

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## QUESTIONS

1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?
2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?
3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?
4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?
5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?
6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.
7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?
8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.
9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?
10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.
11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?
12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?
13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?
14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?
15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?

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## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### JOHN MOSS

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I alone have a detailed understanding of the most significant economic engine in Tidewater – the Department of Defense. I offer the public a candidate with financial acumen, civic history of our community, active listening skills tuned to the priorities and concerns of the residents over special interests, and discerning judgment. I exercise my judgment independent of future election consequences. My forty years of professional experience is one of conducting analyses of large scale projects to include risk analyses and performance metrics. I possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and commitment to public required by job of council member.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Embedded with, in the question are two additional questions:

1. Should all the sources now going into the TIP fund continue to go into the TIP fund, and
2. Should the fund sources that go into the TIP fund continue to be allocated to the TIP fund at the status quo percentages.

I do not have a position on the above two questions. The above two questions are for us to answer as a community. For example, should we still allocate one hundred percent of the amusement tax to the TIP fund, when certainly Beach residents pay a significant portion of this tax?

I wonder when is it not appropriate to use unrestricted General Funds for tourism projects, for example, the VIBE district?

The funds that City Council decides to allocate to the TIP fund should be used for tourism related projects. The former does not translate into the TIP fund having priority access to the City's available credit. The City's ability to issue bonded debt and stay within the City's debt policy is a decision factor. What the TIP fund can pay cash for, in terms of capital construction, and sustained operations and maintenance cost for same, is acceptable.

I am more interested in the consensus of the community on the type, funding threshold, and objective of tourism initiatives that the larger public believes has merit. If those projects involve public debt, the public needs to consent to borrowed investment funding in a bond referendum.

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One feedback I have consistently heard from folks at the Oceanfront is that we should be more concerned with first cleaning up Atlantic Avenue (the front porch and door to the Resort) before building in the back yard. Council needs to make sure that all voices are being actively solicited and actively heard.

I am equally interested in more people following Bruce Smith's lead and building their initiatives totally with private money. If market demand is there then public subsidies should not be required to create competitive returns on capital.

### **3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

The Resort Area is not a traditional neighborhood; thus, the principles of community policing built around stable neighborhoods with a high percentage of neighborhood residents as a percentage of the total micro community population, are not directly transferable. The Resort Area is designed to attract overnight and just for the day, and just for the night visitors. I offer the foregoing only to impart that there is no single set of recommendations that will eliminate the unspecified public safety issues you referenced.

I am interested in the feedback of businesses at the Resort Area as to what are the police officers not doing that you think they should be doing? What do you see as the infrastructure improvements that we should make, that you judge would make a difference? What are businesses in the Resort Area not doing that they should start doing? There is no silver bullet. If there was it already would have been implemented. We as community are going to have to continue to evolve and refine our tactics and be willing to pilot ideas, knowing some might not work.

I recognize that some believe that a lot more lighting would help, I want our police officers to have a flexible spectrum of rules of engagement that they train to and that they professionally judge they need to achieve public policy objectives that City Council adopts. Our police officers and business operators in the Resort Area supported by the larger public is the partnership that can deliver the change we seek.

### **4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

I am not aware of any business or collection of businesses willing to donate their land to the City to create additional green space at the Resort Area. I have not heard the business community making the case to use the Dome site for green space versus intense development subsidized with public debt. The Dome site represents the best asset to provide a critical mass of green space at the Resort Area, if that is truly a priority. I would not be willing to

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exercise the power of eminent domain to create green space at the Resort Area.

The Dome site proposal, at its current level of maturity, is antithetical to more green space at the resort. It is possible that my operational definition of “green spaces” and that of the drafter of the question are not aligned.

I see my role to be an active listener and do a lot of homework on an issue before offering a vision on a subject for public engagement. On this question I possess an insufficient base of knowledge to offer a specific vision.

## **5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Of course, between now and Election Day the long-awaited Sea-Level Rise Study will be presented. While it should be a seminal work, it will be far from an all-encompassing piece of analysis. No study can achieve that standard.

Sea-level rise, coupled with soil subsidence, compounded with changing weather patterns, makes flooding the existential threat to the Virginia Beach we all know and love. We are just beginning to understand the financial and land use planning challenges will require of us to adapt to mitigate. It is important to remind everyone we will not be able to buy down all risk – guarantee no flooding. We will be required to accept risk, and all that risk will not be absorb by governments.

First, we have to very rapidly eliminate the current twelve-year backlog to re-establish and then sustain the drainage capacity and effectiveness of our drainage systems, of which there are 31 distributed over four watersheds.

Second, we have to re-allocate our available borrowing capacity disproportionately to be made available to fund flood mitigation projects.

Third, we need to take the soon to be delivered Sea-Level Rise study, along with modeling results, to develop an algorithm like VDOT applies to road funding to objectively determine funding priorities.

The storm-water management fee is not the right vehicle for funding flood mitigation projects. The full spectrum of trustee and unrestricted general revenue funds have to be seen as sources of funding. The public, in a future bond referendum, is ultimately going to have to decide how much of the flooding risk we as a community want to buy-down over what period of time.

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Fourth, we need to revise our standards for land development and construction on that land. Given that much of the Beach is developed that will not affect a small percentage of our land area. It will impact redevelopment, but that will occur over a longer period of time. For example, should future homes be built on crawl spaces to a height not based on the elevation of the land but some other standard?

Fifth, initiate with my elected colleagues into a community wide discussion, on how the flooding risk is going to be allocated to public sector and to the private sector and how that risk is going to be bought down. We are not going to be able to buy down risk to zero.

Flood mitigation must be our top infrastructure capital investment priority.

6. **If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

My votes in the past, in my judgment, have been on the merits and independent of any re-election consequences might result.

I will continue to judge the issues that come before City Council on the merits.

I curry no favor, I seek no favor, and I have no loyalties other than to my oath of office to serve all Beach residents to the best of my ability. I have been faithful to the former duty without qualification.

The adoption of the 2018-2019 Budget and my role in securing its adoption best speaks to the amplification request you attached to this question.

7. **What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

Due to my employment with the Department of Defense and income streams from companies in the energy development and energy providing business in excess of the Conflict of Interest limits, I have had to abstain in the past and will have to continue to abstain in the future from voting on this question, and includes public statements on the issue.

8. **Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

I doubt I have to convince you of my understanding of the City's budgeting process. I am the only City Council member who has created a fully executable, detailed alternative City budget in the history of the City of Virginia Beach at least three times.

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The City's debt policy has two principal factors that set a policy limit on debt issuance. That the City's debt servicing cost not exceed Ten Percent of its annual operating budget and that the City's issued debt not exceed \$3,000 per capita.

As the cost of issuing debt increases, as actions by the Federal Reserve drive up the ten-year and thirty-year Treasury notes influenced by the Federal Government's trillion-dollar annual budget deficits, the City is already bumping along at Nine Percent and very close to Ten Percent for a couple years thus, in the future, will be policy constrained on this dimension.

Virginia Beach's population is growing ever so very slowly; therefore, population growth is not going to add significantly to our ability to borrow independent of interest rates.

This is why the City's available debt capacity, within its adopted policy, is the most constrained and limiting asset and must be reserved disproportionately for flood mitigation projects.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

The type of conversation you suggest is likely to prove counter-productive. Why would I say that? Your suggested approach invites the development of the thinking that one's revenue generation importance rather the priority of one's public requirement is the basis for making local government fiscal policy and resource allocation decisions. This is not a path I would recommend.

From the importance factor your have raised, who is the most important economic element? It is clearly Beach residents as consumers. Beach residents at a minimum provide 70 percent (some would suggest an even bigger number) of all revenue collected and that comes to \$1.4 billion. True enough owners, investors, and employees of the tourism sector are also residents. I think you can see the point. The industry sector that pays the highest wages and provides the most discretionary income in our community is the Defense Department.

A more constructive approach when addressing Beach residents is to have a dialogue on all of the elements of the portfolio of our community's economy, the relative priority of each segment, and the obligation of taxpayers in meeting those priorities.

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I do not look at my kids and make decisions on their importance, as it is not even come to mind to think of my children in those terms. I make decisions of an economic nature based on an assessment of competing unfunded requirements relative to available resources, balancing the present against the future and candid discussions with my spouse, as well as often with the kids too.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

There is not a stronger believer in capitalism on City Council than I. Before I could responsibly answer this question, I would need to have the business stakeholders that would benefit from such incentives explain:

- Why when the cost of money has never been cheaper:
- Why when never has there been so much liquidity in capital markets looking for investment opportunities;
- Why when the corporate tax rates have never been more favorable;
- Why when expensing for tax purposes is most generous, and
- Why with the twenty-percent pass through has been granted to partnerships

Is it the case that incentives are even needed? Before one can fashion a response to a supposed problem, the problem must be first understood as to its definition and origin.

To proffer solutions to ill-defined problems, without significant collaboration with all stakeholders, especially those incurring the opportunity costs of an adopted policy when intervening in the free market, is unwise.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I am not predisposed to public/private partnerships.

Subsidies inherently drive the inefficient allocation of capital and can actually drive slower economic growth rates over the long run.

The government should not be in the business of providing non-level playing field subsidies that provide the receiving entity a competitive advantage over existing and future businesses not enjoying local government's favoritism.

When population growth rates are anemic and household income in relative terms is flat at best, granting direct tax rebates and indirect tax expenditures to one business or developer, for example, over another, you are just reallocating transactional revenues that are already occurring in the economy. The former just changes where dollars already in the economy are being spent.

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## **12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

We have spent way too much time and effort on branding, as if brand is independent from or in reverse, can create what a region is in the eyes of others.

I thought the move from Tidewater to Hampton Roads was mistake. I see the move by some to now, Coastal Virginia, to be misplaced energy. So, no, I am not in support of another rebranding effort. Displacement is often misunderstood and more often understated. The failed pier project proposal that I opposed from the beginning is one such example.

## **13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

The School Board is an independent elected constitutional body. I support the position as adopted by the School Board. The School Board has adopted a position of a Post Labor Day school start date; therefore, my position is to support a Post Labor Day school start date as well.

## **14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I would have to query the public to discern if they judge it is a taxpayer's responsibility to fund employee parking outside of the TIP fund. I am not so inclined, but then I am a representative of the public will, not the unilateral definition of it.

I am of the opinion that each development should be responsible for the construction and financing of their own parking. Bruce Smith is proposing to build luxury apartments at the Boardwalk on the Atlantic side of 27<sup>th</sup> and is building his own parking with no financial assistance from the City. This is the standard that all future development should meet.

An option is for the Resort Area to adopt a Special Service District and agree to tax themselves incrementally to finance the construction, operation, and maintenance of parking garages. Property owners who have met their parking requirements may be unlikely to join to subsidize those who have not.

## **15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

I would propose a new City Manager, hopefully in January, to bring forth an assessment of the current metrics they measure performance by, acknowledge shortfalls in performance and reason, and property owner's assessment of our performance and the spectrum of their reasoning. Actions start with understanding where you are starting from, what has not worked, what is working, and courses of actions that could be taken.



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## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### GARRY HUBBARD

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am a business man. commercial and residential construction contractor. since 1981

I understand budgets, contracts. I have negotiated contracts with federal, state, city and international

We need experience on city council. We can not take the time or money to hire interns. Who have no experience

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Tourism is very important. It makes up a large part of our city's economy. We must make sure of our future development.

each deal must stand on its own merit.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Safety must be a priority. We must look at lights for areas that have none. With the advent of solar powered leds. We can light up areas. I would like more input from the businesses at the ocean front. After all they are on the front lines every day.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Both business and green space can coexist. Green spaces are a draw for tourists and locals

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Sea level rise must be planned for as a business man we would look to the future 5 10 years down the road. As a city we must do the same. There are studies that have the rise from one to three feet. We must stop building close to the ocean we need a 200 to 500 ft boarder. We must look to the federal agency for funds and grants.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

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As an independent candidate I will represent all of Virginia beach. This is where experience comes in. As a business man I never asked for favors. In business we have brokered many contracts between different contractors. We have not received any donations from Bruce Smith or Bruce Thompson. Unlike others. There is always strings attached.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I would vote no to offshore drilling. My wife's family is from Baton Rouge and New Orleans. I have seen first hand the oil slicks and pollution. The Navy conducts war games off the coast. There would be no job or monetary gain. We must vote and oppose offshore drilling.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

Bond debt relates to the cities ability to pay back debt. Our credit rating. And the sale of the cities bond to fund our services. We must never borrow from existing funds to gain larger bond sales. This debt must be paid down. We must address our debt.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

As I have said each deal for any tourism must stand on its own. This is where experience comes in. This can not be taught this experience must be earned. We must look to enhance tourism not just spend money on any deal that does not have merit.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

Yes to incentives. We must support our small businesses. They create new jobs and increase our tax base.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

public private partnerships must be in the cities favor. We must expect a return on our investment. We must and can make better deals for our city. It is foolish to think new restaurants and retails stores will not take business from existing.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

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Virginia beach is for lovers. Or Welcome to the vibrant city of Virginia Beach  
A great place for fun in the sun.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I am against starting school before labor day

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

The studies that have shown parking lows and highs. We need more parking garages and open area parking. Each business must provide parking for their employees

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Maintenance must be kept up for safety of our tourist and businesses at the ocean front. We have many city employees that go on the roads of Virginia Beach every day. We should be proactive instead of reactive. There should be an app for our employees to report problems before they get worse and cost more to repair. Proactive instead of reactive will save time and money

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## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### DEE OLIVER

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am unique in that my family has been in the hospitality industry in Virginia Beach since I was a child. We owned one of the first hotels at the beach. I grew up in a military family and graduated from Virginia Wesleyan College (now University). I am a fourth-generation resident of Virginia Beach. I married John Oliver in 1984 and spent decades in the funeral business, going back to school for another degree. I am an author, the Vice Chair of the Virginia Beach Planning Commission, an Executive Committee Member of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce - Virginia Beach, Campaign Chair of Hospice House of South Hampton Roads and a Board member of the Virginia Beach Resource Home for the Homeless. I'm seeking office to help take Virginia Beach to the next level. We have so much potential to excel in this city, and I want to help make the future positive for everyone.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

We have to remember the reason the TIP was created, and that was to fund tourism projects through a portion of tourism revenues and not compete with general fund revenues for education, public safety and other core city services. We must be careful not to make it a habit to dip into special funds, because it eventually makes the existence of the fund suspect. I think the Dome and Pier initiatives would be positive projects, but also the fund could be used to complete putting utilities underground along Pacific Avenue.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

We have two choices in solving the problem of salary compression that is hurting our recruitment and retention issues: Fix it within the city's payroll system, or make public safety a separate pay structure from the rest of city employment. You want someone like me who knows how payrolls work and are structured. I've run a business and know about retention, salaries and other compensation. That experience is crucial in crafting a solution to payroll issues.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

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Our resort area specifically at the oceanfront is very built out, but we receive redevelopment requests frequently and can encourage more open green space, perhaps as part of a storm water mitigation effort. The ViBe district and Rudee Loop should include more open vistas and green spaces in any future planning.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

In the near term, we can accelerate very specific things. BMPs all over the city now hold a fraction of their design depth capacity, and those should be dredged immediately, not take decades to complete. Our ditches should be cleared. Flooding happens in neighborhoods during summer thunderstorms, not just 100-year storms or hurricanes. The major improvements will cost upwards of a half-billion dollars, and some have proposed using our existing debt capacity or issuing a bond referendum. All options should be on the table, because fixing this is not optional.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

My campaign is supported by Republicans, Democrats, Independents and people who don't usually follow politics at all. My campaign has been nonpartisan and I have run on issues I think are crucial to Virginia Beach's future. I don't pander. On the Planning Commission, I frequently have brokered compromises with applicants through staff and as Vice-Chair of the Commission. Recently an application for Grace Bible Church was a compromise through negotiations. A bulk storage application off London Bridge road was adjusted and eventually supported.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I oppose offshore drilling due to the risk it causes to our military training and readiness and the risk of a catastrophic spill which would ruin our resort economy. Offshore wind has potential as a clean energy to become a major job creator locally and we should explore that potential.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

Virginia Beach's AAA bond rating is a testament to the excellence Virginia Beach manages its debt capacity and repayment, often paying off debt ahead of schedule. The Lynnhaven Mall TIF was paid off two years early, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars and increasing the amount of revenue to the general fund. The city's budgeting process includes an Operating budget and

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a Capital Improvement program, both of which are proposed by the City Manager. Council holds public hearings on the manager's proposals and creates reconciled budgets amending the manager's proposals. A council majority approves the operating budget, but a council supermajority is required for the capital budget due to its issuing of debt.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

There is a sense of defeatism among some residents. The Sports Center approval is the first major project at the oceanfront in many, many years. We've had decades of proposals, studies and debates about what to do with the Dome site. The arena proposal created a lot of excitement for years and never resulted in an arena. One of the things residents want to see is follow-through. We can have paralysis by analysis in our city while other major cities move ahead. We should engage public participation and make sure our process transparent and level, but at the end of the day, what residents want is follow-through on all these plans.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

We should focus on increasing revenues for small businesses and encourage business to reinvest in their improvements. Council must improve how city departments deal with businesses and the hoops that businesses must leap through to even be permitted to make capital improvements to their businesses. I've met many business owners, and I'm married to one, whose experienced in even being permitted to improve a business site was such a headache that they stopped trying. The city should be more pro-business in this regard.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Public Private Partnerships must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, because each is unique. The displacement factor is a market decision which studied can reveal. Is the project simply splitting an existing market and drawing customers from existing businesses and shifting them to the businesses in the partnership? Or is the project expanding the market or creating a new one, bringing more people into the market and actually generating new business for nearby businesses? This is an important

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distinction, and we should focus on projects that expand the market and not just further divide it.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I like Coastal Virginia, because it tells people exactly where we are, who we are and what we are.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I support it. There is no guarantee that beginning the school year prior to Labor Day results in ending the school year earlier in June. This hurts students who want summer jobs as well as teachers who want significant time in summers for other career efforts or professional development.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Projects like the Dome project could add significant public parking to the resort area, but other than in these major projects, the TIP fund is a completely appropriate way to pay for additional resort parking. Employee parking is a major issue, and its becoming not just a seasonal issue as we move to a year-round resort. Neighborhoods are not the place for employees to park.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

No one wants to see blighted properties, and there are procedures for that. The best way to encourage redevelopment is to raise the bar for the resort in quality, so that others will invest their private capital in renovating and upgrading their properties.

