



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 will work with the residents, City Council, County, State 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 consistent and quality results. I am honest, flexible in my thinking, transparent, collaborative and seek out diverse thoughts and opinions. It is the variety of ideas and approaches that produce the best outcomes.</p> <p>Relevance to the role on City Council: We must establish priorities and manage our spending to first repair, and then maintain our old and failing infrastructure. I've spent my entire career managing large budgets. Managing these budgets requires identifying high-priority areas of spending and postponing items that are wanted but less critical. I have a solid personal brand 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.</p>

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		<p>The mini-horses we rescue provide equine education and therapy to hospitalized children and veterans.</p> <p>Relevance to the role on City Council: I work with our Grant Writer to identify avenues and acquire funding for 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>
<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 prioritize spending, reel in unnecessary spending and focus on our infrastructure to ensure quality water, stop sewage backups and reduce flooding. If spending does not tie back to fixing a critical issue in our small town, I'd recommend removing it from the budget. Instead of looking at a 1-year budget cycle, I will help the city plan for a 5, 10, and 20 year horizon. This will dictate our areas of focus and properly prepare us for the future.</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 seek creative funding mechanisms and work with neighboring cities to identify opportunities for joint competitive bids on high priority projects.</p> <p>Safety of Neptune Beach Residents Our police, fire fighters, and all our first responders are literally Neptune Beach's lifeline. I want to learn what they need to ensure they are able to deliver the best service to our residents and visitors. Our residents have voiced some of their safety concerns - the limited number of crosswalks across Third Street, speeding in neighborhoods on the West side of Third Street, motorized vehicles other than cars that are not following the rules of the road, ie. stopping at stop signs. I will work with FDOT, experts, and other officials to identify and resolve areas of major concern for our residents.</p>
<p>3. Neptune Beach faces significant challenges with outdated infrastructure to</p>	<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</p>	<p>I do extensive research. I am skilled and prepared to have a powerful voice for Neptune Beach infrastructure issues at the State and Federal levels. Obtaining grant money requires strong,</p>

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address drainage and stormwater mitigation. What options have you identified for funding needed system updates	<p>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>persuasive advocates from the Neptune Beach government to go to Tallahassee and represent us on these critical issues. We have a long-term \$100M problem. Grant money is available, and our current government is only now making this a priority due to a Consent Decree from the State on our Wastewater Treatment Facility. This Consent Decree mandates that Neptune Beach resolve high-priority issues. We will need a phased approach to fix the problems. To obtain grants, we must prove we have funding to finish the project. It will take critical thinking and creative minds to identify funding options like low-interest financing, and easier paid parking options for non-residents beyond what we have today. State and Federal grant requests should have started years ago. Approvals don't typically happen the first time; as a tenacious, effective leader I'm the ideal choice for pursuing grant approvals.</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. Every action has consequences, good and bad. Before any decision is made for added development, all consequences must be considered with their associated risk and benefits. These can then be presented to residents for their consideration and input. Infrastructure must be our primary concern.</p>
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?	<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. 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</p>	<p>I am a consensus builder and I'm consistent. My track record in business and solid personal brand are proof points. My committed team of campaign volunteers reflect a mix of political parties while sharing similar values. I ask a lot of questions to improve my understanding and I'm flexible in my position; I don't 'dig in' as there is common ground to be discovered. My continuous goal is to identify that common ground and reach a consensus.</p>

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	reach “across the street” and be inclusive of all my neighbors when voting on any issue concerning NB.	
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>	<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 research how other cities are solving parking challenges. Updated parking software applications help residents and non-residents find, reserve, and pay for parking through a mobile app. There may be opportunities to lease land from our neighboring cities - Jax Beach, Atlantic Beach, and Mayport. I want to explore increasing services such as Beach Buggies and similar shuttle providers to transport people to Town Center and the beach. These would benefit residents and visitors alike. I’d also seek other ideas for parking solutions and alternatives from all sources.</p>
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?	<p>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.</p>	<p>We are a small town of 2.5 square miles. Affordable Housing is a topic that requires collaboration with residents, government, and experts to resolve. This is an issue that requires more research and further discussion before considering plausible mitigations. However, at a high level, I would look at a multi-pronged approach to solving the problem. Programs that provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers and grants to help with home ownership and rent are available.</p>
8. The Interlocal Agreement, first signed in 1982 and amended in 1996, specifies services provided by the City	<p>Yes. 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</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</p>

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<p>of Jacksonville to the Beach cities. Are there changes you think need to be made to this agreement? Please explain.</p>	<p>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>opportunities to make changes to the Interlocal agreement to 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 identify the pros and cons of the agreement and work with my fellow council members, and other resources, to negotiate any proposed changes. We've had a few chances to renegotiate the Interlocal agreement, yet Neptune Beach has been unsuccessful. It will take a formidable person with the experience and skills, which I possess, to successfully navigate these negotiations.</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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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'm not a politician. I am a resident who wants to make a positive difference and I believe I have the skills, aptitude, and demeanor to benefit Neptune Beach as a City Council member. I am consistent in my approach to both personal and business matters. I am proactive when faced with challenges, large and small, studying and seeking suggestions to achieve optimum results.</p> <p>I'm a Sales Executive and Consultant in the Technology industry managing multi-million dollar budgets. As VP on the Board of a Non-Profit organization, I manage the business aspect of the operation, working with grant writers and managing expenses on a limited budget. I possess the skills necessary to prioritize spending, raise funds, and build relationships with our neighbor cities, Federal, State, and local governments, residents and businesses to attain positive results.</p> <p>In addition to my business skills, I am proud of my personal brand of integrity, collaboration and transparency, which our small-town government requires. The residents deserve to feel part of the process. I've learned from our residents they want their council members to represent them and do what they say they are going to do all the time, and not just when they are seeking political gain.</p>