please be specific.
 - c. What is your opinion of encouraging the Central Business District to become a hospitality zone as proposed by the City's consultant?
- 6) Sign Ordinance:
 - a. What is your opinion of the city's current sign ordinance? Please be specific and explain any changes you would like to see made to the sign ordinance.

- b. Do you support the proposed sign ordinance change that would allow digital signs to change every 8 seconds? Please explain your answer.
- 7) Height Limit:
- a. Do you believe more highrise buildings that exceed the 35 foot height limit should be built in Jacksonville Beach? Yes or No.
 - b. Please explain your answer to (a).
 - c. If elected, would you take any actions to change the height limit that was approved by 76% of the voters in 2004? If so, what would you change?
- 8) Communication:
- a. What would you propose be done to improve the city's communication with citizens?
 - b. What would you do to promote communication with your constituents?
 - c. Are you in favor of making city council meetings available online? Please explain.
 - d. What is your opinion of the public council briefings? Please explain.
 - e. Would you be in favor of adding a "City Council member discussion" agenda item for each Council meeting to encourage open public discussion among the council members on topics/issues not on the agenda?
- 9) Public facilities: Do you have any concerns about the city's infrastructure, public facilities or essential services? If so, what do you propose be done to address these concerns?
- 10) Events: Of the various Jacksonville Beach events, which ones would you support keeping and which ones would you support cutting, and why?
- 11) Are there any other issues you would like to address if elected? Please explain.

Watch Group 4

1. District issues

a. I will answer this in two parts (CBD.) The citizens in my district are pleased with the Gladding Jackson Vision plan and Streetscape improvements but want to see our CBD truly become a Hospitality Center. Over and over I heard we don't need more bars. They would like to see outdoor seating for restaurants, rooftop dining, ice cream shops and low key kids festivals (Halloween, Christmas, Fishing Radio, Easter egg hunts and National Night Out). Multiple compliments about the decorated Life Guard stands during the Christmas season last year. The kids and adults loved it and especially the absence of the bar crowd or visible security made it extra enjoyable. They recommended exploring the internet for additional ideas. I will do this but hopefully our workshops will result in additional ideas as well. Secondly, west of Penman Road the citizens are pleased with the ongoing infrastructure improvements. Except for main roads they do not see the need for additional sidewalks. A concern for additional police protection/safety west of Penman Road was basically a non issue. East of Penman they encourage police and the volunteer police visibility. Bikers with open alcohol are especially prevalent during holiday and festival weekends.

b. Bicycles & Workability: The citizens both east and west of 3rd Street want to keep traffic from changing the character of our beach city. As I walked my neighborhood I found that walking and bicycling from the Intracoastal to the ocean is a priority. I was amazed how many people I saw and visited with walking and riding bikes. It should be noted that bicycling and walking results in less vehicular traffic and should be encouraged on the roads as well as the neighborhood streets. Numerous citizens mentioned the need for additional bicycle racks throughout the city east of 3rd Street and particularly along 1st Street. Bicycle lanes and control of speed limits is a safety issue. As a City Council representative for district 3 bicycling and workability will be high on my priority list.

2} Crime/Public Safety

a. **Address crime/public safety in CBD.** There are 40 gangs consisting of 800 members in Jacksonville. The Jacksonville Sherriff's Office alerts the Beaches police department when they are aware the gang members are coming to the beach. Most arrest involves Jacksonville residence and often alcohol and drug related. **How has this been addressed?** We hired 2 CAPE officers in 2006, authorized 2 additional CAPE officers in 2008 budget , a Corporal and the current City Council has authorized 4 additional CAPE

officers for the CBD for a total of 9. This should provide the manpower needed along with support from sister cities during peak weekends such as the 4th of July and festivals.

b. Options other than police to support safety in the CBD. Visitors and citizens during busy weekends attempt to cross A1A (3rd Street) at multiple locations in the CBD. I had extensive discussions with past leaders of our community and without exception we were told at workshops and other meetings with DOT that you cannot have a cross walk without a red light due to safety issues. I will never reject additional attempts to pursue what we consider safety issues but reiterate additional crosswalks would require DOT approval and additional red lights. Also see Alcohol for my answer to this question.

