



Beaches Activists Movement 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

Questions	Atlantic Beach City Council Seat 5	
	Jessica Ring	Kevin Nottingham
<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>In the mid-1950s, my grandmother and grandfather settled in Old Atlantic Beach to raise their children. Fast forward three decades later, my parents brought me home to a quaint house in Royal Palms. Today, my husband and I have made the same choice to raise our children in this beautiful beach town. At the heart of my career choices has always been to serve the public and my community, first as a teacher, and now as an elected official. What better way to encompass both my passion for public servitude alongside the place myself, my family, and my children all call home?</p> <p>Since January, I have served as the Chair of the Mayor’s Council for Health and Well-Being. Through this committee, I have collaborated and planned each month’s agenda alongside Mayor Glasser. I have facilitated the monthly meetings on social cares and concerns of our community with guests from COJ and Jax Beaches, and the other council members. These topics include walkability and our city’s connectivity plan, senior (aging in place) and youth programs, Blue Zones, Mental Health, and vulnerable populations to name some. Through this committee, I have learned about the areas of concern of our citizens, what resources are available to us to combat them, and what areas there are for us to grow in. Aside from my volunteer work, experience as a public servant through teaching, I also hold a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and Government Leadership.</p>	<p>I am seeking this office for I want to give back to my community, get more involved and contribute to my home on a deeper level. I have come to love this community: the people, the diversity, the culture, and the location. I am a public elementary school teacher in the greater beaches’ community, and I have chosen to raise my family in this community. From volunteer-based tutoring and coaching adolescents to involvement in beach clean-ups, and other fundraisers, I have impacted the community and it has helped prepare me for this opportunity.</p>
<p>2. What would you say are the 3 most important issues facing Atlantic Beach in the next 5 years? And what are your priority proposals for the one you consider most important?</p>	<p>Vulnerable populations and affordable housing: When my husband and I first moved into Atlantic Beach as a young couple, we were able to purchase a home for under \$150,000 in the Salt Air district. On a teacher and firefighter budget, this was within our means and allowed us the luxury of short bike rides and walks to beach without going into debt. In the past five years, the average Atlantic Beach property value has gone up 12%, which is higher than the average increase for Jacksonville. The concerns of affordable housing and our vulnerable populations coupled with the rise of</p>	<p>Street safety - I would like to improve the maintenance of streets, lighting, markings, drainage, and overall street safety as the community grows. Allocating the infrastructure to incorporate the preservation of the environment as the community continues to grow.</p> <p>Parks improvement - To focus on maintenance and improvement of our parks and recreation from playgrounds, picnic areas, nature trails, waterways, public dog parks and more. The maintenance and</p>

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	<p>inflation and basic living expenses (food security and gas prices): for one) how will the average family purchase a home in Atlantic Beach; two) how will seniors continue to afford a property tax increase with millage rate and the referendum that just passed (aging in place is a concern); and three) we have longtime renters who are facing hikes in the rent because landlords are feeling the pressure of cost of living expenses and insurance increase across our state. My proposal begins with the commission staying in tuned to our citizens who will be affected the most in the next five years as not all our citizens are secure in the rise of cost of living. Next would be to tap into the resources we have through local and COJ programs to help provide some relief (BEAM, local food banks, collaboration with habitat for humanity, and senior programing). Lastly, the proposed annual budget has on the table a millage rollback/lower for citizens in Atlantic Beach (COJ is also proposing to do this rollback) and although I do not have a say in this year's budget, I would propose to look carefully at rolling back (or lowering) the millage rate for our citizens for the next five years.</p> <p>Stormwater management: Jacksonville Beaches are on a barrier island. With king tides, hurricanes and tropical storms, and newer and larger home construction, stormwater management is a critical issue that needed action yesterday. In my district, we have drainage and stagnate stormwater after every heavy rainfall.</p> <p>City budget and fiscal responsibility: City needs to look carefully at the capital projects and costs going out to ensure that the necessity projects (infrastructure and especially stormwater management) are being funded. How can grant writing be utilize in some of our city's capital projects?</p>	<p>beautification of the community brings a sense of peace and positivity.</p> <p>Emergency Preparedness - To continue and update the current plan - A East Coast community of Florida with extensive growth, needs to have adequate resources in place for emergency preparedness. Power, infrastructure, medical personnel - first responders, and public services are required in enhanced capacity to manage a disaster. Placing an emphasis on maintaining a sufficient financial reserve, educating the community of the resources, and training the required personnel are vital in community safety and security.</p>
<p>3. Stormwater management and sea level rise are of obvious concern for coastal communities like ours. If elected, what would you propose first to improve our community's ability to manage these threats?</p>	<p>Early on in my campaign, I reached out to our city manager and director of public works to ask about what they view as the greatest concerns for our city: stormwater management being listed on both their top priorities. Atlantic Beach is an island and although we have a stormwater and resiliency master plan, it is up to the commission to decide on what capital projects will be funded each year. With an outdated water/wastewater infrastructure, there's the necessity of updating the system in place. I believe COAB codes and ordinances for permeability ratio and even tree conservation (as tree roots are natural stormwater</p>	<p>Being a native Floridian, I recognize that coastal communities require more reserve to maintain, improve and preserve the coastal landscapes. The elements require more maintenance and dedication to keep up with the demands of coastal communities. I would assess a means to effectively manage the millage to adequately cover the financial demands of the community.</p>

