



Beaches Activists Movement

2022 Candidate Questionnaire

Questions	Neptune Beach City Council Seat 4	
	Josh Messinger	Christine Burke
<p>1. Please tell us briefly why you are seeking this office and what life, professional, and volunteer experiences have prepared you for this role, including service on volunteer city boards.</p>	<p>I am seeking re-election because we have unfinished business and great opportunities ahead of us. For 3+ years we have gotten many significant projects to the finish line and many started. I am fully vested in this town (currently building a new home on the 200 block of Bowles St) and want to continue seeing our community improve while retaining the unique character and neighborly atmosphere we know and love so much.</p> <p>Volunteer Work: I believe that there is no substitute for a proven record of service. And long before I considered running for council, I was volunteering to protect and enhance our city for local organizations, such as the Friends of the Beaches Branch Library and the Ish Brandt Beautification Committee. I was also a significant contributor in the fight against the "Big Apartment Complex" at Kmart/500 Atlantic. I worked alongside Mary Frosio to see this fight to the end. Currently I am a member of a Satellite Rotary Club here at the beach.</p> <p>Professional: National Director of Sales for Value Based Care at Sharecare a Digital Healthcare Services company. I collaborate with our national sales team and am responsible for the success for MIPS Quality Reporting who aim is to decrease the cost of healthcare while increasing the quality of care.</p>	<p>I've been a Neptune Beach property owner for 18 years and a full-time resident for the past 13 years. I own two properties in Neptune Beach - both of which I updated and continue to maintain in the quality and character of Neptune Beach. After attending council meetings and hearing the resident's concerns, I decided to run for City Council Seat 4. After doing my research, I became very concerned about our spending on un-budgeted items and the state of our infrastructure</p> <p>=>Relevance to the role on City Council: As a resident and owner of two properties in Neptune Beach, I am invested in our small town. I love Neptune Beach, and I plan to be involved and work with the residents, City Council and other appropriate individuals to ensure we keep Neptune Beach from being overdeveloped.</p> <p>I have a Master's Degree in Business and have been a consultant and senior executive in the technology industry for over 25 years. My technology career has shaped my leadership skills in achieving quality results. I'm unwavering in learning and speaking the truth and in hearing diverse opinions and thoughts, which will result in positive outcomes. I am recognized as a transparent and collaborative leader.</p> <p>=>Relevance to the role on City Council: We must prioritize spending to repair our old and failing infrastructure. I have spent my entire career managing large budgets. Managing these large budgets has meant identifying high-priority areas of spend and eliminating items that are wanted but less critical. I have a solid personal brand and am known for building consensus and having a consistent approach in all my interactions.</p> <p>I serve as Vice President on the board, manage the business operations, and act as an advisor for a non-profit, 'A Place for Peanut.' We rescue, rehabilitate and rehome equines from kill pens. Our rescue mini-horses provide equine education and therapy to hospitalized children and veterans.</p>

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		=> Relevance to the role on City Council: I work with our Grant Writer to identify avenues for funding the operation. I manage monthly board calls to discuss and prioritize the needs of the non-profit and align people to areas of need.
<p>2. What would you say are the 3 most important issues facing Neptune Beach in the next 5 years? And what are your priority proposals for the one you consider most important?</p>	<p>1) Infrastructure needs and a revenue streams to fund said needs. (Stormwater, Water and Sewer) along with our water treatment facilities. My thoughts on this are further laid out in question 3. 2) Increased pedestrian crossings and bike trails 3) Safeguarding our quality of life.</p>	<p>Prioritization of Spend We need to reel in unnecessary spending and focus on our infrastructure to ensure quality water and reduce flooding. Work with appropriate individuals to identify and prioritize spending. If spending does not tie back to fixing a critical issue in our small town, I would recommend moving it off the budget. Instead of looking at a 1-year budget cycle, I would recommend looking at a 5, 10 and 20 year horizon. This will dictate our areas of focus.</p> <p>Funding Infrastructure Repairs We need to find other avenues of funding aside from taxing our residents. This includes obtaining grant money from the State and Federal Governments. I will work with the residents and other individuals to come up with creative funding mechanisms (sale of Neptune Beach logo items, easier paid parking for non-residents outside of what we have today, to name a few), and work with our sister cities to identify opportunities for competitive joint bids on high priority projects affecting more than Neptune Beach.</p> <p>Safety of Neptune Beach Residents I plan to work with and support our police department and first responders to ensure the safety and health of our residents. Our residents have safety concerns - there are limited crosswalks across Third Street, speeding is a concern in neighborhoods on the other side of Third Street, motorized vehicles other than cars are not following the rules of the road, ie. stopping at stop signs. I would work with FDOT and other appropriate departments and individuals to identify areas of top concern and advocate for the residents. fix the problems, they will need to happen in Phases. Phase 1: Fix the Bones with a patchwork funding approach, Wastewater Grants, Arbor Dollars Match, St. Johns Water Management District Grant, and others. To obtain grants, we must prove we have our own \$ to finish the project. It will take critical thinking and creative minds to identify funding options like low-interest financing, easier paid parking options for non-residents outside of what we have today, and Neptune Beach logo item sales to go to the city. State and</p>

