

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

CANDIDATE: Toni Hedrick

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

- Decline of economy and impact on bottom line.
- What the city is doing to help businesses.
- Goal to eliminate BPOL tax and adjust Machinery and tool tax.

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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?

- Do not support under current economic conditions
- As a former business owner, if project is going to be profitable, a private developer will do it, public money shouldn't be used.
- Money is being drained from General Fund to support core services. Need money for roads.

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?

- Look at entire Beach transportation needs
- Doesn't support light rail.
- It will be a drain to community money for right of way and construction and an ongoing subsidizing.
- We should not subsidize.
- Look at bus system in place, as it is more flexible and less expensive.

- 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?
- Need to reach out internationally.
  - Disappointed that Town Center did not attract higher paying jobs.
  - Another reason we should eliminate BPOL tax.
  - Doesn't know what regional alliance is.
- 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)?
- Not in favor if regionalism.
  - Need to be concerned with our city and it's problems and not create problems by working with others.
  - Too much diversity between cities.
- 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?
- Need to let them know we will stop encroaching on their space.
  - Lynnhaven Mall was built in a bad spot.
  - Noise is deafening.
  - As a realtor recalls beacon's reach at end of runway, showed lack of respect of military needs.
  - Doesn't think Virginia Beach has done enough to show military they're willing to work with them.
- 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?
- Not a priority.
  - Where are we going to get the money?
  - Should be put on a referendum and she will support results of vote.
  - If people of Virginia Beach vote for a light rail system, she will support.
  - I will make every effort to make all aspects clear.
  - It will be their tab, they should decide.

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?

- Adjust budget to meet revenue goals.
- Only spend what your revenue generates.
- Budget should have been changed 2 years ago.
- Look at what we expect to bring in and then spend accordingly.
- Virginia Beach has a real spending problem.
- Should have reduced spending 2 years ago to adjust to decline in real estate market.
- You don't just spend, spend, spend and hope for revenue.
- Revenues are going to continue to fall with declining real estate values and the city has not planned the budget for this.

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?

- Yes, city employees need to understand that given the economy, they have to participate in a retirement plan.
- Each locality will be privy to its obligations and should be allowed to adjust with downturn.
- City employees need to understand give and take on benefits; we can't continue to fund 100%.

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

- Yes, can't give line items, but, fountains at Town Center, bridge to nowhere at Rudee, artwork. Private developers should be doing these things. Nice to have, not priorities let private developers come in and do it.
- Should not fund parking garages.
- We have huge debt to employees.

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?

- No.

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

- TIF is favoring one developer over another, unlevelled playing field.
- TIF should not have been used in Pembroke, as it was not a blighted area.
- Eliminate BPOL, machinery and tools.

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

- Not thrilled with him.
- Doesn't take on hardball positions like he should.
- Not as forthcoming as he should be in managing the city.
- She will do everything she can to keep citizens apprised of what is going on, how their money is being spent, etc.
- Wrong to give raises to department heads when staff did not get raises.

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?

- No, she likes them, better than billboards.
- Needs regulations.
- More aesthetically pleasing than billboards.