c. Concerns outside of CBD. Over the 4th of July there was a Hugh party between 16th and 17th Avenue North and 1st street. The police responded and broke up the crowd quickly. July 27th my neighbor saw a man attempting to break into his car. He called the police and they were on the scene in about 2 minutes and caught and arrested the potential theft. The average response time for an emergency is less than 3 minutes and non-emergency just over 4 minutes which is outstanding. In order to truly become a walkable and bike riding community we need to ensure speed limits in our neighborhoods are honored. Neighborhood police visibility was discussed during recent workshops and implemented. Police on bicycles, vehicle patrol by police officers together with our volunteer police patrol encourages vehicles to respect posted speed limit in our neighborhoods, public safety for our citizens. The volunteer police patrol targets neighborhoods as the result of complaints and I reiterate the three working in unison has proved to be quite effective. Traffic patterns are also monitored and congestion is also monitored along our busy streets as well as our neighborhoods. Most of the increase along A1A for example is not due to the increase in local traffic but the growth in Ponte Vedra and Nocatee. A city like Lake City with 22,000 residences has a police force of approximately 22 compare with our 65. . It must be remembered that we are also in a metropolitan area with over a million people with a beach. Comparing inland cities with our beach city is like comparing apples and oranges. In my opinion our police are doing an outstanding job. Neighborhood watch groups are beneficial and effective.

3. Alcohol Ordinance

a. **Permits after midnight.** I would not like to harm business for the Outback, Bonefish, Carabba's Italian Grill and well managed restaurants. These establishments do not remove seating and turn into a bar after 12 a.m. During our walk I observed restaurants with outdoor seating with food service during my daytime walk. When I returned that night all of the tables had been removed and the outdoors had been turned into a bar. **They turned their restaurant into a bar. This should not be allowed. Either you are a restaurant that serves food or a bar not both.**

b. **Would I modify this ordinance if elected?** To repeal the serving of alcohol for all between 12 midnight and 2:00 a.m. due to the few would be unfair to the law abiding businesses. I understand our police don't hesitate to enforce our current ordinance and suspend the permits of violators 30-90 days. A second violation can lead to suspension up to 365 days. The special magistrate can also issue a fine up to \$500. The key to me is 51% food consumption. We need to get the alcohol beverage control to audit violators. **If this can't be controlled then I am in favor of changing the ordinance and no longer enable restaurants to serve alcohol after 12 midnight.** Otherwise we will never become a hospitality zone if we allow restaurants to become bars after 12 midnight.

4) Parking

a. **Paid parking in CBD.** \$5.00 for paid parking is a nominal fee (The citizens of Jacksonville Beach do not pay for parking with proper identification). Hired Management is in place for parking and security is controlled by uniformed police officers. Both do an outstanding job and provide information and directions for our citizens and visitors. We currently have 500 paid parking spots and 1100 additional city spaces provided for our citizens and visitors. During the bus tour we were provided with the new lot planned for 2nd Avenue North with over 90 parking spaces. The plan includes storage and electrical outlets for 9 mobile units and landscape. I like the initial plan presented during the tour.

a. **I would have a combination of paid parking with multiple hours depending on duration and maximum of 2 hour parking in designated business zones.** Although we have had multiple workshops on parking I believe we need to take another look at this issue. To be specific I am in favor of paid parking but need to evaluate the cost of meters and marking cars for 2 hour parking as evident in other beach communities and cities. The cost may not justify meters or paying for 2 hour control. When we looked at this in the past I do recall that meters are very

expensive and exposure to salt could result in excessive cost to maintain? Simply something I would like to look at.

- b. The Parking Ordinance for the City of Jacksonville Beach is specific, clear and fair. There will always be justified exceptions but having served on the Board of Adjustment residential and CBD parking was two of the issues that were on our agenda nearly every month. The board rarely made exceptions for parking variances and in my opinion we have become far too lenient with respect to exceptions.