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3. Neptune Beach faces significant challenges with outdated infrastructure to address drainage and stormwater mitigation. What options have you identified for funding needed system updates	<p>Infrastructure in NB needs to be continually addressed. It's no secret that our water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure are under tremendous stress due to age and more frequent major storm events. With the help of federal, state, and local agencies, we have recently made significant progress, But the work is far from finished. How can we pay for this? I would say, in large part the answer lies in keeping more of our tax dollars in NB by re-negotiating the Interlocal Agreement between the city of NB and the city of Jacksonville. Another answer lies in going after Federal, State (FDEP, FDOT) and Local (St Johns River Water Management District, Duval County) grants to fund these large capital projects. To do this takes long-term strategic and disciplined planning and engineering. Since my time on council, I have championed alongside my colleagues, to make infrastructure a priority. This council and staff are not "kicking the can down the road" and have been taking steps for the last few years to position the city to do just that.</p>	<p>I do my research, am a strong voice, and would be a strong candidate for Neptune Beach Infrastructure issues at the State and Federal levels. To obtain grant money, we must have strong advocates from the Neptune Beach government to go to Tallahassee and represent us on these critical issues. We have a \$100M problem long term. Grant money is available, and our current government is just now making this a priority due to a Consent Decree from the State on our Waste Water Treatment Facility to resolve high-priority issues. To fix the problems, they will need to happen in Phases. Phase 1: Fix the Bones with a patchwork funding approach, Wastewater Grants, Arbor Dollars Match, St. Johns Water Management District Grant, and others. To obtain grants, we must prove we have our own \$ to finish the project. It will take critical thinking and creative minds to identify funding options like low-interest financing, easier paid parking options for non-residents outside of what we have today, and Neptune Beach logo item sales to go to the city. State and Federal grant requests should have started years ago. Approvals don't typically happen the first time.</p>
4. As you make decisions regarding new development, how will you balance maintaining our city's character and livability with the pressure to continue growing?	<p>Every development project considered in Neptune Beach should always answer the question, "Does this make Neptune Beach a better place to live?" As I did in the fight against the "Big Apartment Complex" at Kmart, I will continue to safeguard against development that is intrusive and insensitive to our neighborhoods and our residents' quality of life. Whether it's commercial or residential development, I am in favor of "smart development's that is thoughtful and considerate to the community and to the desires of my constituents. After the fight against the Kmart development, it was clear that we needed to close the loopholes that almost allowed a big apartment to be built at Kmart. To do this, it was necessary to re-write the city's Comprehensive Plan and land-use codes. We completed this intensive project a few months ago. I am proud to say that the loophole is closed, and both the Comp Plan and land-use codes expressly prohibit any residential units to be built on C1, C2, and C3 commercial properties. The fights are over, and the war is won. As originally zoned, these properties will serve to communities' needs for goods and services.</p>	<p>We are a 2.5 square mile town with very little space to grow. The commercial corridor along Atlantic Blvd should be maintained as our primary commercial district. If we add more density, we cause more issues with our infrastructure. If we develop along the 3rd street corridor, I would be a proponent of retail and office space with a walkability factor, however Infrastructure needs to be our primary concern.</p>
5. In today's divisive political atmosphere, many voters are looking for leaders who can	<p>Our town is a mix of all parties. Our council votes on local issues that affect all of us regardless of political affiliation. We often come together as a community to preserve and protect our town.</p>	<p>I am a consensus builder, and I am consistent. My track record in business and solid personal brand are proof points. I have committed volunteers on my campaign team that are Republicans</p>

