

2010 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Prepared by the Virginia Beach Roundtable

CANDIDATE: Andrew Jackson

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1) What do you believe to be the top three most pressing concerns to the business community in Virginia Beach?

- Transportation, have to be able to move folks, especially military. Businesses we are recruiting need to know they can move their people and their goods.
- I say economic development, but I include people development. Good workforce pool, educated and diverse workers.
- Transportation and economic development are intertwined; need to improve transportation to be able to do economic development.
- Are we too reliant on tourism?
- Need to identify a growth area and diversity.
- Look at new alternative energy industries. Simulation, robotics, need to tie in education to prepare our workforce for these industries.

2) For incumbents, do you think the votes you have taken during your service on Council have addressed or contributed to those concerns? Please give examples.

N/A

3) Do you support or oppose the use of public-private partnerships such as those created to develop Town Center, the Sandbridge Beach restoration, the 31st Street Hotel and as have been suggested for future projects in strategic growth areas? If yes, what public financing options do you feel appropriate for such projects? Financing tools might include: Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Districts, Enterprise Zones, Innovation Zones (technology) and BID's.

- All the above, with precautions. You can't get centered on one avenue to do something.
- Process must look at all resources, use developers who bring in lots of people, get lots of people involved.
- My goal is to get citizenry involved and excited about what we're building in the city.
- We are on right track except sometimes we get pigeon holed into using the same group of people.
- Supports community development centers to develop communities that are underdeveloped.
- Financing tool depends on the project.

- 4) What do you believe should be the City's transportation priorities for the near term and assuming the General Assembly's continued unwillingness to provide sufficient funding resources for these projects, how do you suggest the City fund critical transportation needs?
- Need one heck of a negotiator. Look at different options and combinations.
 - In my research there isn't a transportation system that's not subsidized by the people.
 - Likes Bus Rapid Transit like Beijing and Brazil.
 - Any system will have to be subsidized so we need to look at what is most cost-effective and best fits the needs.
 - Look for stimulus money.
- 5) Should Virginia Beach continue to participate in the regional economic development alliance to increase our ability to reach out to national and international companies?
- Yes. Reach harder, act more like a region, look at Charlotte.
 - Turn loose a little ego and focus on the region.
 - Could it have been less expensive if Virginia Beach and Norfolk had negotiated together on light rail?
 - Light rail should have been one big contract rather than city by city.
 - It would help us regionally to have all cities at the table at the same time.
- 6) How important is regional cooperation to the future of Virginia Beach and do you support participation in such regional initiatives as workforce development (Opportunity, Inc.), military infrastructure (HR Military and Federal Facilities Alliance), regional policy development (Hampton Roads Partnership), and regional planning (Hampton Roads Planning District Commission/MPO)?
- Norfolk has terminals. We have opportunity to bring tourists to this area.
 - If we don't do things together, we're shooting ourselves in the foot.
 - Yes, can do more if we work together.
- 7) What are the most important steps the City can take to enhance its relationship and communication with the military and ensure retention of military commands in Hampton Roads?
- Don't keep assuming military will always be here. Be humble. Don't assume they can't go somewhere else. He is retired Navy.
 - One issue is transportation. We need to address it.
 - How can we help military families better?
 - We need a military Ombudsman to help military families better cope with the difficulties with having one spouse overseas with one remaining.
 - How can we involve military in the development of the city?

- Do we have a military person to sit down with Council to help them have input on the development of the city?
- 8) Is the extension of the light rail system from the planned terminus at Newtown Road east to the Beach District a priority and how should it be financed?
- I don't support what they're doing. I live near Newtown Road and see how much traffic is there. I know they're going to run it at peak hours.
 - Concerned with the crossings and congestion.
 - Regarding finance there are too many unanswered questions. Will there be federal funds? Could there be leverages because we have military here?
 - While I agree with the acquisition, I don't agree with the price we're going to pay, or the negotiations.
 - I could have gotten that for \$15 million less, we are paying too much.
- 9) Do you believe the city's budget process ought to budget expenses to meet revenue goals or adjust revenues to meet budget and spending priorities?
- Every month, I look at what \$ I have. Can't spend more in this hand than I have in the other hand.
 - We need to prioritize and not look at "wants" as "needs". Has to be some balance.
 - Stay competitive on the tourism side, but be prudent with the taxpayers \$. Sometimes a "nice to have" slips in with the "needs."
 - Need to balance tourism needs with local taxpayer burden.
 - Probably spending too much on Laskin Road Gateway.
- 10) Should the General Assembly empower localities to: provide defined contribution plans in lieu of defined benefit plans, give flexibility to modify retirement service and age qualifications, and to require employee participation in benefit packages as may be deemed appropriate by the local governing body? Why or why not?
- If you tell city employees, now you're going to contribute, what you're saying is I'm going to cut your pay.
 - City retirement plan is a city cost.
 - Can probably eliminate unnecessary positions.
 - I think you can do it incrementally. Look at how many positions we have. How can we best shift that retirement system so it becomes a shared thing?
 - It has to go to the shared approach, but we should do it in phases, not with a big shock.

11) Do you feel there is waste in the city budget? If so, please site specific areas where you would reduce funding.

- Yes, there is waste. We need to have control. Need to take a good hard look at perks, excessive discretionary spending, who gets cars to drive home, why and confirm need.
- Look at revitalizing our tools of the trade. Look at upgrading our fleet, would we be better off with electric cars or golf carts within a city complex?
- Need to look at structure, what should be contracted out.
- City Attorneys office, need to staff to limit need to hire private firms.

12) Do you concur with the recommendation of the City's Blue Ribbon Tax, Fee and Spending Task Force that a "City Budget Study Commission" should be established to assist in the development of the annual budget? If yes, what should be its composition and mission?

- Blue Ribbon is a good thing. I think we need it.
- Could be too large and become hard to make decisions.
- I think it's done a good job in terms of what they looked at.
- Regarding composition, I'd have to look and see who's on there now.

13) Do you believe business is fairly taxed in the City? If not, what specifically would you change?

- A lot needs to go away.
- BPOL should be retired incrementally, in steps.

14) What is your opinion of the City Manager and the job he is doing?

- I'm not sure if anyone knows the inner workings of what he does, we see outcomes but his job does not seem transparent.
- We lose track that he's not an elected official, he's a city employee.
- There needs to be some scrutiny of what he does and how he does it.
- Are we paying too much? We need to look at that. I don't know the answer to that, but I know he has value and overall does a good job.

15) Do you support City Council's outright ban on all LED signs for future consideration or use by private business, schools, churches, non-profits and others?

- I sat in on these sessions.
- Yes, because it's already done but I would have looked at it differently.