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	absorbers), each can help play a role in stormwater management. I also want to note that pools should be considered 100% permeable.	
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?	The attraction of our town is its recreation, beaches, and natural beauty (especially our Live Oak tree canopy). There's no wonder why so many families and retirees flock here. As a child, I have fond and vivid memories riding my bicycle under the shady oaks, climbing their branches, and fishing in these marshes. I love that my children get to enjoy the same and take great pleasure imagining my grandchildren one day enjoying these pleasures. The vision of one day waking up and driving down the streets of Atlantic Beach to see more larger than the average homes and an eradicated tree canopy hurts my heart. Whereas I would like to welcome all those who wish to enjoy AB alongside my family, the city government cannot supersede state legislation of the property owner's rights. The issue of new development brings on a tight rope walk of preservation of Atlantic Beach (why we love our city) and property owner's rights. I believe our city is on the right track with mitigation and ordinances in place and I would like to continue to reinforce our city's commitment to conservation.	There must be a balance to preserve the character of the community as we continue to grow in population, residential and business, and in tourism. To structurally dedicate areas of land to not be built upon, particularly various coastlines and areas of land that are used for drainage. An environmental emphasis needs to be considered in the balance to give longevity to the community.
5. In today's divisive political atmosphere, many voters are looking for leaders who can bridge the gap between the parties. Is that a goal for you? How would you do it?	Atlantic Beach's issues are unique to our residents, and I would venture to say they are everyone's concern regardless of political party. Aging in place, vulnerable populations, environmental conservation, stormwater management, walkability and even youth and family programs are all matters everyone of us can get behind. This is the beauty of local municipalities and keeping our matters nonpartisan through and through. We will be voting on what and who we believe can represent the majority of people's cares and I believe this is best accomplished across party lines. Furthermore, our city's charter clearly states that all elected officials are to remain nonpartisan during the campaign and while in office. To go against this would be a violation of our charter to which our commission is elected by the people to uphold.	Yes, this is a goal for me to help close the gap. Daily, I integrate opposing parties and facilitate effective communication strategies to work together to achieve resolutions. I have experience with various demographics, ages and cultures - striving to always interact with an open-mind. I strive to listen to understand, rather than listen to respond so I feel I would place a positive impact on closing this division, particularly within our community.
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 -	Atlantic Beach residents have the blessed life of living a short walk, bike, or golf cart ride from the beach. Although we would love to claim it as our turf, the beach is a public place. COAB has done a commendable job ensuring that our AB residents are provided free three-hour parking, which is twice as much of an allotment than the other two beaches. With that said, I would like to see free parking for all AB residents at all times. Affordable paid parking to	A way to help manage the parking demand, find the balance of the residents - rights and the public needs, is to continue to improve and enhance the paid parking practices that have been initiated in existing general public parking locations. Continuing to be innovative in utilizing the current public parking to create a revenue for our community will allow us to better preserve the overall community aesthetics, hence enhancing the appeal for the general public. I feel

