

A faint background image of a coastal town with a lighthouse, a flag, and a marina with many boats.

# 2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION GUIDE





**Andrew Bailey, CPA, ABV**  
Shareholder - *Crow Shields Bailey*

## A message from the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Vice Chair of Governmental Affairs

Local elections shape the policies that impact our businesses, workforce, and economic growth.

We urge the business community, chamber community, and all residents to be informed, get involved, and vote with the future of our local economy in mind.

While the Chamber does not endorse candidates, our goal is to serve as a neutral, educational resource to help

residents and business leaders make informed decisions at the ballot box. We encourage every eligible voter to take part in shaping the future of our Eastern Shore cities by learning more about the issues, understanding who's running, and casting your vote on Election Day.

The Eastern Shore is a wonderful place to work, play, and live in part to these vital municipal elected officials.

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# Election Information

## **Important Dates:**

August 11, 2025 - Voter registration deadline for the municipal general election.

August 19, 2025 - Last day to apply for a regular absentee ballot by mail.

August 21, 2025 - Last day to apply for an absentee ballot in person.

August 25, 2025 - Last day to hand-deliver an absentee ballot (by 5 p.m.)

August 26, 2025 - Election Day. Polls will be open from 7 a.m., to 7 p.m.

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## **Poll Locations:**

Daphne - All Daphne citizens will vote at Daphne Civic Center. (2603 U.S.-98, Daphne, AL)

Fairhope - All Fairhope citizens will vote at Fairhope Civic Center. (161 N. Section St., Fairhope, AL)

Spanish Fort - All Spanish Fort citizens will vote at Spanish Fort Community Center. (7361 Spanish Fort Blvd., Spanish Fort, AL)

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## **Voter Registration Information:**

To submit an application to register to vote, you must meet the following requirements:

- You must be a citizen of the United States.
- You must live in the State of Alabama.
- You must be at least 18 years of age on or before election day.
- You must not be barred from voting by reason of a disqualifying felony conviction.
- You must not have been judged "mentally incompetent" in a court of law.

You will be required to present valid photo identification when you vote at your polling place or by absentee ballot, unless exempted by law.

**Voter registration deadline for the municipal general election is August 11, 2025.**

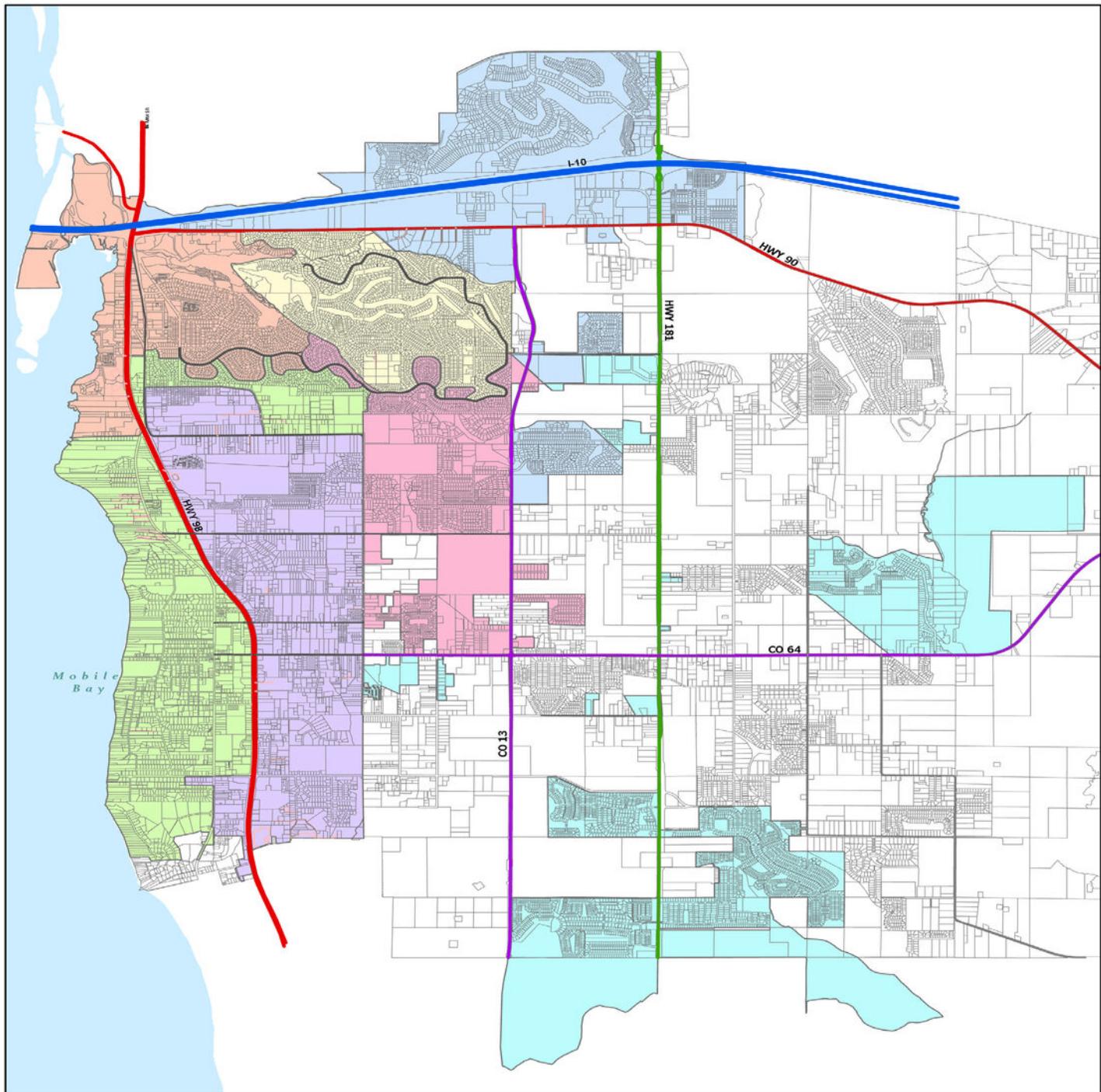
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**For more voter information, please visit: <https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes>**