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## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### AARON ROUSE

**1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I have been working to help support my family since I was nine years old, beginning with the Virginia Beach Bus Garage, then Target, Farm Fresh, McDonalds, Food Lion, and then Rick's Concrete. I am a product of our public school system, graduating from First Colonial High School and going on to attend Virginia Tech on a scholarship for football. I completed undergrad with a Bachelor's in Sociology. Since returning home, I've been active in our community, fulfilling philanthropic work in every part of Hampton Roads, especially with education. I'm running for office because this is the city that I was born and raised in and it made me who I am today. I grew up in Friendship Village in Seatack and I attended Virginia Beach City Public Schools – I'm a product of Virginia Beach. When I returned to this city after my career in the NFL, I noticed some things happening in our city government and I knew our city deserved better. We need people representing the citizens who will fight to make sure every man, woman, and child gets the same opportunities and shot at being successful that I got. We need a city government that works for the people, not against the people. That's why I'm running to be on City Council. If I am given the opportunity to serve, I can fight for practical, effective infrastructure solutions, including flood mitigation programs and a 21st century transportation system. Second, I want to prioritize creating an economy that works for everyone; not just a select few. I want to diversify our economy and bring new sectors, such as high-tech, biotech, and more – we need to create opportunities that will attract our young people back to Virginia Beach after leaving for college. Third, I will be an advocate for fair and competitive compensation and benefits for our teachers and public safety workers to increase retention.

**2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

The TIP is a combination of two different funds: Tourism Growth Invest Fund (TGIF) was established by Council in 1992, and the "major projects fund," which revenues were to be used to rebuild the convention center, construct the Sandler Center, and expand parking for the Virginia Aquarium, was established by council in 2001. In 2011, council merged the TGIF and major projects fund into what is now the TIP fund. The TIP fund is designed specifically for construction and improvements of tourism related facilities. The fund should be used for what council created the fund for. If the use of the fund should be changed as it has been changed over time, it first would need to come before a vote and the public should have a role in determining if



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and why that change should be made. Using the find for other used is no different than using FEMA funds for other uses other than flooding improvement.

**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

While Virginia Beach remains one of the safest cities of its size in the nation, I believe in a hands-on approach in maintaining and improving our public safety. That starts with serving those who serve us, the brave men and women in uniform who risk their lives daily protecting our communities. We must ensure their pay and benefits are fair and competitive so that we can retain and recruit quality police officers. As a resident and community leader I have participated in ride-alongs and community forums on community safety and community policing. As a Virginia Beach resident who grew up in Friendship Village (government subsidized housing) I want to help our police officers build better relationships with all communities and help alleviate the tension within community's police officers have challenges with.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

I'd like to create a balance of green spaces within our resort areas to promote the unique environmental advantages our community offers. The goal would be to preserve our environment while progressing towards a more economical and modern oceanfront.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Much of our city has been built on soft, swampy land. When we overdevelop and cover every square inch of land, leaving no green space, then the natural sponge is destroyed. We're seeing it in Asheville Park and Old Beach. Every time it rains, the water has nowhere to go because the entire ground is covered in asphalt and concrete. We need to be smarter when considering where we develop and how densely we develop. The city also needs to fix the backlog of storm water maintenance projects, like ditches and drains. A great example is the ARGOS project that was proposed a few months ago. This land was swamp land. If I were on City Council, I would have had no problem voting down this project because we cannot build dozens of houses a few feet apart and then wonder why the flooding is so bad a few years later. There has to be a balance between development and being conscious of the kind of environment we have built our city on.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

It has been engrained in my DNA by my grandfather, a US ARMY veteran, to be honest, transparent, and to keep my word. I will not tolerate partisanship and/or bias if given the opportunity to serve on council. Every proposed budget, contract, proposal project, etc. will be voted on its on merit.

Regardless of who presents the idea, I will vote based on fact, not emotion, and most importantly how it will benefit the citizens of Virginia Beach.

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**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

While offshore energy development is a federal issue currently being processed through BOEM's 5-year plan under the Trump Administration, environmental safety and protecting Virginia Beaches' aquatic and geographic assets is a key priority for me. While we must progress in the direction in being more energy independent and less reliant on foreign energy resources, we must ensure environmental safety come first.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The city budgeting process is no different than a family budget. The difference is there are more zero's in the budget and more "family" members contributing to the total budget. The annual city budget is not the government's money, it is the tax payer's money. Council members have been elected to be good stewards of the family budget, make fiscally responsible decisions and investments to ensure the overall betterment, financial stability, and future sustainability of the entire family (city). With a Triple A bond rating we are poised to grow our city economically. The key is to be fiscally responsible with a collaboration with our residents. Communication is everything. The Virginia Beach City budgeting process is one that city council will have to compromise on but there should be a defined pathway or direction towards what is healthy for the city.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Communication is key. Trust needs to be rebuilt with fresh faces that has not eroded the public's interest in progressing our city. To build that trust, defined roles have to be established and make clear the important role we all must play. There has to be a transparent, balanced, and unbiased message that illustrates we are a team. Our year-round residents must feel they are valued and important as much as the tourists we'd like to invite. There has to be a complete understanding of the role our tourism plays within our city along with understanding the value our residents play. The glue that holds that together is trust and the attraction that brings it together is a fresh face.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I value our small businesses and I look forward to exploring all innovative ways to help small businesses start and grow. I think we should address some of the "red-tape" that prohibits small businesses ability to reach their potential. Progress is key.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

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I do not think public/private partnerships are inherently bad, but there are bad public/private partnerships and the system is often abused. All across the country, these kinds of deals are made between cities and private businesses and they are often very successful. The key is, we have to create a government that does not let these deals be abused and we need a fair system so one or two developers are not receiving special treatment. When the city has a bidding process, like with the pier or the Cavalier, if there is an incentive package, it should be public knowledge so that more bids are placed and there is more competition. With a more competitive market, the risks are narrowed greatly and the city benefits more.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I believe the rebranding should come from our ability to diversify our local economy, create well-paying jobs, effectively address our flooding and infrastructure problems, and retain our millennials. While I am not opposed to rebranding Hampton Roads, I do not believe a name change would develop and improve the aforementioned.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I do not have a strong position on when school starts. I know my children would not want their summer cut short and I know the current start date worked well for me. I think the first step would be an open dialogue with educators and parents.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Parking is an issue in our resort area. I believe in growing the resort area responsibly. That means making sure there is a balance to development that can support new traffic patterns and congestion.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

To keep up a first-class appearance, code enforcement in the resort area will be enforced. Our residents and tourist will appreciate a visible appealing resort area. Meaning clean sidewalks, better lighting, and appealing signage, etc. Also, cleanliness. People will respect a very clean and safe environment and adhere to a higher standard.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### ALLISON WHITE

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am from Virginia Beach. I grew up in the Great Neck area. I graduated from Cox High School. I am a public high school teacher and I have a law degree. I decided to run for city council because I bring a different outlook and set of experiences to city council.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I believe TIP funding should be used for tourism projects, however, I believe TIP funds can be used for non-tourism related projects if the city council deems it necessary for the good of the citizens of Virginia Beach. I would support initiatives to enhance tourism.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

I would budget money to hire more police officers. When large crowds are known to be coming to the oceanfront, I believe the city should be proactive and create events to give the tourists things to do.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

I believe we should develop more green spaces at our resort. I believe these green spaces should serve the function of combating sea level rise and mitigating the effects of flooding. I support green solutions for sea level rise and flooding and green spaces are consistent with the view.

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

The immediate solution to addressing flooding in our city is cleaning out ditches, dredging lakes, and building pump stations in areas prone to flooding. I believe the long-term solution to flooding and sea level rise involves green solutions such as permeable pavement, water-absorbing salt marsh which absorbs incoming wave energy, the creation of bio-retention

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gardens for flood-prone areas, and living shorelines which make our shorelines more stable.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I am running as an independent in a non-partisan election. My decisions will be based on the best interests of the citizens of Virginia Beach. I have no conflicts of interest. I will always consider differing viewpoints to seek an appropriate compromise on an issue. All examples I have are related to my career as an educator, working with students, parents, staff, and administration.

- 7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration? I am against offshore drilling.**

I am for renewable energy exploration like wind farms and solar farms where such energy sources are viable and environmentally sound.

- 8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

Taxes and revenue are collected by the city and the city makes a budget. There are lots of revenue streams that are accounted for and earmark for different spending by the city. If the city creates a budget that spends more than taxes and revenue collected, then the city may issue bond debt for projects.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Tourism is what Virginia Beach is known for. It is a major component of our economy. I strongly support our tourism industry. My vision for the future is that the tourism industry continue to play a major role in our economy. Strong tourism helps keep our property taxes lower.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it**

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**look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I would support giving tax breaks to attract and retain businesses in our city. I would consider incentive programs that attract businesses to Virginia Beach, as long as these programs are in the best interests of the citizens.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I believe public/private partnerships are fine if there is a true partnership between the city and the corporation. I do not favor partnerships where the city bears most of the risk while the corporation gets most of the reward. I would scrutinize partnerships that favor one person or group over others. Equality of opportunity for corporations to be partners with the city is very important to me in any analysis of potential public/private partnerships.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I support keeping Hampton Roads as the region name because it has been around for a while. I have noticed that Coastal Virginia has been used as name for the area in recent years and I'm okay with that name as well.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

As a teacher, I like starting school the day after Labor Day. The state mandates the number of instructional hours that local districts must have. As long as the school district is able to achieve the instructional hours required, I would continue to favor starting schools the Tuesday after Labor Day.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it?**

Would employee parking be part of that vision? I would like to see parking expanded at the oceanfront. We should build more parking garages at the oceanfront to accommodate more people. Funding could be done by charging for the parking itself. Employee parking would be part of the vision.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

I would propose to implement policies that stakeholders at the oceanfront want emphasized. Code enforcement would be a priority at the oceanfront.

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## AT-LARGE DISTRICT

### LINDA BRIGHT

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

The following is why I am running for election and my skills. My years of experience in the City of Virginia Beach as a Business owner, Liaison for Economic Development for five years, on the Minority Business Council for 14 years, monitored prime contracts and reviewed if the contractors were respecting our 10 % formula. On the Bio-Tech Advisory Committee working with PTSD, Diabetics, Cancer in our state. Also, address the homeless and mentally ill population throughout the city. Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for Social Services, Community Services Boards and the Chair for the Developmental Disability Board for four years. Worked closely with the Virginia Beach Police Department, Homeless population in both our city and throughout the Hampton roads area. Further have been appointed by the Governor for two consecutive term three year terms as Chair of the Rehabilitation Board. Worked at the White House helping President Obama in 2012 on the Fiscal Cliff. My years of experience in our City allows me the opportunity to mentor and support our citizens to understand how to access services throughout the city and state.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Our funding should be used and evaluated for appropriate projects and initiatives for funding to increase our tourism should not take away from monies for completing resolutions for flooding projects and any other primary needs in our city that would rated top priority.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Public safety issues in the schools, alarms, close circuit camera and security in every school. Activities on campus and security during afterschool activities.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

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Our green space has to be redone, off of Shore Drive, hopefully, the campsite and wooded area will never be demolished. So many of our buildings at the Oceanfront and now the Towne Center area are gone. My vision is to be aware of any future construction and not to over crowd our city with huge buildings and structures with too little parking spaces.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Business owners and home owners will be responsible for a flat fee to accommodate the funding to address this and these fees can be split in 12 payments a year. Note: this fee will not be placed on seniors, disabled individuals who are currently receiving social security.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

My reason for running is because I have observed from the outside, individuals on City Council who are making decisions to support their buddies that want to move up and not considering our citizens and the effects it will have on the rest of the city.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

Off Shore drilling will increase our energy needs but I am hoping it will maintain the distance off shore not to affect our fish and businesses.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The budget process determines the budget and projects such as roads and schools. How much in cash and debt after the project is up and started, The bonds are issued only after the project is near completion. Not every city can do this but VA. Beach does have extra cash and we hold on to the money to maintain our interest.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**



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Current taxes in VA. Beach should be evaluated again to decrease. My vision for future tourism is to create activities to maintain a year round city and not just for the summer months. Our young people are leaving our cities on the weekends to go out of town to do other more exciting things; and they are moving out and not coming back due to lack of things to do here in town.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I would support a city wide incentive program because most small businesses have little capital to grow. An "Incubator program" to decrease rents. We have plenty of buildings throughout our city that house small businesses and give the a start. Loans with little interest or grants from Economic Development.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I support public/private partnerships; however there must be monitoring and research to make sure the application and project is above board and there. The partners must be investigated to assure everyone is on target and everything is in place before we place thousands or millions into a project because the money is our citizens.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Our region is just fine. The city of Virginia Beach can work closely with our surrounding cities but not change our name!

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

There's not reason why we cannot come up with a formula for increasing our time during the year for storms and weather where school is out but most of us look forward to having Labor Day week with our children as the last holiday of the summer; and in our City that our biggest holiday for the children.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Parking has to be now away from the oceanfront because its limited. Maybe off of General Booth Blvd and transportation to the ocean front. We need more employee parking which can also be on General Booth Blvd.

