

Steve Sharp – Mayoral Candidate

Business Climate / Regulations Issues

- 1. Rate the regulatory climate for business in the City of Pensacola. Is it Good/Fair/Bad? Explain your answer.**

Fair. I would say this based on conversations I've had with various businesspeople in our community over the course of my campaign. I've been told the same project in the city would take 3 to 4 times longer to get approved, as compared to the length of time for approval in the county.

- 2. Please provide any examples of how regulations have affected the life of city residents in a positive or negative way.**

See above.

- 3. Name the top 3 specific city ordinances/regulations you would like to see eliminated. Explain why they should be eliminated.**

I have not yet finished my review of the city ordinances; therefore, cannot provide any 3 specific ordinances I believe should be eliminated.

- 4. Downtown Pensacola has grown and flourished over the past decade. What areas of the city would you like to see development focus next?**

I believe all of our neighborhoods should have equal access and application to city resources and funding. I will ensure the city focuses on the west side, which has been historically underserved. Furthermore, over the last 10 -15 years, the school district has physically abandoned the west side of Pensacola. This has resulted in a large swath of the city of Pensacola, almost one third of its total footprint, with only one elementary school, no middle school, and one high school. This area has the largest percentage of children living in poverty, children who need proper resources and support. As Mayor, I will work with the school district to re-establish a presence in the neighborhoods inside the city limits on the west side of Pensacola. While it is not be feasible to build a school in this area, the school district needs to re-establish an actual physical brick and mortar presence. I will propose that the school district work with the city to establish neighborhood educational centers for these children and their families. Such facilities would be used for afterschool tutoring and activities, just as in existing elementary schools. It will provide a place for neighborhood families to come together for normal school events. Furthermore, they can be utilized for summer break tutoring, extracurricular activities and already established feeding programs. The only elementary school in this area is Global Learning Academy, which is located at the western edge of the city behind the district administration building at Pace Boulevard and Garden Street. This is a mostly commercial/industrial area. The next closest elementary schools are located several miles away off 12th Avenue in East Hill. To the north, the next elementary school within city limits is even farther away, located at Tippin Avenue and Langley Avenue. Elementary schools have always played a key role in our neighborhoods, often serving as a source of community pride. This is where our kids start their education, attending class and interacting with old and new neighborhood friends. It's where they participate in youth groups such as Cub Scouts and Brownies. It is where families go to enjoy Halloween carnivals, school plays and other similar events. It is where parents participate in PTAs and school advisory councils, as well as interact with other neighbors when they are dropping off and picking up their kids. These schools bring neighbors together and strengthen the sense

of community. As is often said, our kids are the future of our community and the country. It's time that we adults step up and make sure we are providing all of the children in Pensacola the resources and support they need to be successful.

Operations / Infrastructure Issues

5. Do you see any overlap or duplication of services between the county and the city? If so, what services, and how could these services be consolidated?

I believe the area with the potential for consolidation would be in fleet services/maintenance.

6. Homelessness and panhandling continue to be a significant problem in the city of Pensacola. What are your solutions to this pressing problem that impacts the business community?

