

Beaches Watch
2015 Jacksonville Candidate Questions

Candidate Name: Tommy Hazouri

Campaign web site: _____

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1) Interlocal Agreement:

a) In your opinion, do you think the beaches are receiving their fair share of county services as stated in the interlocal agreement? If not, what would you propose be done to resolve any issues?

As a former Mayor of Jacksonville, and as a former State Legislator of 12 years, I've always respected and supported our inter-local agreement and our special relationship with the Beaches. I will listen to the Beaches Municipal leaders on any concerns, making certain we fulfill our responsibilities and provide county services in a fair and judicious manner. As an At-Large Councilman, I will work with Councilman Bill Gulliford on "all things" Beaches.

b) How would you resolve the disagreement between the City of Jacksonville and Neptune Beach over tipping fees?

I have learned of the disagreement between the City of Jacksonville and Neptune Beach on tipping fees. Again, if the City administration cannot resolve the concerns, I will work with the 19 member Council, and especially Councilman Gulliford, on addressing this matter.

2) Jacksonville Beach Fireworks: Would you vote for or against the City of Jacksonville contributing \$25,000 (half the cost) for July 4th Fireworks at Jacksonville Beach?

Yes, but I also believe a portion of this cost should go towards providing police officers to add to the safety of the event.

3) Human Rights Ordinance: Would you vote for or against including the categories of gender identity and gender expression with the other categories of persons protected by the law from discrimination?

I would vote for an inclusive Human Rights Ordinance.

4) Consolidation Task Force Recommendations: Which consolidation task force recommendations would you support implementing if elected?

I will work with Lori Boyer and the rest of the task force on challenges stemming from consolidated government structure and operation. I will carefully review all the recommendations along with the 19 member council and will make decisions based on the merits of the recommendations.

5) Police and Fire Pension: What is your opinion on the current proposal regarding police and fire pension? What, if anything, would you recommend be done differently?

The partisanship has to stop. That being said, I believe that the Mayor, the City Council and the Pension Fund, at last, are very close to resolving this issue. Funding is still being determined and there are three options at the moment: JEA/Mayoral proposal; a referendum or half penny sales tax with the current reduction in property taxes; and an outright property tax increase. I would first give the people an opportunity to vote on a sales tax increase.

6) Library: The Beaches Branch Library was threatened to be closed due to lack of funding for the library system. Do you support continued funding for the Beaches Branch Library? Please explain your answer.

Yes. We need to have consistent funding for our libraries, both for capital outlay and for operating. Throughout my career, I have been a huge proponent of our library system. I will never support closing the Beaches Branch Library.

7) St. Johns River:

a) Do you support the proposed dredging of the St. Johns River to 47 feet to accommodate the Panamax-ready ships? If so, how do you propose the dredging be funded?

b) Do you support the removal of the Rodman Dam?

I support dredging the St. Johns River from 40' to 47', but not at the expense of the health of the river. Dredging the river is important for the economic future of our city, but we must be cognizant of the negative effects on our river's health. Many of the options being evaluated, such as breaching/removing the Rodman reservoir, will alleviate the increase in salinity that could be caused by deepening the river, but may have its own environmental impact. Deeping the river will be a game changer for Jacksonville. I will work with the USCOE, the SJRWMD, and the FDEP to find the right project to mitigate for the impact and move forward with the deepening.

I believe viable funding sources must come from the following sources: the State and Federal Government; public-private partnership on the local level; and if possible, grants and bonds paid through revenue from the Port Authority. We need to look at all available resources.

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

It has always been my belief that we must work together to make the best decisions for all of Jacksonville. Our success relies on open communication with the Beaches Municipalities. I feel that I've demonstrated this during my years in public service.

9) Mayport:

a) What is your vision for the future of Mayport? What factors are essential for realizing your vision?

b) In your opinion, is future funding of the Ferry secure? What changes would you advocate?

I am very supportive of the proposal to create a Community Redevelopment Area at Mayport. It is one of many important projects that will benefit our city economically,

while improving our quality of life. This includes upgrading the ferry site and adding mixed use development on the waterfront. I supported funding of the ferry as a state legislator and feel that we must make sure there is continued funding as the ferry is an important means of transportation and also an important historical asset. Upgrades should be included in the FDOT budget annually as the ferry is a mode of transportation as well as a historical treasure.