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**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Maintenance by dates and emergencies login's by staff and management and code enforcement will be by license number and fees attached to it like a ticket and 30 days to pay. This might also be adjusted through the years to come.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## BAYSIDE DISTRICT

### LOUIS JONES

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am an experienced businessperson with a well-honed knowledge of both private as well as public finance. I have been involved in City Government for over 30 years and have a clear understanding of what it takes to make government work on the local level. I also understand the Governmental process of compromise in order to get things done. I have proven over the years that I am effective in a positive way as a City Councilman.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

TIP Funds are intended for enhancing Tourism in the City of Virginia Beach. Only when the use of the funds serves that purpose should they be used. That is exactly what I did in the most recent City Budget Compromise. With the resignation of former Mayor Will Sessoms just two weeks before the vote on the City Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program, I had only 10 Council Votes to work with in getting the Budget approved and the Capital Improvement Budget approved. The Capital Improvement Budget needs a supermajority to pass. Without approval of the Capital Improvement Budget, the Virginia Beach Sports Center would NOT have passed. There would not have been an approved Sports Center Project. My next effort will be to get an approved Dome Site Project passed and underway. It won't be easy; however, with the right Leadership, I believe it can happen. I think I have proven that I provide that leadership.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

First, let me say that I think that our Police, Fire and EMS people do a fantastic job! We are the SAFEST CITY OF OUR SIZE in the United States. Having said that, we had need to solve the Compression Problem within our budget in order to create equity within the Ranks of the Police and Fire Department specifically and the general City-Staff generally. I took the initiative on behalf of the City Council to insist that the City Manager address both vertical and horizontal compression in this recently passed City Budget. It required more money allocation; but, we were able to accomplish that goal. The Commonwealth budget has cut what is called 599 money in the past; but,

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has this recent year began to partially provide an increased amount. That money is earmarked for additional police officers. Hopefully, those funding increases will continue. If so, it will be easier for us to increase the number of police officers available throughout the city in general as well as at the oceanfront.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

At proper intervals, as older hotels and properties become available for purchase and development, it may be beneficial for the City to purchase those properties to open up vistas to the ocean. That same purpose may be enhanced with future public private partnerships the City may enter into in the future.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

This is probably the most difficult question you are proposing. Sea Level Rise is not a phenomenon that we have any control over. It is happening, and we need to deal with it. We need to understand the effect of deforestation on groundwater levels and how we can initiate reforestation. Trees absorb groundwater (40%). Restoration of treed areas in the Southern portion of the City and where possible in the developed areas of the City would help significantly in the absorption of groundwater and return that moisture to the atmosphere. But, that won't be enough. We need to work with the U.S. Corp of Engineers to developed methods of preventing wind pressure from pushing floodwaters back up from the Currituck Sound and water estuaries in the Southern portion of the City into our developed areas. Also, we need to systematically re-engineer out current drainage pipes and infrastructure (including BMP's) to better control water flow in major rain storms. The City Council has committed \$359 Million over the next 10 years to mitigating flooding in the City. It will cost even more. Redirection of funds may be a partial solution. But, it won't be enough. Hopefully, we can receive help from the Federal Government.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

My record speaks for itself! I have never made decisions on the basis of partisanship. I think independently and vote my conscience. The recent compromise on the Budget in order to get the Sports Center approved in the Budget and Capital Improvement Program is an example of my ability to do so. Not only did I get the eight(8) votes that I needed; I got a unanimous vote

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of approval for both the City Operating Budget, but, also the Capital Improvement Budget.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I am emphatically opposed to drilling off our coast and was the first Councilmember to oppose it. If an oil spill can happen, it will happen! The risk is too great. I would support renewable energy as long as it doesn't impair our military training and abilities. Navy Presence and Training as well as Safety is crucial to our economy and National Security.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

We have basically three kinds of Bond Debt. First, we have General Obligation Debt, which is used for public buildings, schools, and some other projects such as roads, bridges, etc. Second, we have income backed debt, such as utilities (water and sewer) where the revenues and charges for those services are dedicated for the service of that Debt. In addition, we have referendum debt (which could be General Obligation Debt or Public Utility Debt) which is authorized by the voters in a referendum, and leased debt on properties and equipment. Also, we have Public Facility Revenue Bond Debt which is issued through the Economic Development Authority. Supposedly, all of the debt other than the Public Facility Revenue Debt has an effect on our Bond Rating(which is AAA) . However, in truth, rating agencies look at all debt in their assessments. Having a sizable Ending Fund Balance(10%) of Budget is looked upon favorably.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Virginia Beach Tourism has a promising future. With the new Sports Center and hopefully, the Dome Site, being developed there should be a strong stimulus to our tourism dollar in Virginia Beach. The new Cavalier Development should also be a stimulus. It is important that the general public be constantly reminded that tourism provides jobs, money for governmental services through meals taxes, etc .. It provides entertainment for our citizens as well as tourists. The public needs to be reminded that tourism along with the Military are our two largest boosters to our local economy. The new Dome Site Development (When developed) plus the Sports Center, plus the furtherance of the Vibe District provides entertainment and living experiences for the Citizens of Virginia Beach as well as the Tourist. Tourism dollars defray the burden of Schools, Public Safety, etc. on the General Public.

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- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

We already do help small businesses with fixed improvements such as utilities and parking, etc. We do this through the Economic Development Incentive Program of the Economic Development Authority. In addition, with the Oceana Land Use Conformity Program, we have been able to provide land opportunities for small businesses to locate and relocate in the City. Generally, the EDIP Program is funded through the General Fund annually. The Oceana Land Use Plan has been funded jointly with the State. The State is now easing out of that plan, but has been a great partner with the City over the past several years.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Public/Private Partnerships have a favorable impact on the local Economy and the Taxpayer when implemented and administered properly. The goal is to award them fairly to all applicants and in a manner that is profitable to the taxpayers (who are the ultimate partners in the project) . Break-even and unprofitable Partnerships are not in the best interest of the Public. I have supported some Public Private Partnerships and I have ultimately opposed some. Displacement is an important factor in deciding whether or not to support such a partnership. Generally speaking, most of the Public Private Partnerships can create displacement, so we should focus on those that open new markets to Virginia Beach. Is it substantially beneficial to the citizenry, local business and the general public, is the question.

- 12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

If I could think of a name to rebrand the region that I thought would be beneficial I would do it. But, to be honest, I haven't come up with a name myself, and I haven't heard a name that I thought would be more beneficial.

- 13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I think what we currently have is fine. We need to keep our current policy.

- 14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

As we implement future projects in the resort area, we need to include Public Parking. The ideal approach would be for the new Public Parking would be self-sustaining. However, that may not be possible. TIP Fund might be a source of funding, As we run out of land for new projects and re-development

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slows down, the Tip Funds may be beneficial to the Tourism Community for Parking. Employee parking provided by Tip Funds may be a way to provide convenient parking for workers; and, it may be a way to alleviate the problems of employees parking in local residential neighborhoods.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

That's a tough question. Maintenance costs money. Management of Codes and enforcement are subject to State and Local Laws. Basically, the best and only way to enforce Code violations is to have enough people on the payroll for inspection and citation. True blight hurts our competitiveness and we should make sure we address it in the proper manner.

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## BAYSIDE DISTRICT

### BRAD MARTIN

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am a professional civil engineer with 26 years of consulting experience in the Tidewater area, mostly in Virginia Beach. I understand stormwater and flooding like no other candidate or councilperson does. My skill set would be a valuable resource in the decision-making procedure as the Council considers spending \$300 million in dedicated spending (in addition to the existing \$40 million annual revenue from the stormwater fee) as well as roads, transportation, and development projects.

I love my City, and I believe that the time is now for me to serve Virginia Beach in this unique capacity.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I was disappointed to see the current Council budget allocate \$1.5 million from the TIP Fund to City-wide garbage trucks. That money could have been found elsewhere in the City's \$2 billion budget, and it represents a troubling allowance to move from one identified spending area to another, without due consideration. I support return of that money to the TIP Fund.

I would support collaboration with our neighboring Cities, and the region all the way to Williamsburg in general, to promote tourism in the area.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

The issue of horizontal and vertical pay compression has been an unsolved issue for decades. The current situation where we train our first responders with the best academy programs in the State, and then we lose many of those professionals after only a few years because of pay issues, is unsustainable and is costing our City huge investments in the public safety professionals working for other organizations. We need to commit to truly solving the challenge, which will take about \$40 million annually. If we pay our public safety professionals appropriately, they might choose to live in the neighborhoods they protect, in which case "Community Policing" would have a greater positive impact.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**



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Significant public parks are an important component of our oceanfront landscape, but smaller opportunities for landscaped greenspace are a critical addition which enhance the intrinsic enjoyment of our public spaces. As properties and public spaces are redeveloped, stormwater management regulations can be accomplished by an increase of pervious areas, and that strategy should be encouraged. In addition, prospects for adding green spaces in City properties - either in road medians or in closed streets - should be vigorously embraced.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Our area is always going to be low and flat, and Mother Nature is always going to deliver the rain, tides, and winds that have the potential to so drastically damage our improved properties. We need to focus on the maintenance and dredging of our existing stormwater conveyance systems to allow the flood waters to be carried away in every situation, avoiding the property damage that we've experienced in the last several years. As an area particularly threatened by sea level rise and other environmental factors, there's a real opportunity for our area to capitalize on educational and business markets which study and solve the challenges we face. I am uniquely suited among the candidates to identify opportunities for improvement.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I've been working with Delegate Kelly Fowler, both of us ignoring our partisan identifications, trying to resolve a construction / stormwater issue for some Virginia Beach residents near Elbow Road. As our national and even state political scenes become more polarized, I think that local politics can largely avoid partisan bickering and differences; the location of the next recreation center isn't a red versus blue issue.

I broker compromises among my developer clients and jurisdictional regulators almost every week on the job, but I'm most proud of my involvement in the Rotary Club and my efforts toward the rebranding of our annual fundraiser the "Oyster Crush". While the idea for the rebranding was not mine, every aspect of our former fundraising efforts was examined and debated, and I raised my voice with significant ideas to enhance the event. My pet project became the "Grand Raffle", a new addition to the event where donated high-value gifts were given away to raffle ticket contestants, and the raffle itself raises between \$4,000 to \$6,000 each year.

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## **7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I am not opposed to offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration, with some caveats. If the Navy is opposed or if the practice would threaten our existing relationship with the armed forces operations, I'm against it. I would not support an energy initiative or practice that would be visible by the naked eye from our oceanfront. With the technology of directional drilling, and the possibility that Hampton, North Carolina, Maryland, or Cuba might mine energy sources off our shores, I won't close the door on our ability to protect our shores with appropriate, safe techniques, or the opportunity to benefit financially from the revenues that would come from exploration.

## **8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

I know that the vast majority of Virginia Beach's \$2 billion annual budget - up to 80% or 85% - is committed to the non-discretionary demands of our City and our 450,000 residents. Our collective lifestyle comes from how effectively and efficiently that money is spent, but really in the remaining 15% or \$300 million of discretionary spending.

Our debt capacity, capped to ensure we keep a favorable credit rating, must be managed while we pursue investments for our City - either flooding protection or new oceanfront amenities. The citizens should be made aware of our debt capacity, what the money is being spent on, when old projects will be paid off, and how that recaptured capacity will be used.

## **9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

The impact of tourism dollars to our City will always be important, and communicating the "payoff" to our residents is a difficult balance. We want to collect an appropriate fee from our visitors without discouraging their visits to Virginia Beach. The long-term effects of public-private partnerships go beyond just whether each project will "pay for itself" and the overall business impact needs to be analyzed. Cultivating opportunities for our residents to enjoy our tourist-focused amenities, and extending the shoulder seasons to attract locals to the oceanfront would enhance the relationship of our full-time residents with the tourist industry. The elected officials and senior City staff should assist in the partnership between the locals and the oceanfront.

## **10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it**

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**look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I am not supportive of a generic small business investment program, which could be used to create unfair competitive situations for our existing businesses. I'm more in favor of trimming the unnecessary burdens and regulations which make starting and running a small business overly onerous. In this age of technology advances, data cables coming across the ocean, and disruptive business models, I think the citizens of Virginia Beach, and even the existing businesses, will benefit from the City being accepting of new small businesses in our City.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I am neither for nor against "public / private partnerships" in general; I will evaluate each one on its own merits. In the case of some oceanfront opportunities, the City owns the property and some public infrastructure might be necessary for a private project to proceed and be successful. The City might also want to participate to create public parking in an appropriate location. In those cases, the City is a necessary partner in the project, and what must be ensured is a level playing field for multiple potential developers if there are more than one.

Appropriate business studies are necessary to ensure that the PPP is a unique entity, which will add to the overall business of the City, and which won't just cannibalize existing businesses, even if the competitive advantage is only closer access to free parking. Our current City Auditor has admitted that his office is not equipped to conduct such a study, but there are academic and other local resources which are.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I like the idea of rebranding our area from "Hampton Roads" or "Tidewater" because, for the most part, visitors from outside of Virginia can't visualize our area from either moniker. Not to mention that Virginia Beach doesn't deserve to be referred to as either

"Hampton" or "Roads". I support a rebranding effort, and I like the identification of "Coastal Virginia" since it is more clearly descriptive to visitors outside of our area, our state, and our country.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I favor keeping the start date for Virginia Beach public schools after Labor Day, which assists both the oceanfront and other area businesses, as well as the parents of school children in planning and scheduling.

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**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I support the strategy of spreading out the facilities for public parking throughout the oceanfront instead of obliging the expense for massive City parking garages. Partnering with developers to add a public parking component into a private development is both a better integration of parking areas in the City and a more cost-effective solution for the City.

Employee parking is a difficult function to provide, but options like a satellite parking area (VBMS, the convention center parking lot, or even the Food Lion, Harris Teeter, or Farm Fresh shopping centers), bike and golf cart transit, or Uber-style shuttle service could be explored.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Form-based code opportunities have opened up options for redevelopment in the oceanfront communities, but specific overlay rules in either the North End or in the Resort District have made consistent enforcement of building and maintenance standards difficult. The City's inspectors have to be well-educated on the regulations and impartial in their enforcement actions. Maintenance and management standards must be equitably enforced.

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## BEACH DISTRICT

### JOHN UHRIN

**1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I was elected to the Virginia Beach City Council in 2006 and is now serving a third term on City Council. I grew up in a Navy family near Lynnhaven Mall, attended Brookwood Elementary, Plaza Junior High School and graduated from Kellam High School in 1986. I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in marketing and finance from Old Dominion University. I started his career in the hospitality industry in high school, as a groundskeeper for the Schooner Inn. In 1991, I was named director of operations for Burlage Management and currently oversees the operation of multiple hotels at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront.

I serve as City Council liaison to several organizations, including the Military Economic Development Advisory Committee, the Legislation Coordination Committee, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, the Resort Advisory Commission, the Virginia Beach Audit Committee, Old Beach Design and Review Committee, the Towing Advisory Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Virginia Aquarium Foundation and the Dome Site and Rudee Loop projects.

I have long understood the importance the coastal nature of our City and work tirelessly promoting water quality initiatives that have helped open up the Lynnhaven River to commercial oyster harvesting for the first time since the mid 1980s. Sea Level Rise and flood control projects have also been a big part of my focus. A Blue Ribbon Task force appointed by Council has also born many common sense solutions to improving the overall quality of our environment.

I care about supporting those that are less fortunate. I helped lead the creation the new Housing Resource Center, which will become a one-stop location to help those that are trying to improve their current living situation. I have worked hard to improve access for the disabled, championing Grommet Island Park, Camp Grom, and many other initiatives that have made Virginia Beach one of the most welcoming cities in the country for those with mobility issues.

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Promotion of biomedical and high-speed internet initiatives have been some of the accomplishments I have focused on in his mission to bring job opportunities to The Beach so that Virginia Beach has opportunities that will keep our young talent here.

My wife, Catherine, and I will celebrate their 10-year wedding anniversary in November of 2018. We have two wonderful little girls who are flourishing in Virginia Beach's nationally ranked school system. The Uhrin family has a love for all things outdoors and spends their leisure time boating, surfing, crabbing and fishing.

**2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Obviously this year, Council voted in a compromise to secure the supermajority required for the Capital Improvement Budget which contained major projects like the recently approved Sports Center and the current Dome Site proposal. It was not the ideal solution, but demonstrates how important it will be to have a pro-business City Council which values tourism and an economic engine. The Sports Center is the most significant tourism initiative Virginia Beach has approved since the new convention center and I'm proud of the work we did making that happen.

**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

We have been one of the safest, if not the safest, city of our size in America. We have consistently invested to make sure our public safety professionals have the best training and the best equipment possible. Salary compression issues remain within our police department which we have dedicated millions of dollars in this year's budget to address, and we will further help balance the pay scale in next year's budget.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

As new proposals come forward, we should promote less density and make the resort a more walkable community. The ViBe district is becoming a good example of how this can happen over time with the right concepts and designs. A world class resort is clean, open with complimentary natural vistas and attractions, and we should encourage that when sites approach us to redevelop and improve.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

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The key issue to address flooding is determining how to put stormwater improvements in place that are done correctly the first time and don't make things worse in nearby neighborhoods. The studies we have begun will help determine that, and I have worked with my colleagues to fund those and complete them in a timely manner. Council has invested millions in enhancing our stormwater management systems and have coordination important studies to determine the order and process of upgrading the city's ability to manage stormwater from nor'easters, heavy storms and major tropical events. Virginia Beach must demonstrate the commitment to handle these intensifying storms and keep our neighborhoods clear of floodwaters to the greatest extent possible. This commitment will be an expensive and time-consuming one but we must make sure that we fix these issues correctly the first time and not just shift flooding issues from one neighborhood to another.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I am not a member of any political party and I think the partisanship in elections and government becomes destructive. I have been a proponent of proposals that move our economy forward, create jobs, generate revenue for the city and keep taxes reasonable. My decisions are based on the merits of each proposal and not on whomever is proposing it. Every major vote has included compromises at some level, including the Sports Center, the current and previous Dome site proposals, the arena proposal and each budget Council has passed every year.