5) Central Business District Vision

- a. For any city to succeed you need a sound foundation. Streetscape and incorporation of the Gladding Jackson Vision into CRA by ordinance in 2008 reinforced our commitment to improve the Quality of Life in the CBD. For Jacksonville Beach to become a walkable and family friendly city it is imperative that SeaWalk, Latham Plaza, public restrooms, parks and community facilities are kept clean and well maintained. The framework is in place to work with our citizens and businesses towards making Jacksonville Beach a Hospitality Center for all age groups. The CDA established the goal to improve the Quality of Life in 1979 (35 years ago) in accordance with Florida Statutes and by ordinance. The Hospitality Center Vision will become a reality but like anything worthwhile will require numerous additional workshops and strong Leadership.
- b. For example, it required numerous workshops before the Gladding Jackson Vision became a reality. I can see the current properties in our CBD drawing Class "A" businesses as our hospitality center becomes a reality. I see our most exciting years in front of us with outdoor seating for restaurants, rooftop dining, ice cream shops and activities for children and adults. The shops on our boardwalk/oceanfront SeaWalk are currently occupied by class "C" or "D" businesses. As a Vice President of a major corporation it was important to locate in desirable class "A" buildings which were invariably in walkable friendly locations with shops and eating facilities. As we change our image there is no reason our CBD shouldn't be user friendly for our beach citizens for walking eating and enjoyment. We have hired a position to encourage these changes. This person needs the support of our City Manager, Mayor and City Council. The Surfer (Bar) is known nationally with one location currently located in Hawaii. Establishments like this would not be looking at Jacksonville Beach if they did not see future positive growth in our CBD. The problem: in Hawaii they have a full kitchen with roof top eating. If they will not revise their plans for a restaurant that meets the 51% food/alcohol ordinance and

create additional parking then their request should be declined. Others nationally known businesses will follow that meet our hospitality goal. One more very important issue involving parking. The owners and developers of Surfer (Bar) have additional property they own on site but want to retain this property for an office park. As a Realtor I recognize that this is valuable land and the reluctance to utilize this property for the Surfer (Bar). This is a decision they must make. Can't have it both ways. They have additional parking. How badly do they want the Surfer (bar)?

- c. Encouraging the CBD to become a hospitality zone as proposed by the City's Consultant is an unfair question in my opinion. The proposal by Gadding Jackson did not end up anything like the original presentation. It encouraged discussion and anytime you hire a consultant **the prime purpose is to initiate discussion and after workshops positive change.** On a corporate level we hired a number of consulting firms over the years and if handled properly will create positive discussion. **The consultant does not dictate change. Change comes about after input by our citizens and businesses.** Finally, to my knowledge the questionnaire has not been released. I would hope that no one visualized anything in the questionnaire as anything more than a discussion tool. I see nothing but an exciting future for the next phase of our vision – a hospitality zone.

6.) Sign Ordinance

- a. Canopy sign means a sign that contains all the text and/or logo symbols within a single enclosed cabinet and may or may not be illuminated. Banners: I support the idea of attractive banners for special events not to exceed two special events in any one year (St Pat's Day). Sign size per square foot and percentage of renovations etc.
- b. Fletcher High School electrical board does a good job providing updated information and appears to be 8 seconds in duration which apparently legal for public schools in Neptune Beach. Without additional input with regard to safety I have no idea whether 8 seconds, 15 seconds or 24 hours is the appropriate time for board changes. I strongly recommend workshops with professional input with respect to historical figures on safety as well as input from business and our citizens prior to making any changes in our current ordinance. Will the signs create a Las Vegas image, should the signs be limited with respect to size and location and visibility? Will signs influence our quality of life? I don't have sufficient information to arrive at a personal position.

7) Height Limit

- a. Highrise Buildings? NO.

- b. In talking with our citizen's one said "I don't want any more New York sky scrapers." Based on my conversations with our citizens they are not in favor in any changes in the current law including the CBD and the citizens should prevail.
- c. I have already answered question c.