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balancing the rights and needs of city residents with those of the general public?	<p>the general public through Flow Bird generates revenue to our city that we can put towards the upkeep of the Beaches Amenities and beautification.</p> <p>In addition, it's also important to note that in order to receive funding from the Florida DEP and COJ for beach renourishment, AB must provide a certain number of spaces to the public. I would also like to see more golf cart and bike racks for our AB residents.</p>	<p>that the resident initiative of free time allocated to park provides a sense of ownership, pride and gratitude for residents of Atlantic Beach. These initiatives can place a positive impact on our community by creating revenue, employment, appeal, and preservation.</p>
7. Our neighborhoods comprise residents of different socio-economic levels, ethnic groups and political viewpoints. How will you address the varied needs of all of our residents including those facing food insecurity, securing affordable housing and accessing health care?	<p>One of the benefits of Chairing the Mayor’s Council has been the opportunity to learn about these subgroups as well as the resources and programs available to aid in combating food insecurity, affordable housing, and health care resources. It is going to take a relationship building between community leaders and the agencies working in the non-profit sector, alongside educating the public as to the resources we have at the beach, to assist our vulnerable populations. Between COJ and nonprofits at the beach, there are resources and programs that can be offered as relief to those citizens facing food insecurity, securing affordable housing, employment council, and access to health care: partnership with BEAM, Feeding Northeast Florida, Sulzbacher, Mission House, and Beaches Habitat for Humanity. Mission House offers legal assistance, medical care clinic, food, showers, employment council, and clothing. Sulzbacher offers mental health care, dental and other medical resources. The downtown facility houses men only and the villages offers all family member housing. Dig Local and Northeast Food Bank are fantastic resources and programs for COAB to develop a stronger relationship with and to consider educating the public on the resources available.</p>	<p>The diversity of our community makes us unique, resilient, and viable. Connecting the communities’ resources and collaborating to meet such basic human needs is an important factor in strengthening our community. In the plans of infrastructure and allotment of building zones, there should be a focus on the available resources of health care (emergency and preventative), food and affordable housing for the entire community. Currently, I feel this is an area that our community can strengthen its connections to improve these resources.</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>Yes.</p> <p>This agreement allows for the Jacksonville Beaches to receive resources and services from the City of Jacksonville, including courts, hospitals, libraries, and transportation. This agreement has been amended since its original establishment in 1982. As it stands, for every AB resident tax dollar, 12 cents stay in our city considering that we have our own trash and recycling pickup, police department, and public works to maintain, it may be time to revise our ILA with COJ.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Possibly, to consider the inflation and re-allocation of services within the community as we grow. Through my research on this agreement, I feel that the services provided by the City Of Jacksonville are necessary, but I am not aware of the specific permissions to allocate funds.</p>

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<p>9. Is there anything else you would like to share with voters?</p>	<p>Twenty years ago, at the age of sixteen, a friend and I wrote a grant to organize a summer camp for underprivileged children off Caravan Rd in Arlington. My friend was volunteering for a nonprofit who helped refugee families coming from war torn countries including the Middle East and Africa. Together we spent our summer writing the grant, planning, and then facilitating a beautiful summer camp experience for these children who you couldn't begin to imagine what they had endured before their families made their way to America.</p> <p>This was an inspirational experience for me. As with most nonprofit work, naively I started out believing I would be the one to impact their life. On the contrary, it was me that would be the most impacted by the love and heartache these children so graciously shared with me during those summers. I owe it to them why I chose to become a teacher and then went back to school to get a Masters in Public Administration and Government Leadership.</p> <p>A question I get (and it's usually the first) during my campaigning is: why are you running and what is your agenda? I'm hard pressed to pull up this memory and the children who first gave me the passion for community and public service. I am not a politician. I am a mother and I am a public educator who believes that it is through public service and sacrifice that we can make a difference in our community. I did this first as a teacher, then volunteering as Chair to the Mayor's Council, and now, I wish to continue this public service journey as City Commissioner; that is, if the people will have me.</p> <p>Election date is November 8th and is an At Large Election which means that all Atlantic Beach residents can cast a vote on any of the seats regardless of whether they live in that district. Although I live in district 1312, I would be representing all of Atlantic Beach citizens. As citizens are paying close attention to the Seat 1 race (the mayor), I implore voters to consider all of the races as this is a weak Mayoral Government structure. Each seat on the commission is one of five votes, so every seat is important and necessary to stay in tuned to (even if the seat is not within their district).</p>	<p>Thank you for your time and support. Together we can make our city flourish.</p>