- 7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I sponsored the resolution to change Virginia Beach's stance from supporting offshore drilling to a neutral stance and a firm stance of opposition. Paramount to that effort was the catastrophic consequences an oil spill would be to our tourism economy and the opposition of the Navy to drilling and its impacts on training and readiness. Within 30 days of that vote on my resolution, the Governor of Virginia changed his position to oppose offshore drilling as well. I supported the Council's vote to support offshore wind and I support solar power initiatives.

- 8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

Each year the city manager proposes an Operating and Capital Budget which is presented to Council and the Public. The capital budget needs a supermajority vote for approval because of the issuance of bond debt. The

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fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30<sup>th</sup> and the budget must be passed well in advance of the fiscal year. It also includes funding to the School Board for education as derived through the revenue sharing formula.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

I am troubled by a good deal of misinformation that is generated by some for only political purposes. For example, the recent Sports Center proposal was accused by opponents of having massive cost overruns before the project was even approved. The fact that a hydraulic indoor track and parking was added is not a cost overrun, but opponents never mentioned that. In many ways, newspaper coverage and editorial boards have been replaced by Facebook and Twitter, and we need to make sure we get the facts about tourism out to the general public in ways that are relevant today.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I would have to study the scope of a citywide incentive program and what fixed capital improvements would qualify.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I support Public Private Partnerships and understand that they should fill tourism voids by bringing new people to the market of Virginia Beach or encouraging visitors to stay longer, resulting in more economic activity, not less.

- 12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I think Coastal Virginia has a lot of potential. It is much more understandable to the rest of the country in terms of where we are located. Hampton Roads really is not very distinctive and most people I've spoken to from out of state have rarely heard it.

- 13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I have always supported our position of a post-Labor Day school start and will continue to do so.

- 14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**



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Parking is always a major consideration in terms of balancing the needs of development with the stabilization of the surrounding neighborhoods. I have been the catalyst for many initiatives to help accomplish this. Future enhancements to shared parking opportunities will be key to further balancing these needs.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Enforcement of codes is a lengthy, legal process that will never be as efficient and swift as some would like.

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## BEACH DISTRICT

### JOHN COKER

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I believe my experience as a Navy veteran, former small business owner, civic league president and technology professional would bring needed experience and talent City Council. I decided to run for office because I think the priorities of the current Beach District representative do not align with those of the majority of Virginia Beach.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

TIP funding was established to help grow our tourism industry. It has been successful in that manner. That being said, if there is a surplus of funds in the TIP and there is an option to prevent a tax increase for citizens, then yes I would use TIP funds. Just as if the tourism industry needed additional assistance in a time of need, I would approve money from the general fund. One way I would help tourism is as part of my technology plan for Virginia Beach, would be to attract compatible technology conventions. I would like VB to be a Blockchain innovation hub. There are 100's of Blockchain related conventions averaging 10k-50k visitors. None of them currently come to VB. We can change that.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

It is true, Virginia Beach is one of the safest cities in the country. But especially for the tourism industry, a few events can cast a bad view on the whole area and I believe its irresponsible for candidates to make comments like calling areas of the Oceanfront "Rape Alley". The most important item of public safety are those who are part of it. Our first responders deserve to not just have their pay issues addressed and fixed, but they deserve pay stability in the future. Our first responders need to be fully manned and have operational and up-to-date equipment.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

The most important part is to preserve what we have now. If future redevelopment allows for the inclusion or creation of new green space, it is well worth it.

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**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Virginia Beach is threatened by rising water for multiple reasons. It is of utmost importance we address it now and in an accelerated manner. The two most important ways of doing this are 1) do the basics first – We can have multi-million dollar infrastructure plans, but if the pipes are clogged, none of it will work. We must maintain and repair the systems we have now. There is a 12 year backlog on doing just that. Not by accident or technical difficulty. It was a clear and conscious decision by City Council not to fund these projects as needed. This is what I mean by priorities. We never should have gotten to this point. 2) Working together – flooding doesn't just happen in the southern watershed, or one neighborhood or even just in Virginia Beach. We need to work with neighboring cities, the state and federal offices to address flood mitigation and improve our regional resiliency to flooding. It is more efficient, more affordable and most importantly, the right way to do it.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

This is a great question, because this is a big reason why I decided to run and I do not believe the Beach incumbent is unbiased. I have made it very clear, as the Beach district council member, yes I would represent the Oceanfront, but I would also represent all of Virginia Beach. I believe in continued investment in tourism but with fiscal responsibility and common sense. We can build the projects at the beach while also fixing our stormwater system. We can create new jobs and address debt issues. We don't have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem. I don't have a specific example to give you, but I am the only one willing to give detailed explanations of what I will do once in office, even if some people don't like them. If I'm willing to risk a few votes for openness and honesty now, then you can rest assured I will do the same once in office.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

There has been a lot of rhetoric on both sides of off shore drilling and the wind farms too. Neither will destroy tourism and neither will save the city. Each could help Virginia Beach grow but both come with risks. The question is, is the risk worth the gains. At this time, I would have to say no, to both. Once elected I would request more information from those who want them and those opposed and learn more. I would like to see our Oceanfront however become greener however. Be it through improved efficiencies or

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expanded use of solar power, I think the Virginia Beach oceanfront could be an innovator and leader in green tourism.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The city uses several types of bonded debt as a tool to afford projects for which there is no direct funds on hand. There are direct revenue bonds, bonds that are guaranteed by a direct revenue source such as the TIP. And there are collateral type bonds which uses collateral such as government land or property to secure the bond. The use of such bonds requires not just budgeting for the current fiscal year but many years into the future in order to pay the bond off. Most importantly, is it very important to know, bonds, despite how they are secured or paid for, are a city-wide debt. No matter their use, combined they count toward the city's total debt capacity.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

I believe the residents of Virginia Beach know well the importance of the tourism industry, so I don't think we need to spend time or money trying to convince them of it. I think the concern most residents have is, is the tourism industry receiving unfair attention and advantages compared to the rest of the city? Basically, how is a store or restaurant at the oceanfront, more important than a store or restaurant in Centerville? If they both create the same number of jobs and bring in equal taxes, don't they both deserve equal attention and investment? Some business owners tell me, if they did not have to pay the meal tax to support tourism, they could hire another employee or maybe even open a new location. I believe it is vitally important we make sure everyone understands that all business deserve opportunities to succeed. Where tourism is different than other businesses, the money generated by tourism mostly stays here in Virginia Beach. Instead of just recycling money already here, it generates new wealth for the city. That is how a city grows.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

If the question is, should all business received a financial incentive? No. That is achieved through low taxes, not cash incentives. Also, there are several steps we can take to make small business in VB feel more welcome: simplify paperwork, improved inspection cycles and times, create a small business consigliere. As an IT professional I know the value and cost savings when we

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automate manual processes. If the small business owner could spend 15-20 minutes at their desk completing city paper work instead of running around to different offices all day, they could accomplish more work at less cost.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Public/Private is not a dirty word. Its people who abuse the practice that give it a bad name. Citizens should not take all the risks while the private gets all the rewards. And I strongly believe in displacement. The city should not use taxpayer money (even TIP money) to fund a project that does not bring something unique to the city. If it's used to build more general shops and restaurants, then it is not creating any new sales.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

No. People are already confused, Hampton Roads, Tidewater, Coastal Virginia. We can't keep changing it every decade and expect something new. We should be known for who we are and what we do.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

As a parent, I understand the desire for a pre-labor day school start date. But I also understand the importance to the tourism industry. I don't see any harm to our kids either way. I would not support any change to the current date unless there was solid proof it harmed our children.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Funding is the easy answer, the TIP. That is what it was designed for. We should not be using the TIP for other projects then build garages with general funds. Adding garages to large projects is a good way to keep prices down. As for employee parking, they should not have to pay to park close to their jobs.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

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## BEACH DISTRICT

### RICHARD KOWALEWITCH

**1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am uniquely qualified to represent the Beach District on City Council because I owned and operated a retail business in the resort area for 31 years. I've also lived in the District for 30 years. I love this City, I love the beach, and I understand the unique challenges and concerns of the resort businesses and residents unlike any other candidate. I am seeking elected office, because I believe the incumbent, along with the majority of our current council, has lost sight of our priorities, and we are headed in the wrong direction.

**2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

a). The TIP fund should NEVER be used for non-tourism related projects. Council established the TGIF (Tourism Growth Investment Fund), TIP's forerunner, over 25 years ago by Ordinance for the explicit purpose of funding tourism programs and projects. That said, I DO believe the allocation of tax revenues to the TIP needs to be REVISITED and ADJUSTED, if necessary. For example, TIP collects ALL (100%) of City-wide entertainment taxes...all year long. This amounts to over \$6 million for TIP each year. Now, logically, you and I know that tourists do not generate ALL of this revenue. In fact, I would guess that residents (young people) kick in the majority of that amount. Why should all of it go into the TIP fund? But, I'm not the expert. I would recommend the City Council commission a study with ODU, (which, by the way used to conduct annual tourism studies for the City every year until 2009) to review the allocations of tourism taxes, primarily hotel, meal and entertainment taxes, and determine if those allocations are an accurate reflection of tourism spending or if they need to be adjusted. This alone would let Virginia Beach residents know that the City is serious about being fair and equitable with the TIP funding.

b). I support a strong Convention & Visitor's Bureau as a public good. I also support the Tourism Advertising Program for marketing outreach. I would also support additional funding to study the economic feasibility of proposed tourism programs and projects by ODU's Economics Dept. and ODU Professor Emeritus Dr. Koch BEFORE we sign agreements and commit to financing projects that may not deliver what we've been promised. We have a wealth of local knowledge and professional expertise on this subject, but for some reason, we're not using it. Instead, the City has shown a preference for hiring consultants in places like the deserts of Utah to tell us what we need to

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do (i.e. the Victus Study). I want every hotel room filled and every restaurant packed with customers. But, we're not there yet. We've got some work to do.

**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Fully staff and fund our police department. Resolve the pay compression issues for the fire department and police department. During times of heavy holiday crowds, put police at every intersection (at a minimum 15th to 31st Streets) directing traffic and keeping the peace. By keeping the traffic moving, it is good for business. This plan would be very similar to what Miami Beach does.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Stop developing! We only have minimum open space left at the oceanfront. We are selling the beach, not concrete walls. People want to come to the resort to see and enjoy the beach. This will be good for day trip business that will shop in our stores and eat in our restaurants. Keep Rudee Loop as dedicated Open Space for today and for the future to be enjoyed by residents and tourists alike! We also need to protect our precious surfing area. It is an important part of the quality of life for our city. Examine existing city-owned properties at the oceanfront for possible conversion to parks, green spaces and walkable areas.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

a). We must begin a multi-year, multi-phase city-wide program to repair and replace existing, out-dated infrastructure...roads, sewers, drains, overhead utilities, etc. Right now, today, I would subcontract out to small businesses to help clean, inspect and maintain the city's stormwater drains annually--59,000 manholes and basins, 1,200 miles of pipe, 560 miles of ditches, 44 miles of canals, 38 dams and spillways, 15 pump stations, and 790 lakes and ponds. That's a start. Given our location in the Mid-Atlantic and our topography, we have always been and will continue to be subject to severe, weather-related events, flooding and sea-level rise. This isn't new. But, we have more people and more development depending on the same old infrastructure, and the system is breaking down more frequently. It won't get better on its own. It is one of my top priorities.

b). We have the funding already to do this; it simply needs to be reallocated. We're putting too much borrowed money into entertainment projects when it should be going to City-wide infrastructure. The success of the entertainment projects have been dubious at best. They compete with private sector businesses, and they contribute to the flooding problems as retention ponds and green space are paved over.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

a). I am running as an Independent. Virginia Beach is a very unique city with unique characteristics. There is no room for partisanship at this level. I am a

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businessman and a problem-solver. We need to balance the interests of all taxpayers, residents and businesses. Government should never pick winners and losers in a free enterprise system. It does not work.

b). Example: The city engaged in a practice of closing streets and issuing passes that only allowed hotel guests into the oceanfront. I headed up the effort with 17 other businesses and took the city to court on this illegal policy. After discussing the matter in court, we all came to an agreement that the city would no longer do this unless there is a true safety issue. This policy was horrible for citizens and businesses because it eliminated a lot of our day trip business. The action I headed benefited everyone.

## **7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I have mixed emotions on offshore drilling, but I am willing to sit down with both sides and discuss this issue. I will protect the environment and economic impact that it could have on the resort if something went wrong. It may be too risky for the waters and tourism industry. I support renewable energy exploration by private industry--wind and solar farms out in the ocean, far from view, as long as the Navy is okay with it.

## **8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The City's annual budget process is the most important activity undertaken by Council. The vote on the budget each May establishes our priorities as a City (by the way, the incumbent managed to miss that important vote this year). In general, I believe in a balanced budget, funded primarily with current revenues. I support the use of debt only to fund public infrastructure and public goods such as schools, roads, sewers, etc. I believe we need to maintain sufficient debt capacity in reserve for emergencies (such as a bridge, road or school replacement if destroyed in a serious weather or other catastrophic event). I do not support the use of public debt for unnecessary, "nice-to-have" projects. The goal should be to keep our debt balance and annual debt service at the lowest levels possible--pay-as-you-go funding as much as possible.

Two examples are: (a) The total debt in Virginia Beach right now is \$2.6 billion right now which has been growing at a faster rate than the national debt. Just to service this debt is \$457,000 per day; \$167 million annually. This money could have funded our whole police and fire budget, including raises, and a big surplus at the year end. (b) The pension fund for the city (unfunded mandate) in the year 2002 was \$22 million to the good. Today it is \$1.4 billion in arrears. This is flat out unacceptable and needs to be fixed now.

## **9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

a). Our City needs to do a better job brokering the message that Tourism is a great industry, and it provides many amenities and benefits to residents, including jobs. Unfortunately, the perception among many is that the resort



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area and tourists are given priority over taxpayers and residents. It is easy to see why this perception exists when Council has been slow to aggressively fund a city-wide stormwater maintenance program but in the meantime gave the green light for a \$68 million Sports Plex. What should be done?

b). It's what you DO that matters. Commission and publicize a study on the TIP Fund allocations. Adjust the allocations to correctly reflect the revenues generated by Tourism with a promise to revisit those allocations every 5 years...just like the Comprehensive Plan. Spending and dining patterns, demographics, lifestyles and overall economic conditions do change over time, and the TIP should accurately reflect those changes. This action alone would boost residents' perception that the City is trying to get it right. The City should prioritize a City-wide infrastructure maintenance program so that all are protected, to the best extent possible, against sea-level rise and flooding. These actions send the message that residents AND the oceanfront BOTH matter and the City is trying to get it right.