8) Communication

- a. As you know from my resume I have been in leadership positions and servant hood positions my entire life. As you know as founder and leader of the Watch Group the key to success and achievement is being a good listener, open communication, which leads to group acceptance and ultimately implementation. I am sure you will agree that you will rarely have 100% acceptance and I don't see that as unhealthy. It only becomes unhealthy if at the end of the day an individual(s) won't accept the final decision. When I was on the Board of Adjustment there were several times when we had to open the entire chambers so many citizens showed up and we listened. Our first hearing with Gladding Jackson began in 2005 and it took three years of walking, workshops and communicating to arrive at a final plan. Quality of Life should always take precedence over time goals.
- b. As you know I have always answered all of my phone calls and emails and will always have an open door policy.
- c. I would be in favor of making meetings online. We do that at our church for shut-ins and those that cannot attend for one reason or another.
- d. When we held public briefings prior to City Council meetings maybe 3-5 attended other than *The Beaches Leader*. This is a difficult question as it is so difficult to arrive at a favorably time for the majority of the community. I wish I had an answer to this question but would be open to suggestions.

9) Public Facilities

- a. I am proud of our public facilities and essential services. The city has 1 and 5 year plans and the department heads do a great job forecasting their priorities and needs. I could not be more pleased with the employees and their communication skills. Unlike Jacksonville we know the age of our infrastructure and are scheduling timely changes of dated facilities including upgrades to our web and latest technology available.

10) Events:

We are down to four major events. When I was on City Council we cut events from six to four. This was a fair compromise. Festivals are not going to create business for our downtown businesses. To the contrary I met with the owners of bars, restaurants in the CBD and without exception was advised they suffer a loss of revenue during festivals. In addition alcohol once again becomes an issue for our police and hospital facilities. One of our leading citizens said it best. The opening of the beaches annual parade is heavily attended by our local citizens with 1000's of children. The citizens look forward to this event with support and enthusiasm. This is not true of festivals. The individual said "I hunker down the same as I would for a hurricane during festivals. We don't need any additional festival."

11) Other areas I would like to address. Pedestrian Safety crossing A1A (3rd Street)

DO MARKED CROSSWALKS PROVIDE BETTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY?

Marked Crosswalks as set forth in the Florida Uniform Traffic Control regulations (Chapter 316, F.S) and as promulgated by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

What is a crosswalk?

Crosswalks may be either "marked" or "unmarked". Chapter 13 defines a "crosswalk" as follows:

"(a) That part of a roadway at an intersection included within connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway."

"(b) Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface."

What causes crashes at marked crosswalks?

Research suggests that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security. Pedestrians often step off the curb expecting drivers of vehicles approaching the crosswalk to stop. However, drivers frequently fail to stop and cause vehicle/pedestrian crash. At all crosswalks, both marked and unmarked, *it is the pedestrian's responsibility to be cautious and alert before starting to cross the street.*

At crosswalks on multi-lane roadways, another factor in causing crashes involves the driver of a vehicle in the lane nearest the curb stopping for a pedestrian who is waiting to cross or who is already in the crosswalk. The driver of the second vehicle traveling in the lane next to the

stopped vehicle tries to pass the stopped vehicle and hits the pedestrian, even though it is illegal for drivers to pass a stopped vehicle at a crosswalk (Chapter 316.130(9)). Pedestrians should be very cautious when walking in a crosswalk, especially where there is limited visibility by vehicles stopped at the crosswalk.

Where are crosswalks normally marked?

- Approved school crossings
- Signalized and stop sign controlled intersections where there is significant pedestrian traffic or where one or more crossing locations are prohibited

In general it is not good policy to paint crosswalk markings at midblock locations where traffic is not controlled by stop signs or traffic signals. Marked crosswalks should only be used where necessary to direct pedestrians along the safest route.

After festivals and especially during the summer months it is not unusual for pedestrians to attempt to cross A1A (3rd Street) between Beach Boulevard and 4th Avenue North. There are no red lights between Beach Boulevard and 4th Street North nor any stop signs on A1A (3rd Street). There are turn lanes at 1st and A1A (3rd Street North) but simply not feasible to have a two red lights between two blocks of each other.

Has this issue been addressed by our police department?

Chapter 316 makes it clear that pedestrians should not cross A1A (3rd Street) which is a divided highway other than at a red light based on my interpretation. Police Chief Dooley is out of town today but I look forward to discussing this with Chief Dooley next week to make sure my interpretation is accurate. How many pedestrians have been involved in accidents attempting to cross A1A (3rd Street)? Is this considered a serious issue by our police department and if so has it been addressed?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Dooley', written in a cursive style.