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bridge the gap between the parties. Is that a goal for you? How would you do it?	Coincidentally, my core campaign team is comprised of 5 Republicans, 3 Democrats, 2 Independents which reflects the political mix of our town. As a proven leader, I believe I have already shown how I have bridged this gap. I will continue to reach “across the street” and be inclusive of all my neighbors when voting on any issue concerning NB.	and Democrats. I ask a lot of questions and come from a place of understanding. If a viewpoint or concern is expressed, I seek to understand and will ask the question why to find common ground.
6. As our public beaches and city center draw increasing numbers of people, the demand for parking keeps growing. How would you tackle this problem - balancing the rights and needs of city residents with those of the general public?	<p>The Neptune Beach Paid Parking Program was a proposal from many in NB and AB for almost a decade. When I came to office, one of my initiatives was to see this program come to fruition. Paid Parking has been a huge success for NB by generating \$100’s of thousands per year in revenue, after expenses. Like many, I am of the believe that there is “no free parking”. Someone must pay for the construction, signage, maintenance and landscaping, of each space. Prior to the implementation of paid parking, this burden was on the backs of the NB residents. I think it is only fair that visitors who don’t pay taxes in our town, but use our parking spaces, should shoulder some of the cost burden by paying to park. Paid parking is a creative way for the city to shift the burden to visitors. When this program was created we designated dedicated free space for NB residents. Since then we have expanded the free parking for NB residents.</p> <p>All residents of NB can park for free for 3 hours in any NB space as long as they register their license plate on the city’s website.</p>	Parking is an issue that needs creative solutions. Our paid parking brings in revenue for Neptune Beach, and there are other opportunities for paid parking outside of what we are doing today. I am a proponent of looking at how other cities are solving parking challenges. Updated parking applications help residents and non-residents find, reserve, and pay for parking through a mobile app. I might also look for opportunities to lease land from our sister cities - Jax Beach, Neptune Beach, and Mayport. One idea would be to increase and promote services like Beach Buggies and other shuttle providers to transport people to Town Center and the beach. More residents could also take advantage of these shuttle services.
7. Housing costs - both home ownership and rent - have skyrocketed in this area. What can local government do to address the problem of affordable housing?	Short term rentals (less than 28 days) are illegal in NB. There are many who are violating this law. This illegal activity is not only destroying the quality of life for residents nearby to these Airbnbs, but it is also exacerbating the problem with affordable housing. Nationally and locally there has been a surge in corporate investments into single family homes. These corporations are turning these homes into Airbnbs because it is more profitable than putting in long-term renters/tenants. As a result, the long-term rental market is being squeezed. When rental housing supply is low and demand is high, this drives up rent prices. Our council has a renewed commitment to enforce the laws on our books regarding short-term rentals/Airbnbs. We are in the early stages of reviewing 2 software solutions which use the latest in technology to track violators. One of these is the same technology that Jerry Holland’s tax collector office uses to uncover home exemption fraud.	This is a topic that requires collaboration with residents, city and county government, and other appropriate individuals to come up with a solution. I would encourage participation in programs that provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers. In addition, there are grants to help with home ownership and rent through the State. I would identify and encourage participation in these programs.

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<p>8. The Interlocal Agreement, first signed in 1982 and amended in 1996, specifies services provided by the City of Jacksonville to the Beach cities. Are there changes you think need to be made to this agreement? Please explain.</p>	<p>Per the Interlocal Agreement...and as it currently stands, 82 cents of every tax dollar NB residents pay goes to the City of Jacksonville, leaving NB with only 18 cents. In return the city of Jacksonville provides a host of services to include courts, jails, landfills, tax collector, rescue, libraries, animal control, and others. The population #'s and property values are vastly different today then 1982 & 1996 along with the strains placed on our infrastructure from those same populations and increased intensity of major storm events. I propose that the mayor and city staff, with council support, begin re-negotiating this agreement to be more favorable to NB. The timing is very favorable for such a negotiation because there is a mayoral race in the city of Jacksonville. The beaches vote is very important to these mayoral candidates. I believe we should unite with AB and JB and use our leverage to renegotiate this agreement for all cities. After all, we are one big beach community. The lines that separate us are only on a map. We can be stronger together.</p>	<p>Yes. When Neptune Beach entered the interlocal agreement, we had different leadership and concerns as a city. Facts and financial circumstances have changed over time. I believe there are opportunities to make changes to the Interlocal agreement, even if it is a few %, to help keep more revenue in Neptune Beach. To answer the question of what changes we should pursue requires a thoughtful dialog around the services we receive from Jacksonville that are "helpful", and services that are "necessary". I would chart out the pros and cons to make an informed decision. I would put my skills to work with critical thinking, reviewing, researching, and negotiating any changes to the Interlocal agreement working alongside the other Council members. We have had a few chances to renegotiate the Interlocal agreement and Neptune Beach has been unsuccessful. It will take a strong person with experience to help navigate these negotiations. I will bring these skills to the current City Council.</p>
<p>9. Is there anything else you would like to share with voters?</p>	<p>I believe my record of dedicated public service shows my commitment to our community, and to every one of my fellow neighbors. Re-elect me to continue working as your Councilor, so we can finish what we started. That is why I am asking for your vote in the November 8th election. As always I am happy to talk with you about your concerns. It's always a pleasure to meet new neighbors over a cup of coffee at Southern Grounds or when I am out walking Hazel my Australian Shepard . You can reach me via cell at 904-990-7495, e-mail at Josh@Josh4Neptune.com, or follow me at facebook.com/joshmessinger4neptune. Thank you for your vote!</p>	<p>I love our small town. I live on Walnut Street with my Fiance, John Gray, and three small rescue dogs - Pancho, Luna, and Travis. I am not a politician. I am a resident who wants to make a difference, and I believe I have the skills, aptitude, and demeanor to benefit City Council. I am consistent in my approach when addressing personal and business matters. Instead of reacting when challenges are presented, I research and find creative solutions to the problem. I am a Sales Executive and Consultant in the Technology industry managing multi-million dollar budgets. I am also a VP on the Board of a Non-Profit, where I manage the business aspect of the operation, working with grant writers and managing expenses on a limited budget. I possess essential skills to prioritize spending, raise funds, build relationships with our sister cities, State and Federal governments, current city government, residents and businesses to drive positive results. In addition to my business skills, I am proud of my personal brand. I lead with integrity, collaboration, and transparency our small-town government needs. The residents deserve to feel part of the process and the feedback from our community is they want people to represent them who will do what they say they are going to do.</p>