

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

CANDIDATE: Louis Jones

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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
 - Alternative Energy
 - Public Safety
 - Education

- 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.
 - Yes, transportation as much as they could afford to do including major road projects and Norfolk Southern right of way.
 - We have purchased the right of way, not sure how it will be paid for.
 - Council has contributed, not sure on light rail.
 - New idea (alternative energy), was not in favor of off shore drilling. Wind might be better.
 - Does not object to Surry Plant.
 - Puts budget together. Put police back into the budget. We fund for fire engines. Always fund safety core service.
 - Voted for significant road projects, Shore Drive...

- 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?
 - Has been liaison for Town Center.
 - Supports TIFs.
 - Public-private partnerships needed to develop SGA's.
 - Sandbridge Service District supported partnership with corps of engineers. Property values significantly increased.
 - Did not vote for 31st Street Hotel, issues with business deal.

- 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?
 - Critical transportation needs can't be met without help from the state. Twenty-eight years ago we got 28 million, this year we got zero.
 - The state has failed to meet our needs. Makes it difficult to fund with city funds.
 - Example, safety concerns of Lesner Bridge.
 - Did get 12.6 million for Witchduck Road.

- 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, we should. Any effort regionally to bring businesses into our community should be supported. We should move forward.

- 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)?
 - It's important because there are things that we can do for ourselves but there are things that we can't do for ourselves. They bring jobs revenue and economic benefit to our community.
 - Need to respond on regional basis for things like BRAC/JFCOM and Virginia Beach needs to do its part.
 - A united voice does make a difference in Washington.

- 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?
 - Virginia Beach had allowed too much encroachment at Oceana.
 - Now reversing encroachment on Oceana.
 - Economic development opportunity by bringing in business in that area in compliance with land use agreement.
 - We have to pay more attention to military.

- 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?
 - Real issues will come when study is complete. Lots of questions around project.
 - Hesitant to say extension is a priority.
 - Worked on negotiation of the purchase of right of way. If we don't build light rail it will be a big problem for Norfolk.

- Purchasing the right of way gives us the option for alternative modes.
 - Light rail is seven years off.
 - Norfolk's real experiences with light rail will come in to play.
 - Is it Virginia Beach's responsibility to bail out Norfolk?
- 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?
- Need both.
 - First, fund the priorities by budgeting and adjusting the revenues, and then determine how to raise the revenues.
 - Figure out what we need to do and then find money.
- 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?
- Would be a breach of trust if you change plan for existing employees.
 - Prefer defined benefit plan.
 - Shouldn't force employees to go to defined contribution plan.
 - Welcomes flexibility from the state.
 - City employees prefer defined benefit plan because it provides security. Lose certainty with defined contribution.
 - Will have to give current employees options.
 - From strictly a business standpoint, defined contribution plan would save significant money.
 - The economy may force us to place new hires in defined contribution.
- 11) Do you feel there is waste in the city budget? If so, please site specific areas where you would reduce funding.
- Yes, waste. How much are you willing to cut given the political pressures. Example, funding for arts in not a core government function. The Sandler Center, some people would provide that this is a waste. He believes it is an addition to quality of life.
 - Depends on your perspective of waste and core services.
- 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?
- Believes that we are taking a shotgun approach.
 - Nothing will come of the proposal.
 - Charge is too broad and may not be effective.
 - Need to target and focus on four or five issues.

- I won't stand in the way of it; some council members really want it (Bob Dyer).
- Commission will get push back from the beaurocracy; need to get them on board.

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

- Yes.
- If we did away with BPOL, we would have to make up 40 million elsewhere, like real estate.

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

- Outstanding city manager.
- Knows about everything that's going on in the city.
- Fair, even-handed.
- Most knowledgeable city manager in Hampton Roads.
- Mistakes, country club memberships.

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?

- Supports the ban on LED signs, would be an aesthetic problem.
- Worried about proliferation of signs.
- Referenced oceanfront and how it looks now vs. twenty years ago.