Also, the Resort Area should provide more programs and incentives for locals to visit during the off-season. The Resort Area Advisory Committee, working with the Restaurant and Hotel/Motel and Retailers Associations can develop these incentives.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I support the free market, free enterprise system. I do not support tax or other incentives which typically favor large or "selected" developers and corporations. The number one thing to do to facilitate small business expansion and development is to phase out the Business Permit Occupational License (BPOL) Tax. This local tax is assessed on gross revenues, not profits. This is a tragedy and especially affects small businesses operating on high-volume, low margin economies. Other Virginia localities have reduced or eliminated BPOL tax rates with great success. Stafford County has reduced their BPOL tax rates to zero. Henrico County has greatly reduced their BPOL rates and has attracted greater business expansion. As the largest city in the Commonwealth, Virginia Beach should lead the way on getting rid of this job-killing, business stifling tax. Let long-established, small businesses that have contributed to the local economy for many years keep their own money. That money will be used to create new jobs and expand small businesses, or it will be recycled in the local economy through higher private spending. Currently, city-wide collections of BPOL taxes are about \$49 million, a sizable amount, so an intelligent tax rate reduction plan is essential. To offset some of this phase-out, I would use the \$4 million that is currently disbursed annually by the Development Authority in the form of Economic Development Investment Program (EDIP) grants to select businesses (Green Flash Brewery should serve as a warning that this program does not always work) and redirect that amount to the General Fund. I believe that over time, even within the first year, with a proper phase-out of

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the BPOL tax, small business expansion and job creation will be incentivized as never before.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

In general, I am against public/private partnerships. We've had a number of them in Virginia Beach. They are highly touted with skyscrapers and lots of activity, but do we really know the net value they have added to the local economy? Not one of these partnerships produces a comprehensive annual financial report for taxpayers that details the financial results of the public's "investment" in these projects. For example, the City is still paying debt for Town Center which was created almost 20 years ago. New debt is being issued to support continuous Town Center development, but we don't really know the net benefits to the City's overall economy. We hear about how great Town Center is, but where is the financial report? We know that all of these public/private partnerships interfere with the free-market system and create an unfair advantage for the developer lucky enough to be chosen. New public/private partnerships swallow-up existing market share and smaller, older businesses are forced to move or close. We are at a very interesting time in the resort area. We now have so many proposed public/private partnerships that the developers involved are concerned about cannibalizing each other's market share! (example, the Dome developer is concerned about the Pier development) The City needs to proceed with extreme caution with these projects. Right now, I'd say the City may be in over its head with too much promised to too many big developers. With a proposed Pier development, Dome Site, Rudee Loop and Convention Hotel, all requiring public funding through TIP...well, I'd say anyone doing business here at the oceanfront should be alarmed. These public privates are going to be competing against privately funded businesses. These deals would not survive without the subsidies or incentives. No reasonable businessman would invest in these deals because the numbers do not add up. This mindset undermines the whole concept of the free enterprise system. Evidently, it will destroy it. In the meantime, at a minimum, all existing public/private partnerships should be required to produce an annual financial report that is signed-off by the City's Director of Finance.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

If it works, why not? But having said that, our current council cannot even manage our problems. I think we need to get our house in order before we start branching out to other areas. We have some serious issues with our debt; our infrastructure, i.e. stormwater; fully staffing our police department; and properly paying our fire and police departments. But there is something we can do to work with the other localities by combining our efforts in the training of our police officers and firefighters. This will reduce the cost for all the cities.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

## Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

Keep it the way it is...school starts after Labor Day. Virginia Beach is a resort city, and it needs our workforce.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I am glad to see that off-season parking has been started. I have been talking about this issue for a long time. I believe we need to focus on and making sure that parking is distributed throughout the resort as equally as possible. I believe that we can work with private land owners to incentivize (possibly reduce taxes and remove some of the regulations required for parking lots to make it more cost effective) to expand parking.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

All laws should be applied equally. Any people who come to our resort should respect our city and our laws. It should be a zero tolerance to any and all trouble makers.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## BEACH DISTRICT

### DAVID NYGAARD

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I grew up in Virginia Beach after my father moved and retired here in the Navy and graduated from Kempsville, then William and Mary, and finally Regent with an MBA. I have run several successful businesses in Virginia Beach since 1983, which were recognized as the Virginia Business Success Story of the year, Chamber of Commerce, small business of the year, Best Places to Work, and Entrepreneurial Excellence, after I was forced to rebuild my business. I survived a catastrophic business failure, and rebuilt my business after the Great Recession. I have served as an advisor to the local entrepreneurship Center at William and Mary and taught business classes including entrepreneurship at Chowan University. I would bring a unique small business and entrepreneurial focus to city council. Perhaps the greatest qualification is that of a CEO- who has learned how to balance the competing interests of multiple stakeholders, while finding creative solutions and common ground to get things accomplished.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

When the city collects money for a stated purpose, such as storm water, or TIP, the money needs to be used for that stated purpose. Keeping your word is important in city government. I believe we need to continue to innovate with new development and entertainment venues at the oceanfront to improve and expand the tourist's experience when they visit. I also believe we need to make sure we give small business a priority over out-of-town chains when developing because our unique Virginia Beach culture should be preserved- it's that culture which also serves as a critical asset to tourism. I like the Sports Plex and I liked the Arena. I do think we simply must include local civic groups who are impacted by developments and make sure we address their concerns.

When city funds are used in public private projects, I think we should include provisions so that citizens receive some kind of benefit as well, even if it is a 10% discount offered by the developers for various services they provide. We need to make sure local citizens feel included in some fashion when public money is used to encourage development. The ocean front continues to be our greatest asset economically, and we need to make sure locals have the opportunity to enjoy it too.

With respect to new initiatives, I believe the best ideas can come from business incubators and I'd like to see the city support partnerships between private incubators and local entrepreneurship centers so that businesses can

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

grow organically and businesses can take advantage of the new high speed data hubs coming into the city as well as the new Federal Regulations for Opportunity Zones to encourage investment with great tax benefits. With the high number of tourists visiting, we have a unique ability to test and validate new consumer ideas or concepts with tourists.

### **3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

41% of murders are connected with Domestic Violence, and I'd like to see our police manual updated with new research regarding domestic violence with respect to cultural differences, and also trained to look for signs of manipulation and abuse of victims which might prevent them from protecting themselves, signs of choking/strangulation, which is a felony and most likely indicator that the abuser will commit murder.

Human Trafficking both with respect to sex trafficking and forced labor are on the rise and Virginia Beach is a hub for both activities. I'd like to see initiatives with local groups to not only help police and first responders identify these crimes, but also help teach citizens what to look for as well. We have excellent local groups, such as Samaritan House and Virginia Beach Justice Initiative, who could step in and help in these areas with minimal government funding for training and awareness. Partnerships with proven organizations can go a long way.

### **4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

I grew up around Mount Trashmore and remember how Virginia Beach was recognized for this green innovation back in the 1970's by taking the landfill and creating a wonderful park. We should continue to stretch ourselves by innovating ideas to create more green spaces for tourists and locals to enjoy. I'd like to see the land purchased from Norfolk Southern for Light Rail put to some better use. I suggested a plan to pave the rail bed, creating a road which would be leased to a private company to provide a dedicated bus/trolley service linking Newtown Road Light rail to the ocean front. The lease income could help pay back the purchase of the land, and the city would add a bike lane, possibly adding Pace Bikes, on one side and a walking trail on the other creating a good 21 mile long green space. State funding could be acquired through VDOT for the road, and the money from the lease could be used to pay back the purchase as well as develop the other aspects of this land.

### **5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

I believe government has an obligation to use money collected by the city for the stated purposes and not divert that money to other causes. The Storm water fees were clearly not used as they were intended, creating a backlog of maintenance that needs to urgently be addressed. I propose we begin by taking 4% of the budget and earmarking/ prioritizing it for catching up on the backlog. By doing this we should be able to accelerate the catch-up to 4 years. This is the essence of my 4% in 4 year plan. I have and will continue to actively lobby both state and federal elected officials to provide additional

## Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

funding to help in this regard. One lawmaker told me that no one from city council has contacted him for state money to help with flood mitigation projects. If we can request state money for road re-routing, like Atlantic Avenue, we can request money for help with the backlog of storm management projects. Additionally, I'd like to help incentivize citizens to address the storm water management on their own properties such as reducing the storm water fees for rain barrels or rain gardens, which would allow for a more gradual discernment of rain water, or efforts to revitalize the soil so it can absorb more water using native species plants. In our own small contribution, we are purchasing fewer yard signs and instead giving away trees with our campaign signs attached (which can also be removed) for residents to plant in their yards to help revitalize their soils. When considering new development we need to consider ways to help mitigate flooding caused by the development itself, and when considering city maintained landscaping, we should design with an eye toward using plant materials that would help absorb more water.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I have been active in both political parties and recognize that city issues like flooding and public safety are not partisan issues. I also believe we need a level playing field so that we welcome all kinds of developers. Our reputation unfortunately, as a city that only accommodates certain developers, has encouraged good developers to walk away from doing business in our city.

- 7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

We cannot allow our tourist industry or military bases to be jeopardized by offshore drilling. The navy has expressed concerns and could close bases, because they may not be able to operate with oil rigs and the tourism board is against for obvious reasons that an oil spill would decimate tourism. I see no compelling reasons to allow offshore drilling here and I would actively advocate and lobby against it. I believe we need to preserve green spaces against overdevelopment and to build wisely when the city builds new buildings with an emphasis on "smart-green technology" incorporated into new buildings. We can achieve long term operational savings by spending a little more in design to make maintenance of these new buildings less costly and more fuel efficient to heat or cool.

- 8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

I am not a fan of bond debt for general operations or for funding necessary services. I would not favor taking additional debt to catch up on the backlog, for instance, and believe these should be paid for from the operational budget. I believe unless a project can pay for itself over time, we should not borrow for new development. I favor debt financing of projects that have a good rate of return over time, just like any business. A rate of return can be

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measured in different ways. As an accountant and appraiser, there are many valid ways to look at value contributed and how to properly assign costs to various projects. I think we need to carefully consider these costs but also believe we need to be bold and creative when looking at new projects to make sure we do not neglect our tourist industry.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

I think given the recent dialogue, that citizens need to be continually educated on the benefits of our tourist industry and how it is used to fund schools, and reduce property taxes. There seems to be a lot of misinformation being disseminated and a public relations campaign may be in order to improve awareness of the positive benefits the citizens receive from the tourist projects, such as the prospective new pier, already approved sportsplex, possible wave and entertainment park/venue at the former Dome site, or a regional arena that could bring larger entertainment options and maybe even a sports franchise to our market.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I am a small business advocate and believe that small locally owned businesses are the backbone of our economy. Local businesses know how to create local jobs. One key to development of small business is a level playing field which makes it easier to build a business. There were times in my own business that I became incredibly frustrated with the way our city does permitting for example. I think there is room to improve here. I believe we need to change the business license tax to a more equitable system and would lobby the local delegation to give localities flexibility under the Dillon Rule to provide incentives. We can certainly provide tax rebates to new businesses who are hiring. I believe we can break large contracts into smaller ones to attract more small business bids. I believe we can reevaluate the bonding requirements so they are commensurate with the job being bid; there is no reason to have a \$2 million bond for a \$10,000 project- assuming no other factors. I have worked with local entrepreneurship centers and currently have one of my offices at a business incubator in Norfolk, and I subscribe to this model of small business incubation. We currently have several opportunity zones, which provide significant Federal tax incentives for investment. To the degree we can expand these zones within our city, this alone creates a great inducement to invest. I'd like to see us incorporate each of these ideas to encourage small business incubation because there really isn't one answer.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

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I am a proponent of public-private projects but prefer they are more private and supported by the public. I think clearly we need to provide some city incentives to attract small business projects or development. I believe these should be transparent and benefit the city economically but also our citizens. For instance, we could ask developers receiving these incentives to provide discounts or other extra services which would go directly to our residents. I think that is fair. I believe these kinds of projects should be able to pay for themselves in a reasonable period and that we should continually monitor progress and have reporting steps in place so we can measure their success over time. It shouldn't be a one time give-away, but should be closely monitored and reported on. I'm concerned we have not had reliable cost-benefit analysis reports on these, so I'd like to make sure we are getting better projections. Monitoring past projects would give important information going forward.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I've had to re-brand my business several times, based on changing market conditions and on what services I provided. I am not sure we need to do a full re-brand but rather put more focus on our brand and invest more in marketing the brand. Some people feel that a "name change" from Hampton Roads to say, Coastal Virginia or some other name, is enough to re-brand and I disagree. I am considered an expert in branding and believe it takes more than a name change and that we can accomplish more the way we market whatever name we create alongside other types of efforts to really create a memorable brand.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I am a product of the current schedule and recognize that it always allowed me to work later into the summer. I would certainly consult the school system but am not adverse to the current school schedule.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I believe we need to make sure our residents also have access to our beaches and other recreational sites. I think increased parking garages are important and necessary and I am optimistic that we can find ways to make them pay for themselves. I also believe we can improve our local mass transit to benefit employees. We have to consider the impact of employee parking because if we don't it will affect neighborhoods as well as available tourist parking options. I was fortunate enough to own property on 22nd street and 24th street where I could park and walk to work- when I worked at the oceanfront. Most are not as fortunate and we should be mindful.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

I think first of all the city needs to keep its word about where it collects funds and where it spends them, and that means with stormwater maintenance or the additional taxes collected from the Ocean Front businesses to be re-



## **Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018**

invested there as part of the TIP fund. We should not rob these funds and use in the general fund, without the consent of the taxpayers and businesses who pay them. I think code enforcement should be consistent and create a level playing field for all stakeholders. I think everyone needs to be brought to the table to find consensus and agreement over whatever projects are needed. There are simply too many stakeholders and we cannot afford to alienate or ignore any of them.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## CENTERVILLE DISTRICT

### SABRINA WOOTEN

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I serve in the community and I understand the needs of the citizens. I serve as a Chaplain in the Virginia Beach Police Department, a volunteer instructor for Kempsville Entrepreneur Academy and as the Vice Chair for the Minority Business Council. Additionally, I have experience as a Supreme Court Certified Mediator; a skill set that is greatly needed on City Council.

I am running for City Council to ensure that Virginia Beach continues on the path of growth and moves forward given the abrupt change in leadership in our current City Council. Additionally, I am running for City Council to ensure that the future is brighter for the next generation by creating viable opportunities in our workforce and ensuring that all children have access to a quality education.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Funding designated for the TIP fund should be used for tourism projects as designated. There should be no exceptions to this rule.

I support the Sports Center as a new initiative to enhance tourism. The Sports Center will secure revenue during the off peak season of summer. The tourist who visit the Sports Center will patronize other areas of the oceanfront as well as the business entities of Towne Center and abroad. Additionally, the Dome project will create another stream of revenue for tourism as well.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

As a Chaplain for the Virginia Beach Police Department I support cameras for officers and believe the pay compression issue should be corrected in the next budget year.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Open spaces and natural views and vistas make for a great resort, and we should include those desires when we consider development projects near the oceanfront area.

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

I believe that it is important to review and adhere to the Dewberry study that was prepared specifically to address the sea level rise and flooding issue. It is important to partner with the surrounding cities to see how they address this matter in an effort to learn from them and potentially offset some of the costs associated with this issue.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or**

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**group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

As a Supreme Court Certified Mediator it was my job to work with opposing forces by remaining impartial and coming up with solutions to provide a win/win solution for all parties involved. I believe that this skillset is needed on the City Council and I look forward to implementing this skillset as the Centerville District Council member.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I do not support off shore drilling. However, I do support renewable energy exploration.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The fiscal year begins July 1st and ends July 30<sup>th</sup>. The budget should include the amount appropriated and expended during the preceding year, current fiscal year's appropriations and expected expenditures and proposed expenditures for the coming fiscal year and any increases or decreases that are proposed. A well-prepared budget helps the City of Virginia Beach qualify for a AAA bond. However, an unequally funded budget will decrease the City of Virginia Beach's chance of maintaining the AAA bond.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Communication is key, and in my short time as a candidate, I was surprised how few people really know the economy of Virginia Beach and what generates revenue for our schools and our police and other city services. City Council members should be champions at delivering this message to citizens.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

Yes, I would support an incentive program for small businesses. I support a full phase out of the BPOL tax.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I support public/private partnerships that are developed in the right manner. For instance, a pier project that was created with tax incentives that would pay for the project and still allow the city to maintain ownership of the property. Public/private partnerships can be a win/win if the public use is substantial and the project expands our markets.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Yes, I support the rebranding of Hampton Roads. I would rebrand it as Coastal Virginia to represent the many bodies of water that surround us. This name is also attractive to the tourist population.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

I favor retaining the post Labor Day start of schools in Virginia Beach.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

A long term vision for parking would include building a few parking garages that include a tax incentive that pays for itself. Employee parking should be a major component of this plan.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Our resort needs to look first class in order to be first class. Blighted buildings should be improved and we should look at not just code enforcement but economic partnerships to redevelop blighted construction.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## CENTERVILLE DISTRICT

### ERIC WRAY

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

In my everyday business, I have to possess a unique trait; have compassion while making a profit. I communicate with all types of people in all circumstances. How this correlate to City Council; I have the vast ability to get the job done for our City while showing empathy and caring for our citizens. I also bring a leadership cadre that has real world experience.

As a first generation startup owner; I bring a perspective that understands the new business owner. I understand how to open a business and its challenges. I've worked in politics for a number of years on the Federal, State & Local levels. I understand the process of how local government works.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Per our City Charter; anything over 10 Million should be going to referendum. So, if there be a surplus over 10 Million; the voters should have a say on how we allocate those funds.

I want to see tourism boom and flourish. I want our next Vice Mayor or Councilperson, serve as our Chief Business Creation officer. That person will work strongly with our departments to attract major businesses and fortune 500 companies etc.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

After speaking with many police officers; my first plan is to fix pay compression. Currently, theres no overtime available for them. I realize that the majority of our incidents, occur between Thurs – Sunday. I first want to see Police fully staffed and paid overtime. That should insure more officers available at the oceanfront.