As Mayor, I will address the problem of aggressive panhandlers and transients located throughout the city. I understand that Pensacola has a true homeless population who, for some, are in their situation for reasons beyond their control, such as those who have had a significant loss of income and victims of domestic violence who have had to flee dangerous relationships. I will ensure the city does what it can to bolster the many community and faith based organizations serving these individuals. If they want help and desire to change their circumstances, they should be given every opportunity to do so. I also realize a portion of the homeless/transient population are suffering from mental illness and believe they need to be provided appropriate care. As both a paramedic and deputy sheriff, I was trained in Crisis Intervention and served on the Northwest Florida Crisis Intervention Team. CIT is an effective law enforcement response program designed for first responders who handle crisis calls involving people with mental illness including those with co-occurring substance use disorders. CIT training emphasizes a partnership between law enforcement, the mental health and substance abuse treatment system, mental health advocacy groups, and consumers of mental health services and their families. In both of his capacities, I often responded to individuals suffering from a mental health crisis, for which I was able to ensure they were transported to a local healthcare facility, instead of jail, to receive the appropriate care. However, a portion of the panhandlers and transients have chosen their lifestyle. I will not tolerate aggressive panhandling and any associated behavior. As I have been talking with citizens throughout the city, they have told of panhandlers that have beat on vehicles stopped at intersections, people being accosted as they walk downtown and through store parking lots, and even of transients knocking on doors of homes in our neighborhoods asking for money in the middle of the night. Many of these more aggressive panhandlers and transients are using the money they get to buy alcohol and drugs. Many are from out of town, have no connection to our community, and have out of state warrants for similar behavior. As Mayor, I will ensure that all appropriate laws and ordinances are enforced to get a handle on this unacceptable situation. We as a community will continue our longstanding tradition of helping those that want to improve their lives. But we cannot tolerate our fellow citizens being accosted as they go about their day-to-day lives.

7. Do you believe the city allocates sufficient resources for infrastructure projects? How would you prioritize these projects and fund them?

No. I will review and reprioritize our stormwater and sidewalk plans, and then work to identify additional funding through state and federal sources. Furthermore, I will ensure that all areas of the city receive their equitable share of funding for improvements.

8. What do you consider to be the number one infrastructure concern for the City of Pensacola going forward, and how do you propose to address that concern?

Stormwater, as above.

9. What would you change about the relationship between the Mayor's Office and City Council (i.e. should the Mayor attend all city council meetings, etc.)?

I will meet with each City Council Member within the first month to listen to their concerns and district goals to determine how we can better work together. I will then establish a process for scheduling quarterly meetings thereafter. Yes, I believe the mayor should attend each council meeting.

10. What would your Five Year Plan for the City of Pensacola look like?

I will review and update the city's strategic plan to include measurable goals and set up a process to tie the budget to the core mission, priorities, and goals of the city.

Economic Development Issues

11. What role should city government take in attracting new businesses to the area?

I believe that the most important function of the city in business recruitment is ensuring we have a safe city. We have to address the gun and gang violence, as well as aggressive transients/panhandlers. If our city is perceived as unsafe, it will be much more difficult to attract and keep businesses in our community. We also have to have strong, stable thriving neighborhoods throughout the entire city, not just in the downtown core. The large majority of residents don't live downtown but live out in the numerous neighborhoods. If we want people to live here, we have to provide neighborhoods with good roads, good sidewalks, clean safe parks and community centers, proper lighting, and the best police and fire protection possible. Also, the city administration and its numerous operations must be responsive, efficient and accountable. In doing so, we must ensure that we provide the necessary infrastructure for existing and new business. Without these things, we cannot expect to have the economic growth we all want.

12. Which industries should the City of Pensacola should concentrate its business development/growth efforts? Be specific.

I believe we need to focus on growing our cyber-security industry, as it provides good paying jobs for our young people, as well as provides critical support for our established military community. Also, we need to focus on businesses such as ST Engineering which brings 'new money' into our community, as well as have the potential for significant future growth.

13. What should the city do with excess properties that it owns? Which properties should take priority? Do you believe certain city parks could be considered excess property?

I am against eliminating any public park space in our neighborhoods.

14. Tourism is an integral part of Pensacola's economy. What are the top 3 ways that the city can add value for the Pensacola business community with respect to increasing tourism and nurturing a positive tourist experience while here in Pensacola?

Ensure our community is safe. Ensure our community is pedestrian and bike friendly, especially along the waterfront. Continue to enhance our historical and arts and entertainment community.

15. What is your vision for Pensacola's waterfront from Three Mile Bridge to Joe Patti's? Feel free to incorporate the Port of Pensacola, Community Maritime Park, the Hashtag Project, and Bruce Beach.

I believe it should be pedestrian and bike friendly, from 3 Mile Bridge to Bruce Beach. Also, Community Maritime Park needs to be built out. As for the port, I believe it needs to continue as a port operation, not be converted to residential/commercial.