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**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

The more we develop, the more green space we lose. I think the oceanfront is a tourist destination and not a suburb. However, I am very willing to have a conversation should it be a broad consensus that we need to preserve oceanfront green space.

**5. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

City politics should NEVER be Democrat or Republican. It should all be citizen based. My votes will reflect the will of the people and not a partisan political party.

**6. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I think we should drill offshore which will create jobs and produce natural resources.

**7. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The City's debt policy has two principal factors that set a policy limit on debt and the way it is issued. The debt service cost can not go over 10% of our annual operating budget and that the City's issued debt cant exceed \$3,000 per capita.

**8. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

First, I want to eliminate the parking cost to our citizens. As, mentioned earlier, I want to attract bigger businesses and fortune 500 companies to the oceanfront. Lets reinvest into the expanding business to our city.

**9. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

Yes. I first want to see the BPOL tax abolished and give new businesses tax incentive.

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**10. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

There are good partnerships and not so good ones. I am in favor of ones with an expiration date and not a major burden on taxpayers

**11. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Our Region is fine currently

**12. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

That is a school board issue; we have to adhere to their votes

**13. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I would like to see it free for residents.

**14. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

1. Open the zoning classifications
2. Having Enforcement work closer with the owner
3. Relax regulations that don't work

**15. UNANSWERED QUESTION #5:**

What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## CENTERVILLE DISTRICT

C. CONRAD SCHESVENTER



# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## LYNNHAVEN DISTRICT

### JAMES WOOD

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

As a four-term City Councilman, former police officer and current business owner, I am running for re-election to the Lynnhaven District City Council seat. A strong believer in lifelong education, I recently earned a Master's Degree in History, thirty years after earning a Bachelor's Degree. I've really become a passionate reader of history and pursued a Master's Degree online, which was a great experience. I was unanimously elected by City Council to serve as Vice Mayor of Virginia Beach on May 1, 2018. I am a commissioner and Chairman of the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads and Council Liaison to the Audit Committee, Hampton Roads Transit, the Volunteer Council, Town Center, Sister Cities, the Technology Committee and the Bayfront Advisory Committee. I will continue to focus on several important issues, including public safety, education and flood mitigation. As a former police officer, I understand the need to keep neighborhoods safe and I continue to be a leader on safety issues, from increasing penalties for malicious attacks on pets and DUI offenses. I was appointed by the Virginia Senate to the Joint Subcommittee to Address Recurrent Flooding, an issue we will continue to address. Virginia Beach is among the top cities in the nations at risk for recurrent flooding due to stormwater impacts, and will work for greater state involvement in funding solutions.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Using the TIP fund outside of its purpose was an unfortunate compromise to reach budget agreement after the retirement of Mayor Will Sessoms. It is not something I would suggest Council do again. I have supported tourism projects throughout my service on City Council, most recently the Sports Center. Tourism is one of our major industries, generating significant revenue for the city and employing a large number of Virginia Beach residents, and we have done an excellent job supporting the growth of that market.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Public safety is an investment in our quality of life, and I have been a leader in making sure our resort and our entire city stays on the forefront of safety in a world where the threats are numerous and unpredictable. I have worked extensively to correct the structural imbalances in our salary plans that result in pay compression and we will continue to make it a strong priority in the upcoming budget. This year's past budget included millions of new dollars in

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

serious effort to solve compression to a large degree, and I support creating a pay plan that mitigates the impacts of compression. Specific to the oceanfront concerns, I have consistently voted to fund and deploy technology that assists intelligence gathering as well as providing safety for first line public safety personnel. I have been endorsed by the Virginia Beach Professional Firefighters, the Virginia Beach Police Benevolent Association, Sheriff Ken Stolle and retired VBPD Chief Jake Jacocks.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

We can encourage more green spaces in our resort through design guidelines and redevelopment proposals that include open, green spaces. Massing structures together to provide more open space and using urban design concepts help create more green space. A walkable resort is a goal of the city, and can be achieved through working with the business community and raising the bar in design.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Climate change and sea level rise are two major issues that impact Virginia Beach. The City needs to leverage local, state and federal funding for mitigation efforts on the impacts of flooding, and we need to proceed along a path shown by engineering modeling and studies so we can solve problems in an orderly fashion that minimizes cost, maximizes effectiveness and limits the shifting of flooding to other neighborhoods. Funding will be significantly impacted by the level of participation from state and federal governments. It is essential that we partner with the private sector to make sure designs treat stormwater quantity as much as stormwater quality.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

Partisan politics have no place in local government and I have always been supported for election by Democrats, Republicans and Independents, including this cycle. There have been many instances of compromises brokered over my years of service, in every budget, public safety pay plans, transportation, major projects, and the current process of developing policies of short term rentals.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

Offshore drilling – Opposed. The risks are too great for the perceived benefit. Offshore wind energy – Support. I co-sponsored a resolution on August 7, 2018 endorsing the effort to bring wind turbines to the waters off of Virginia Beach. Solar power – Support. NAS Oceana has a solar field outside the base. While we do not have a lot of available land for this, I would support expanding the program in the rural areas as part of the ARP provided the solar structures do not negatively impact soils, etc.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

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What few people understand is that while our Operating Budget is passed by a majority vote, our Capital Improvement Budget requires a supermajority due to the issuance of bond debt. Both budgets start with proposals by the City Manager and after public hearings and Council input, a reconciled budget of each is offered for a vote usually in May in advance of the end of the fiscal year. Despite the fearmongering heard from some, the city's debt policies are very conservative. We have a rapid repayment policy and 75% of the principal is paid within ten years, and the \$1.2 billion in bonded debt is the result of borrowing to fund schools, roads, water and sewer projects and other public projects.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

The most recent data we have shows an annual economic impact of \$1.49 billion and actually \$132 million in local and state taxes, as well as providing \$278 million in salaries for 13,600 jobs. Visitors spend about \$4.1 million per day in our city. I will continue to push to fund projects that enhance our hospitality business, that create more room nights and that encourage repeat visits. Communication is so individualized today that press stories and websites can't reach mass audiences that they once could. Social media has replaced that in many ways, and we need to be communicating in those forums and engage misinformation rather than assume people will come to the city's website to learn the facts about tourism.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

The city has experience with projects like this on a smaller scale, incentivizing homeowners in at-risk areas to improve their properties. Businesses are different than homes in that their infrastructure and capital improvements cost significantly more and are subject to stricter regulation. There are a number of incentive programs now in place that require a certain level of private sector investment and/or the creation of new jobs. This could easily be adapted into a micro-grant program for new small businesses that achieve smaller but comparable investment or employment goals.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I support Public Private Partnerships when they have a demonstrated ability to pay for themselves over a number of years, provide a project that the private or public sector is unlikely to do on its own, and that expands the market of Virginia Beach while giving tangible benefits to the public. Studies show that all projects have some level of displacement, so the goal is to mitigate that by drawing more people to Virginia Beach and expanding the economic impact.

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**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Coastal Virginia has benefits geographically that Hampton Roads does not have and would probably be better understood nationwide.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I support the current policy of post Labor Day school starts.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Parking at the resort by necessity must include a component that addresses employee parking and my vision is a multi-prong approach.

First, any new parking structures should be expanded to the greatest extent possible where feasible, making the resulting additional spaces available to the public. It is significantly less expensive to add 100 spaces to a larger project than it is to build 100 new spaces in a stand-alone structure.

Second, we need to evaluate parking patterns and open up reserved spaces during time periods that the spaces are generally vacant to allow for short-term parking.

Third, we need to look for remote lots and work with oceanfront businesses to create a continuous shuttle for employees to and from lots and several stops at the resort. Finally, we can provide an "employee-only" parking permit area in some structures to allow late night parking that is close to an employee's place of work.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Code enforcement is handled by several city agencies and if there are problem buildings or operations, the city should be notified. Generally first responders will notify the appropriate agencies if there is a life-safety issue. Incentives to maintain or preserve older buildings can be pursued and in extreme cases, the city can use spot blight abatement to correct or remove deficiencies.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## LYNNHAVEN DISTRICT

### SUSANNE HENDERSON

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

Some of the unique qualifications I possess that make me an appropriate representative for Virginia Beach City Council is I am an average citizen, have no conflict of interest, I am not born and raised here, and I have lived in several different Beach communities and tourist town all over the United States. These reason and many other reason why I bring a different perspective to City Council. I am seeking this elected office because I have the desire to serve all the citizens of Virginia Beach and not the select few, I love Virginia Beach & am tired of seeing the increase debt and deteriorating of our infrastructure. I am not running to be a politician and to move up the political ladder, just have the desire to serve the citizens of Virginia Beach and my country the United States of America.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

Use the TIP fund for what it is allocated for, to reinvest into tourism related projects.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Make this a priority, by fixing the First responders pay and boost their moral. If we don't have enough first responders and they are not properly equipped then we will continue to have major issues and lack the protection. This all is part of having a solid foundation for Virginia Beach.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Beautify areas that are already vacant and available. By improving the quality it will attract people and businesses. This is important.

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Virginia Beach must prioritize this! The city has not been making this a priority and we are at the point that no matter what gets developed it will end up flooded if Virginia Beach doesn't stop the wasteful spending and focus on the issues. Using the money for what it is actually allocated for is a good start.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I can assure you that any decisions I would make it would be what was in the best interest for the city as a whole/ the citizens. Being that I was not born or raised here I do not have any ties to one person or group such as investors or

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commercial developers. My career as a residential Realtor I negotiate for a living and at the same time stay ethical, honest & fair while still representing my client & looking out for their best interest.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

Both are important for the area and the state as a whole. It brings a lot of benefits including jobs.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City Budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

There are different types of Bond debts but if the city doesn't pay the interest rate it will affect the city's bond rating. Either way Virginia Beach is so in debt that it is having a hard time paying the first responders and the already promised pensions.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

First Virginia Beach must make the Oceanfront safe. If the residence of Virginia Beach are attracted to the resort area then the tourist will come and there would not be a need to relay how important the Virginia Beach Tourism. Making Virginia Beach attractive to its residence is important.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development?**

Simplify and streamline the process, remove some of the regulations this will attract more small businesses and will help them grow.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Not necessarily for it.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Before any talk of rebranding, Virginia Beach needs to fix the current issues. Virginia Beach first needs to have a solid foundation, i.e. Flooding, Infrastructure & public safety.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I understand the original reason for making school start after Labor Day, but what I am seeing is the Virginia Beach Public Schools are get out really late in the summer, the end of June. Most of the private schools in the area kind of mimic the college schedules, starting towards the end of August and getting out right before Memorial Day weekend and that seems to work better.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

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Virginia Beach needs more parking garages as a lot of Virginia Beach Citizens do not want to go to the Oceanfront during “tourist season” because it is so difficult to find parking. I do believe the lack of parking in the summer is a huge deterrent and a problem that needs to be addressed. If someone is working at the resort area there should be a system that allows them to park and not have to pay only while they are actually at work.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

First step is for the business owners to keep the city accountable for what they are responsible for and the city to keep the business owners accountable for what they are responsible for. Keeping accountability is a form of working together for the same goal or purpose.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## LYNNHAVEN DISTRICT

### MICHAEL MASKELL

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I have graduate degrees in physics and law, giving me the ability to understand both the technical and legal issues facing the city. Most importantly, I lack any family or investment ties to the construction, development, and banking industries; I have no conflicts of interest to cloud my decisions. I am seeking elected office to make our city leadership accountable to residents, and to prioritize the city's fundamental needs first.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I am not opposed to using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects. Residents pay into the TIP fund as well as tourists, when they are at the oceanfront, and the city's resources beyond TIP funds go into the maintenance, policing, etc of the oceanfront. In addition to the advertising and other activities the city engages in to enhance tourism, I would support expanding these efforts to promote more of Virginia Beach's features, such as ecotourism opportunities, and events that showcase the city's diverse cultures.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Our police do an excellent job with the resources they are provided; however, we are still losing officers to neighboring jurisdictions due to non-competitive pay and benefits. We need to fix pay compression, not just by raising pay levels to where they should be, but by moving to a grade/step system to ensure compression does not occur again. There are many other policies we can implement to improve efficiency and morale, such as allowing officers to take vehicles home when they are off-duty (which studies have shown reduces maintenance costs drastically, and improves officer work/life balance).

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Space is at a premium at the oceanfront; to increase the amount of green space at the resort, I would encourage developers to explore plans that incorporate green spaces into their designs. Landscaping with native vegetation, designing for maximum solar efficiency, and incorporating rainwater-harvesting architecture are just a few ways we can improve the environmental sustainability of the resort area.

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**



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Preparation for sea level rise and flooding requires a multi-faceted approach including closing of the stormwater maintenance backlog, construction of new stormwater management projects and improvement of existing ones, as well as “soft” measures such as limiting rezoning of agricultural land and adapting building codes to account for the possibility of flooding. Funding should come from existing stormwater fees and revenue sources, as well as reallocation of funds from less critical areas.

- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

Throughout my campaign, I have made it a point to work with people from across the political spectrum toward the common goal of solving our city’s problems. It is well-known that I am a member of the VB Democrats, yet a large portion of my supporters are Republicans, Tea Party members, and Libertarians. This is because I have developed a reputation for being reasonable and willing to listen to all viewpoints.

- 7. What’s your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I am absolutely opposed to offshore drilling due to the extreme environmental risks it presents. I am in favor of renewable energy exploration, including offshore wind farming.

- 8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The city manager submits a budget to the council at least 90 days prior to the beginning of each budget year. The budget is prepared by the city manager based on the estimates of revenue and expenditure from each department head. The city manager’s recommended budget is required to be balanced (i.e. the expenditures must not exceed the estimated receipts without a recommendation for an increase in tax/fee revenue. The council holds a public hearing on the recommended budget ordinance, and is adopted by a vote of at least a majority of council not later than 30 days prior to the end of the current fiscal year. Additional appropriations after the budget is passed may be made only if there is enough available in the general fund to meet said appropriations. Council may vote to issue bond debt by passing an ordinance adopted by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of council members *and* approved by a voter referendum. The city’s total debt may not exceed 10% of the city’s assessed real estate.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Tourism is our largest resource, and we have many different tourism avenues to develop. My vision involves not only promotion of beach tourism, but also developing our city’s potential for ecotourism, agrotourism, and showcasing of cultural diversity.

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- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

There are certain types of improvements that the city has a legitimate interest in incentivizing. For example, the city could offer tax incentives and other benefits to encourage building improvements that improve stormwater management. Small business development can be facilitated by simplifying and reducing the cost of permitting processes for small businesses, making the city more open to businesses like food trucks, holding frequent events and festivals, and making it easier for small businesses/vendors to gain access to these events.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Public/private partnerships should be subject to strict scrutiny to avoid waste and abuse. At a minimum, any public/private partnership should satisfy at least two criteria: 1) the project should bring a new capability to the city, rather than competing with existing local businesses; 2) the city should be able to expect a reliable return on its investment that is greater than the interest that would be saved by reducing the debt instead.

- 12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I don't see a need to rebrand our region.

- 13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

Starting school the day after Labor Day makes sense to me because it's been that way for so long, but I understand that potentially large financial benefits can be predicted for a post-Labor Day school start due to an extended tourist season, and I am open to exploring that possibility.

- 14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

More municipal parking is needed to better serve Virginia Beach residents. The municipal parking lots should be upgraded to parking garages, which can be paid for by parking fees until the buildings are paid off, then made free or greatly reduced in cost for residents. Employee parking would greatly benefit nearby businesses, and leasing spaces to businesses for employee parking would be another potential revenue stream to help pay for the parking facilities.

- 15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

We should continue and expand programs that keep the oceanfront a clean and attractive place to visit; such as the successful Cigarette Litter Prevention Program implemented in 2015. Codes should be enforced in a consistent and equal manner.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## PRINCESS ANNE DISTRICT

### BARBARA HENLEY

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you and an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I believe that this is a critical time for Virginia Beach, and especially the Princess Anne District. Now, more than ever, Virginia Beach needs experienced, proven, steady leadership to provide a stable, financially secure, well managed city. As we deal with the forecasts of natural changes that affect our drainage capabilities, we must have demonstrated leadership in conservation and environmental concerns to meet those challenges. I believe I have that proven background to help lead the city as we make these important decisions for our future.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? What new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

The TIP fund was created to provide a dedicated funding source for tourism related projects and that is how it should be used. I look to the tourism related community to recommend initiatives and funding that they can support to bring about those projects. The TIP fund allocations should be carefully reviewed, and perhaps some of the allocations could be adjusted, but it should be done cooperatively with the resort community. I always appreciate hearing RAAC recommendations.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

The city council's role is to provide the policy, and the funding to enact that policy. Our goal that we are the safest city in Virginia would mean that our citizens feel safe any place – at home, in the neighborhood, throughout the city, at all times. I would make sure that we have the most capable, well trained people in the public safety leadership roles and I would be looking to hear their recommendations. We now have issues that were previously inconceivable. I look to the professionals to make the recommendations for how we should be prepared to address all public safety issues.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

As a champion of the earlier Open Space Program adopted by the City Council in 2000, I am recommending that we reengage that program. The Oceanfront planning area had four parcels/easements acquired with this program, ranging from a small but important parcel at Norfolk Avenue of 1.2 acres in 2002, to the 98 acre land/easement exchange with the Navy of the

## Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

Marshview property in 2010. As we have opportunities to assure that green space is included with development, we need to seize the chance.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

The City Council set in place the study for sea level rise in the 2015-16 budget and engaged the Dewberry Firm to conduct that three-year study. That study work was funded by a federal grant. That three-stage study is due to submit recommendations to the city in a few months. The recurrent flooding modeling work was also funded, and is being conducted by dividing the city into 31 sub-watersheds in order to develop specific modeling parameters for each specific sub-watershed. That work is being completed incrementally and will be complete for all sub-watersheds by mid- 2019. When we have the benefit of the findings of these two in-depth studies, we will be at the point of determining what is the best course of action we should take to address the sea level rise-recurrent flooding issues for our future. This will require multiple actions in order to address the differing needs throughout the city. We will need to look to many funding sources, including federal, state and local funding as well as grants and whatever else we can find to assist. I serve on the regional Coastal Resiliency Committee through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission which will assist as this entire region tries to meet the challenge.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I have a very clear record that will assure voters that I am an independent thinker and that I am not controlled by any one person or group. I do not belong to a political party. I am an Independent. My time on city council clearly shows that I have always been a grass-roots representative. While I do have broad support from the various sectors of the city's communities, my campaigns are funded by a wide-array of donors. When I am presented with an issue, I listen to all stakeholders; I study the total background of the question; I try to see the broad question and consider all angles. Often, there are opposing views, which each have valid concerns. Finding an acceptable compromise is important. Probably the most difficult compromise I helped broker was the question of how to control sprawl in the southern part of the city, yet maintain a fair means of compensation for property owners. It took several years of considering alternatives, but we finally developed the Agricultural Reserve Program which has proven to be highly successful, and

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

has become the model for other agricultural protection programs in the state and nation.

**7. What is your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I firmly support the development of renewable energy sources such as offshore wind energy and solar. I do not support offshore drilling because there are too many variables that could adversely affect our environment and our economy. I supported the city council resolutions supporting offshore wind energy and opposing offshore drilling. I believe that the city should be active in making its positions known on these critical issues.

**8. Explain your understanding of the Virginia Beach City Budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

Critical to Virginia Beach's future is maintaining our strong financial ratings, Triple-A from all three rating agencies. The annual Comprehensive Annual Financial Report completely accounts for all budgeting policies and expenditures, and includes the annual independent auditor's report. Included in the CAFR is an accounting of the Debt Management Policies of the city, including the self-imposed debt indicators. The most obvious of those debt indicators is the established standard that overall net debt is not to exceed \$3,000 per capita. All debt affordability indicators are well within the established guidelines.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60 million dollars of tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how you will relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

I support all of Virginia Beach's industries, including tourism. Because of our very special natural location and amenities, tourism is a natural industry for us to support and cultivate. I have a long history of supporting our tourism, going back to the early Atlantic Avenue beautification programs. Our tourism projects have proven not only to be good for attracting visitors to our city, but also good for our residents to enjoy. It is important that we continue to be competitive in the tourism market for the success of the industry, and that we consciously include in those attractions amenities that entice our citizens to participate in those activities. An important means for including our local residents is to assure that there is ample parking for day-use at the oceanfront. Local residents are an important source of customers, especially for the off-season, and need to be a part of all considerations.

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**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? What other alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development?**

Our economic development initiatives address all levels of businesses. Small businesses thrive best when we also have successful “big” businesses. We are aggressively looking at assuring that Small, Women and Minority Businesses are given opportunities to participate in our local government contracts, and we will very soon have the results of the disparity study which has examined our use of this program. Our Economic Development Incentive Program is especially successful, and in the most recent review of the period between 2014 and 2017, 71% of grants were awarded for existing company expansion projects, and 42% were awarded to companies with fewer than 50 employees. Since this program has proven to be successful, perhaps we could adjust some of the qualifications to assure more small business participation. This program is funded by the cigarette tax. Anything that we do to make certain that we have a strong, growing economy should have a positive effect on all well-founded businesses. “A rising tide floats all boats.” A stagnant economy will probably be most harmful for small businesses. A positive attitude toward our business investors is important.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach? Please elaborate on the displacement factor.**

We have successfully used public/private partnerships in many ways to spur economic development and to provide services for our citizens. Economic development is competitive. If there are incentives that can be provided, particularly by providing public infrastructure improvements that serve not only a particular development, but also the surrounding area, that can be very positive. Established incentive programs that have specific qualifications should be equally administered for everyone. Any partnership must show a benefit to the city and be revenue positive for the city. The City Council considers the impacts of any partnerships on all of our citizens. Often, the city can simply facilitate a service, particularly in partnerships with non-profits. While the city cannot stifle competition, any partnership with the city should, and does, include an analysis of the displacement factor to assure that the benefit to the city is not overstated. Any public/private partnership needs to meet carefully crafted standards, but when an opportunity meets those standards, I certainly can be supportive.

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**12. Are you in support of rebranding of our region and, if so, what would you rebrand it and why?**

If our region is to be rebranded, it must be done with the support of the region and after a tremendous amount of groundwork is in place. I would be interested in hearing about the proposal to rebrand the region.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I have always supported post Labor Day opening for schools.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Any long term solution for parking at the resort area must include employee parking considerations. On high saturation days, parking can be a constraining factor at the oceanfront. As the professional parking consultants develop the options to present to city council for consideration, factors which must be addressed are residential neighborhood preservation, customer access, and the availability of safe employee parking. Land availability and funding will be major constraining factors that must be overcome. Continued creative financial partnerships will be needed to ensure the success of this process.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

First, the problem that needs correction must be identified. It is important that codes be enforced, not just "put on the books." Then it is important that enforcement be uniform, so that there is a level playing field among like businesses. Perhaps we need to have discussion among the resort area businesses about the perceived problem, and then we need to assure that we have the properly trained staff to enforce the code requirements.

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## PRINCESS ANNE DISTRICT

### PIERI BURTON

**1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you and an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I have a very innovative thinking mind that allows me to think “out side of the box,” to come up with solutions to common everyday difficult problems. My motto is “What is difficult for everyone else is just right for me.” I also am an Associate Pastor & Trustee at a local church in the Virginia Beach community, (Christian Way Ministries) A Real Estate Sales Agent, A Mortgage Loan officer, Director of Operations of Men of Distinction, (Mentoring) Virginia Beach C.E.R.T Emergency First Response and I raise my beautiful 12 year old daughter who attends Virginia Beach public schools. I proudly profess my faith in all arenas in my life. So, know that I will serve with the humility, humbleness and servitude as a servant should while on council. I am seeking election, because I believe I have the mind-set and ability to ensure my constituents voices are heard on council. And, I have the zest to build bridges with my peers to ensure fair and ethical legislation that benefits all citizens are passed. I’m also running for those small business owners who are tired of being over-taxed, those citizens who have to drive on in-adequate roads for their daily commute, those who are looking for income producing jobs so they can stay in a city that they love and respect, those who are on fixed incomes and are reaching a ripe age in life, those who are homeless and locked up and forgotten about, and those who are deficit hawks who seek justice over corruption. These are the reasons I’m running for council. To ensure their voices are heard!

**2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? What new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I do not agree on using Tourism Investment Program on non-tourism related projects. I am a fan of this new “Surf Park” which I hope stimulates economic development in that region. These have been very successful in other cities out west and I hope it draws year-around visitation to the oceanfront.

**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

First, we must solve the citizen to police officer ratio problem. I believe we still have an eighty (80) officer shortage for the Virginia Beach task force. Plus, our police officers and fire fighters are suffering from pay compression which lowers moral while at work. We need to address and solve this problem before truly being able to remedy any public safety problem. So, I would suggest more funds be allocated in hiring more police officers, Actually hiring EMTS for our voluntary city EMS, which will allow firefighters to remain on the truck and be able to respond to calls.

Secondly, I would plan and add more entertainment for college beach weekends. Having thousands of people who come down annually on their college break and



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have no entertainment provided for them is a recipe for trouble. Therefore, our beach weekend has been unsuccessful. We must provide and allocate the same resources and capitalize on revenue as we do with any other event held at the ocean front.

## 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?

Open scenic natural views and parks are always ways to boost green spaces in urban localities. Provide power charging station for phones and laptops at descanted areas, with benches and a child play area, and watch how many people will flock to take a load off and take our beautiful city ambiance in.

## 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?

Well first I would utilize our military in our region. I would contact the army core of engineers for this is one of their primary objectives when they enter a foreign territory is to survey and strategize the landscape for best possible settlement for our troops. I'm sure they have already assessed and know about our sea level rise problem and if contacted would be eager to help. If the army isn't attainable, then we would have to go back to the fundamental principles of landscape architecture. "Dig a hole, Make a mound." This is a time-tested ideal that has been used in many costal localities to create multiple benefits. If your ground water table rises your hole fills with water and it becomes something that lets you control water and use it to get multiple benefits. For example, we would dig an pond an canal system on the land side, Use that material to build a super-dike which is just an extra wide levee that supports wetlands and wild life sustainability. And that movement of material from one side to the other allows us to control a lot of things on the land side and on the water side. The Dutch have already done this, they have built luxury housing in ponds. They built housing in their infrastructure to generate money that they can use to do the infrastructure and to build housing that they need.( So it would pay for itself) If we can do this in a way that densify the coastal edge and build the wetlands higher we'll actually be able to align the interest of housing developers and environmental groups. That's the only way to move rapidly towards any adaptations strategy. We must bring those two groups together. Another ideal is to train our inmates on engineering and dredging. I have spoken with a company that will train our inmates who have less than one year of incarceration of jail time with the necessary skills to read, survey and dredge our backlog of lakes, rivers and ponds. Inmates will work for reduced wages as they gain skills and education. They will be remedying a problem that effects all residences of Virginia Beach will gaining skills that will last a lifetime. Upon completion of the course and release from jail. The inmate will have the opportunity to apply for a position with the company. Starting salary is \$45k a year. The estimate cost for this program yearly is six (6) Million dollars which cuts all proposed dredging budgets and delays by three fourths.  $\frac{3}{4}$ . This can easily be funded out of what we already set aside for dredging.

## 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.

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I can ensure that my views will align with what my constituents elected me to my position for.

**7. What is your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I am a fan of renewable energy but not so much off shore drilling do the what happen in the Gulf of Mexico. I wouldn't want to put the wildlife and beaches at risk for a few more containers of oil that won't really make a dent in gas price dropping.

Renewable energy's such as windmills and solar farms will stimulate higher technology jobs in this region and hopefully open up warehouses for manufacturing.

**8. Explain your understanding of the Virginia Beach City Budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

On an annual basis, the City issues debt to finance capital projects, including streets, stormwater, water utility and sanitary sewer. Our issuing of bond debt rating reflects the City's sizable and affluent tax base, strong financial position supported by healthy reserves and liquidity, and a modest debt and pension burden.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60 million dollars of tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how you will relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

College beach weekend. I would add class A entertainment for those college students that surpassed 11p.m. This is an lack than luster attempt by not providing anything for this week of telling those college students that they are not wanted and to leave as quick as possible. This puts a huge shadow upon our city tourism for some. Plan and capitalize like with any other event at the oceanfront.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? What other alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development?**

Absolutely, I encourage the city to pour an abundance of resources and encourage growth from there small business owners. Offering incentives is one way to keep a small business owner striving for a goal that yields a beneficial result. As waiters say, Tips are appreciated. I would suggest grants or tax breaks for small business who revitalize their business dwelling. I would also incentivize a small business owner by waving their sales tax for materials to build start up business dwelling. I would offer incentives for businesses who start up or relocate to economically depressed areas. I would eliminate the Business Occupational License (BPOL) which will save ALL business owners. I would suggest the city offer new business owners a \$5000 grant. There would be prerequisites that they would have to fulfilled. The business must complete a "starting a new business course" at (SBDC) Small Business Development Center. The business must be in Virginia Beach. Following completion of those prerequisites, the applicants can choose the services they need to start their business and pair up with a vendor(s) that has pre-registered to participate in the program. The City would cover up to \$5000.00 for marketing services, legal services,

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payroll services or continued education. I would request \$200,000 get set aside for this. It can get paid by redirecting BPOL current fees.

## **11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach?**

**Please elaborate on the displacement factor.**

I am in favor of public private partnership. What I am not in favor of is the disparity of awarded contracts and favoritism to selected builders. I like that the direction the new surf park is headed as well.

## **12. Are you in support of rebranding of our region and, if so, what would you rebrand it and why?**

I not opposed to it. I heard Coastal Virginia kicked around a bit. It would have to grow on me.

## **13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I am all for it. It's good for tourism

## **14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

It seems that the locals are feeling the burn in their pockets every time they have to shell out money for parking at the oceanfront. I know the Tourism Investment Program (TIP) shouldn't be used for non-tourism projects. However, if you asking for additional parking at the oceanfront to help with congestion, due to tourism, I would say TIP funds should pay a portion.

## **15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

UNANSWERED

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## PRINCESS ANNE DISTRICT

### KAREN KWASNY

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am the only candidate in my race that supports our tourism economy as an industry. Two challengers have been openly hostile to the tourism industry. As well, with all due respect, the incumbent consistently opposed the arena project, and when she supports a resort initiative, she isn't an enthusiastic supporter.

Communication is my strength. As a Planning Commission Member, I have gone to great effort to include all interested constituents in my work and the decisions we make. Too often, the incumbent has certain friends and certain enemies and these long-fought political battles have gotten in the way of her leadership. I provide broad representation without special interest motivation. I am ready and prepared. I've been a member of the Transition Area/Interfacility Traffic Area Citizens Advisory Committee since 2014 and the Vision to Action Community Coalition (now VB 2040) since 2016. I am ready to be a new pro-business voice for the Princess Anne seat.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I believe there has been too much "borrowing" or outright taking from special funds that are created for a specific purpose. The TIP fund was created so that tourism would not clash with city commitments to education, public safety, and other core city services. Tourism projects should expand the market and encourage visitors to stay longer and make Virginia Beach an iconic destination. The funds earmarked for those initiatives should be used for those purposes.

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**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Our public safety pay plan needs serious revisions. Public safety professionals are some of the most highly trained employees we have, and the city goes to great expense to recruit and train them. It makes no business sense to have a pay plan that encourages experienced personnel to leave for other cities for better pay and benefits. In the long run, it is much less expensive to retain our experienced personnel than it is to recruit and train new ones. Pay compression needs to be eliminated and it shouldn't take an election season to address these issues.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

The resort area SGA emphasizes a synergy between cultural and commercial activities that enhance recreational and natural life by creating more open, walkable spaces into the resort district. I support that approach and will be committed to achieving it during the project review process.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

I have been emphasizing the need for a regional resiliency plan for the past four years, both in my work on the Planning Commission and as a resident of the Transition Area, an area of the city significantly affected by flooding issues related to sea level rise, more frequent and severe weather events, subsidence, and wind tides. It is essential that the cities look at ways they can partner to make resilience a priority and a reality. Our initial investments should dredge BMPs and canals, which no longer handle the capacity they once did. As well, we better prepare for extensive land use shifts and an expensive solution over the next decade. We will need to seek additional funding from state and federal sources to implement change.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I am non-partisan and independent and will remain so. As I am not part of a party with a commitment to specific views, I believe I am better able to provide a broad perspective and a more balanced view. This always leads to better decision making, in my humble opinion.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

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I oppose offshore drilling because I understand a spill would be devastating to our resort economy and it would interfere with military readiness as well. I do support offshore wind energy and think we should investigate the possibilities of creating a wind energy industry here.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The City Manager proposes an operating budget and a capital improvement budget. Council adds amendments to each, a process called reconciliation, and votes on each. A majority is needed for approval of the operating budget and a supermajority for the capital budget, which is required due to the debt issuance which is done through the CIP.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Championing tourism shouldn't be limited to the Beach councilmember or the Mayor. All Councilmembers should understand the importance of this industry to our budget, our residents, and our business community. Tourism is a major industry for our coastal city and we should market it and make it iconic for visitors and welcoming to residents as well.

One of the benefits I will bring to council is the understanding that while it is my job to represent my district's needs and see that they are attended to, it is also my job to actively support the other areas of the city, both in my thinking and in action. I am excited by the prospect of working with other district representatives on projects that are key to the health of their districts as well as the viability of the city. Today's leaders must have broad perspectives and regional mindsets. They must bring ideas to the table that may benefit all of us and have the energy to see them through. This is the kind of City Council member I will be.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I would have to see the structure for such a program. I support incentives through the Economic Development department and regional efforts like Go

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Virginia to help transform our economy to be less reliant of federal military spending.

I am a champion of small business and believe the first approach is a matter of policy (definition of small business) and policy (pay schedule, for instance). As well, we can do a much better job of marketing our small businesses throughout the city. Finally, we can continue to develop grant programs that work to spur small business develop in areas of our city in need of growth and improvement, like grants that support small biz in the VIBE district and within other SGAs.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Displacement is avoided if we focus public private partnerships on projects that open new markets to us and expand our visitor base rather than focusing on “more of the same” kinds of projects that simply divide the customer base. Public private partnerships can work well when focused on expansion of the market and providing true public benefit.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I think Coastal Virginia means more to those outside the state than Hampton Roads does. It better identifies our location.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I support the post-Labor Day school start. Students needing summer jobs would be hurt by a change and the industry that relies on them would be adversely affected. This industry generates significant revenue for education. We should carefully consider collateral damage when we make these types of decisions.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Parking is a significant issue at the oceanfront and the city has been trying to couple increased parking capacity with major projects over the years; many of those major projects were never approved or completed. Employee parking is an issue and Virginia Beach residents find it difficult to enjoy the beaches without adequate parking options. Council needs to explore and fund ways to add more structured parking within walking distance of the beach. As well,

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they must consider how to make this parking more affordable for residents so that they, like tourists to the city, can enjoy the oceanfront more often.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Code enforcement should be stronger at the resort area. The oceanfront contains some significantly blighted areas. We must address this.

Redevelopment is one way and I am a strong advocate of redevelopment initiatives at the oceanfront and throughout the city. I will encourage projects that seek to redevelop and beautify blighted oceanfront properties. As well, I will encourage adherence to code and, when necessary, initiate the process to enforce the level of quality we expect at a premier resort.



# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## PRINCESS ANNE DISTRICT

### TIM WORST

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I'm a lifelong Va Beach resident. I've lived in Arrowhead, Kempsville, Pembroke, and Lagomar. I've worked all over the City of Va Beach including the oceanfront. I know Va Beach. I have zero connections to the hotel and restaurant industry or development. Neither of my opponents can say that. We need a fresh look and a Council that does not have to abstain from votes. More importantly I am honest, people focused, and one of the few who will stand up to Bruce Thompson. The majority of hotel and restaurant owners are ready to have a fair market.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

How about the TIP fund paying for the Overtime for the Police Officers during Beach Weekend? There's a new idea. How about a new/larger percentage of the restaurant tax going to the general fund? How about the general fund gets some money from the amusement tax? Enhance tourism by going after a new crowd. Attract the families. Give the tourism folks of Va Beach a larger amount of the tourism budget to go after other areas than Michigan, Pennsylvania, NY, and New Jersey (and Canada). Get in new markets. Clean up our "strip" with the TIP money with bigger sidewalks and green grass and trees. Sick of the cement, hotels everywhere and no view of the ocean.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

Fix pay compression and stop putting band aids on it. It's clear to our Police Officers what is more important... our law enforcement or shoveling money to the Oceanfront projects. We're short on officers. What have we done to current it? We are taking the 4th precinct officers and bringing them to the Oceanfront to help coverage.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

Has to be a priority of the hotel owners and businesses. I love the green grass behind some of the hotels. What about Rudee loop, the Vibe District, and the old Dome area? They have to prioritize green space.

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**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

What will the Sea Level Rise study say? Act on it. Infrastructure. We have some old pipes and old roads. Update both. We have a 12 year back log on cleaning and clearing up drainage. The City Manager has been here for 12 years. Fire the City Manager. Get back on track and use ALL of the \$40 million collected for stormwater, on actual stormwater and drainage clean up.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

Can't wait to hear Ben D, John U, and Jim W answer this question. Go to my video on YouTube.com of the City Council meeting on Jan 16, 2018. I stood up for ALL of the City of Va Beach and pointed out the good boys, the nepotism, and conflicts of interest as Will Sessoms tried to FIX the pier deal for the Bruce Thompson, the Capps Family and others. A few weeks ago I was the only person who spoke out against Rose Mary Wilson's nomination to re-appoint Dot Wood to the VBDA. I am not a bought candidate. I work for the people of Va Beach.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

If we could drill and do so safely, I'd be for it. If we could guarantee no issues with our military and drilling, I'd do it. I like the idea of the wind turbines but I've seen mixed studies on the effectiveness.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

I know our debt service cannot exceed 10% of our annual operating budget. I know our debt issued is not to be more than \$3,000 per capita. I know we should save our debt for projects to improve our drainage all across Va Beach. Right now we use our debt service for the chosen few and their projects. I want to use debt (if we have to) to fix drainage and fix flooding for all of the folks of VB in all the different neighborhoods of VB.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

Show the amount of money in real numbers to the 12 month residents of VB. Show the real numbers of people visiting and what they spend and where. What do our tourist/visitors want to see in VB next? How do we attract our own VB residents back to the Oceanfront? Cater to families and not to the

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college age. Cater to the families and not beach weekend. Tourism is important, but not more important than the 12 month residents of VB.

- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

No. I believe in capitalism and the free market. Bruce Smith and others build, entertain, house, feed, and take care of our tourist without public money. Why can't Bruce Thompson, the Venture Group, and many others do this on their own? The city should not be picking who gets incentives and who does not get incentives. What is the definition of small business to you? 250 employees or less?

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

Rarely they have worked here in VB in my opinion. I like our Amphitheatre and the deal with Global Technical Systems coming to the old Owls Creek Golf Course. They were good for the city. Entertainment, better paying jobs, and tax revenue.

- 12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

Depends on the cost. I liked Tidewater and I do not like Hampton Roads. Coastal VA has a nice ring to it. But stick to a name and run with it.

- 13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I'm still okay with the post Labor Day start. I think it's up the Educators, School Board, and the people to make that decision.

- 14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Our current public parking lots should be free for Va Beach residents with an ID or it should be \$3.00 max. Period. No special events fee for local residents. We paid for the parking lot(s) already with our hard earned tax money, why are we being charged again? Let each builder/developer pay for his/her own parking. Employee parking is a responsibility for the land owner, company, etc.

- 15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Management of the City of VB will not change or improve until we fire our current City Manager Hansen. Fix the flooding problems and areas of need with new infrastructure. Fix the mess that is 17th street. We will have guests leave the SportsCenter and travel right down 17th street to the beach and see

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a true mess. It's embarrassing. City employee productivity. Who is in charge of the code enforcement and is he/she being held accountable?

# Virginia Beach City Council Candidates Forum 2018

## MAYORAL CANDIDATES

### BOB DYER

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

Virginia Beach has only had two directly-elected Mayors, so I believe the choice of Mayor is a profoundly serious one. It is not a partisan position, but it does require preparation, understanding of the city government, and leadership. I believe I am the best qualified. I have a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a PhD in Organizational Leadership. I have been a Gubernatorial Appointee by two Governors in two states, one Democrat and one Republican. I have served on Virginia Beach City Council since 2004 in a non-partisan manner, engaging with the community and reaching out to everyone to bring them to the table. I also wore our nation's uniform in the United States Marine Corps and have made improving relationships with the military and our veterans a key part of my public service from the beginning. I serve as Council Liaison to the Minority Business Council, Human Rights Commission, Health and Human Services Task Force, the HR Planning District Commission and the Process Improvement Task Force (which I created). I have been an Assistant Professor and Assistant Dean at the higher education level, and have spent a care in the Physical Therapy industry. I care about people and know that as Mayor, I can bring people together to lead Virginia Beach in a positive direction.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I didn't support this but voted with the majority in the spirit of compromise. I thought it was important to have a budget that didn't raise taxes on residents and business, and the response was to use the TIP fund for trash trucks, and I think political gamesmanship was behind it. We should negotiate budgets without raiding special funds, just as I didn't like raiding other funds for light rail (which I opposed). Budgeting should be open, honest and fair.

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**3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

I helped secure an additional 3 million dollars which should've been committed in years prior to start correcting public safety pay compression which has hurt in retaining our most experienced employees. We need to solve this problem – as Mayor, I will lead the compromise budget effort to do so.

**4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

We simply need to establish the vision of a natural, green, walkable resort and work with the community to design future development with this as a goal. Over time, we will transform the resort image.

**5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

Accelerating flood mitigation is a major plank in my Contract with Virginia Beach, in which I pledge to fund solutions to flooding impacts from the current 15 year projection to 6 years. We need to plan so that future redevelopment improves, not worsens, storm impacts. I propose an immediate Blue Ribbon Commission to focus on stormwater impacts, strategies and improvement plans to include experts from academia and the private sector to develop comprehensive strategy and funding scenario to address these issues now.

**6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

My creation of a Process Improvement Task Force exists as a way to bring differing viewpoints together for compromise. When I proposed it, City Manager Jim Spore opposed it 100%, but Council supported it, and Mr. Spore was so thrilled with its work and the results it produced that he frequently included it in his State of the City address as a great way to forge compromises on difficult issues.

**7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

Out of respect for our resort economy and respect for the military readiness of our Navy partners, I voted to oppose offshore drilling and support offshore

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wind initiatives. Nothing can harm those two major employers without causing possibly irreparable harm to our city.

**8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

The city budgeting process could use some reform. The city manager proposes a capital budget and an operating budget and a number of public hearings are held following that presentation. Council then reconciles those budgets with public input and crafts a reconciliation budget of each, which is voted on the next official meeting. I believe more public input and review of the reconciliation budgets would be a more transparent process and would push to do so. Issuing of bond debt is included in the Capital budget, and that requires a supermajority vote of council to approve.

**9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

I believe citizens understand the economic impact of tourism. They are skeptical and some very cynical because they feel that major projects and economic incentives are slanted to benefit a select few in processes that aren't transparent. Projects like the Pier generated great suspicion because the process seemed to be fast-tracked and a "done deal" while projects like the Dome were required to delay and conduct multiple studies that no other proposal was asked to do. Citizens would support the resort economy more if they thought it was a level playing field for participation and they felt everyone was welcome to the table.

**10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

Again, the devil would be in the details, and any incentive program must be transparent and fair and not subjectively applied.

**11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

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Public Private Partnerships can be a good thing with a lot of public engagement, a lot of transparency and a process that is open to all. My mantra since first being elected is that we can't allow government to compete with existing businesses. Public Private Partnerships should open new markets to bring new people to our resort area, not just subdivide existing business.

**12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

I've never been a fan of the name "Hampton Roads" and think Coastal Virginia is a better fit.

**13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I have supported post Labor Day school starts every year in office and will continue to lead in this effort.

**14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

I believe the arena project would've justified a significant investment in parking near our resort and would support projects that add significant public parking as part of their proposals.

**15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

Absolutely. Some parts of our resort look embarrassing and we should invest in giving some areas a capital makeover. It will pay dividends in long term visitor loyalty and in people feeling welcome at our resort.



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## MAYORAL CANDIDATES

### BEN DAVENPORT

- 1. What unique qualifications do you possess that make you an appropriate representative for the Virginia Beach City Council; why are you seeking elected office?**

I am passionate about the City of Virginia Beach. I have been the At-Large City Councilman since January 2015 and have led a region wide technology initiative that is responsible for luring the first transatlantic subsea cables to our city. In addition the technology initiative has now linked the two largest cities in Virginia's municipal fiber networks together in a partnership with ODU and VCU. This will encourage R&D at our top institutions and will have a direct connection to the cable landing station. In addition we are pursuing the data center industry with great success (two operational data centers now with one on the way) which will help us shift our tax burden from residential to commercial as these data centers are huge real estate tax revenue generators.. This initiative is important to the entire region because we must attract a new industry to create opportunities for our children. I am ready to lead this city into the 21st century.

- 2. What is your position on using TIP funding for non-tourism related projects? And what new initiatives would you support to enhance tourism?**

I am against it. We have to continue to reinvest in our resort area as this allows us to compete with other resort areas for tourism dollars. Tourism is vital to keeping our taxes low.

- 3. What are your recommendations for the public safety issues we are currently experiencing?**

We have to enforce the laws.

- 4. What is your vision for developing more green spaces at our resort?**

I hope we can find creative ways to create greenspace in the resort area. I will work with the city staff and all new applications for large scale projects to see how we can incorporate more green spaces in our resort.

- 5. What are your plans to prepare the city for sea level rise and flooding and how would you fund it?**

I am working with the HRPDC to address sea level rise on a regional level. This issue is too big for any one municipality to address any sort of meaningful way. We will need to work with the region, state and federal governments to address this.

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- 6. If elected, how can you assure us that your decisions on Virginia Beach City Council will not be partisan driven or biased to one person or group? Include in your comments an example of when you took differing viewpoints and brokered a compromise.**

I am proud of my voting track record. I believe I have acted in the best interest of the citizens of VB on every vote I have taken. A couple of examples:

ex1) the outlet mall vote- I acted in the cities best interest even when the majority was firmly against me. The prevailing sentiment was that if we did not approve the road on CVB property they(Norfolk) would not be able to build the outlet mall. The majority my opponent included voted to not approve the road in VB that would have been built by the City of Norfolk and would have created excellent commercial street frontage in VB. Ultimately costing our city in opportunity cost.

Ex2) When I was first elected to council the City of VB was the only city on the eastern seaboard to have a resolution in favor of offshore oil drilling. I was adamantly opposed and was able to convince the council to first move to a position of neutrality pending the DOD report on the effects of the oil industry on naval operations. After the report came out I built consensus and was able to get the council to unanimously oppose off shore oil drilling.

- 7. What's your position on offshore drilling and renewable energy exploration?**

I am against offshore oil drilling.

- 8. Explain your understanding of Virginia Beach City budgeting process and how it relates to the issuing of bond debt.**

I am sorry I don't really understand the question.... If you look in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) it gives specific detail on the budgeting process. All of VB's GO General Obligation Bonds are rated AAA. VB is one of the best fiscally managed cities in the USA.

- 9. Given the contribution of \$60M tourism related taxes, what is your vision for the future of Virginia Beach tourism and give specific examples of how will you relay its importance to Virginia Beach residents?**

We need to continue to reinvest in our resort area. Our tourism industry needs to be protected and we need to create an environment in which it can grow.

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- 10. Would you support a citywide incentive program for small businesses to spur capital investment in fixed improvements? If so, what might it look like and how would it be funded? If not, what alternatives would you suggest to facilitate small business development.**

I would have to have more detail on this type of program. The city's EDIP program is designed to help all businesses, small business included. I believe the program in place works and would have to see specific details before I would commit to anything new.

- 11. What is your opinion of public/private partnerships in Virginia Beach, please elaborate on the displacement factor?**

I have been one of the biggest proponents for public/private partnerships. PP's are used in every city in the US. As a result of these projects we now have some of the places that create the identity of our city. Specifically; VB Amphitheater, Town Center, Sand in Sandbridge, 31<sup>st</sup> St Hilton and Neptune Park and the Cavalier on the Hill. All excellent projects.

- 12. Are you in support of rebranding our region and if so, what would you rebrand it as and why?**

It will not be my first priority.

- 13. What is your position on Post Labor Day school start date?**

I am in favor of Post Labor Day school start.

- 14. What is your long-term vision for parking at the resort area and how would you implement and fund it? Would employee parking be part of that vision?**

Parking has been an issue at the resort for as long as I can remember. I support Councilman John Uhrin's long range plan of providing parking throughout the resort area not just centered in one place. I think that technology can be part of the answer as well, in terms of parking apps and smart city initiatives.

- 15. What actions would you propose for improvement of maintenance and management and subsequent code enforcement in the resort area?**

I am sorry I don't understand this question... I will listen to the RAC, Atlantic Ave Association, Restaurant Association & the Hotel Association for their recommendations on how to improve maintenance and management and code enforcement in the resort area.