# City of Daphne Council Districts

Per Ordinance 2024-32 Adopted by City Council on September 16, 2024



ATTEST:

  
Robin LeJeune, Mayor  
Candace G. Antinarella, MMC, City Clerk

Maps serve a purely illustrative function and do not constitute a legally certified survey.

The information within the datasets disseminated by the City of Daphne is sourced from a diverse range of both public and private origins, which are generally considered to be reliable. However, the City of Daphne does not provide guarantees as to the accuracy, comprehensiveness, or completeness of this information. The City of Daphne disclaims all express or implied warranties concerning the accuracy, comprehensiveness, currency, reliability, or appropriateness of the information or data originating from the City Geographic Information System.

Furthermore, the City of Daphne, its representatives, agents, or employees assume no liability associated with the utilization of this data and accept no responsibility for its maintenance in any manner or form. For any inquiries related to zoning or any dataset, please direct your queries to the City of Daphne, Community Development Department at 251-620-1000.

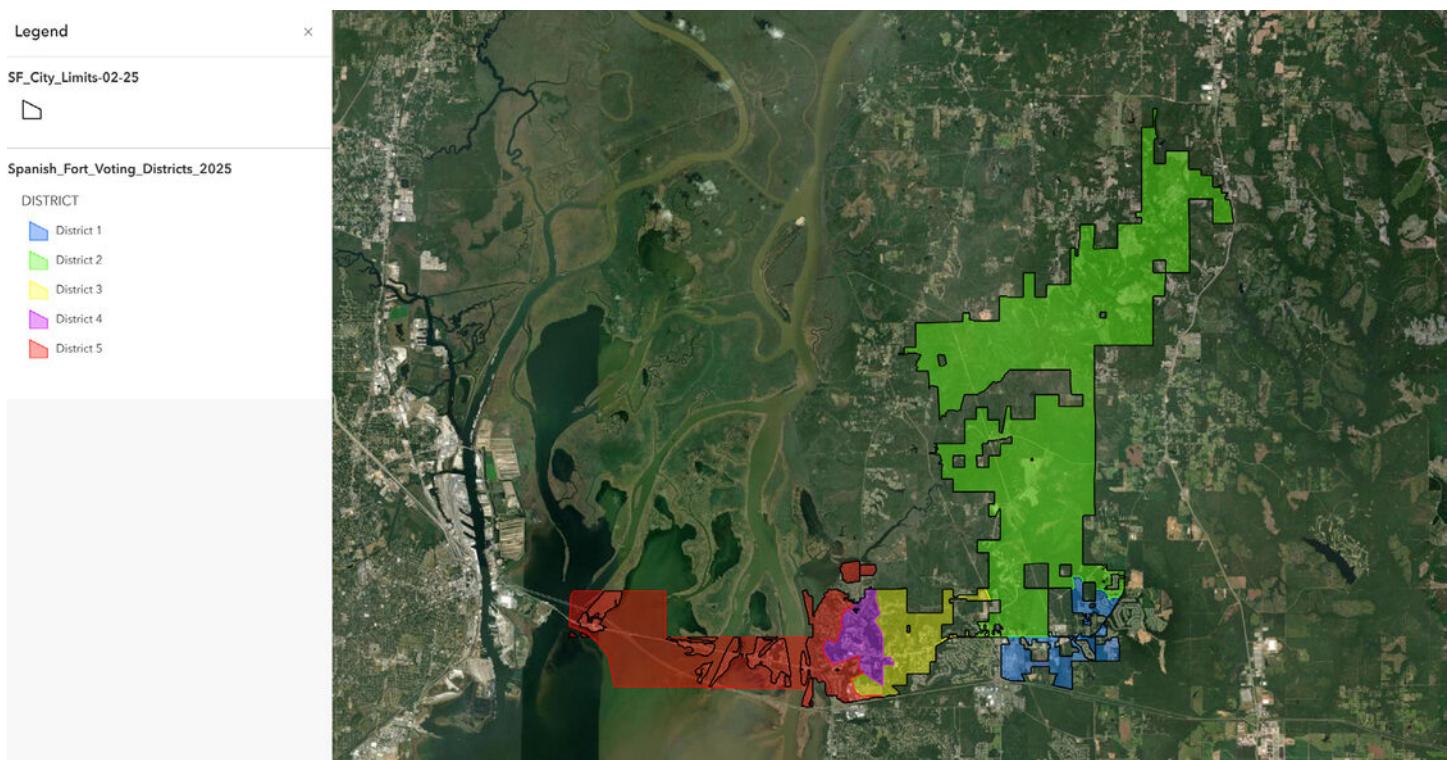
## Legend

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 6
- District 7

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**The City of Fairhope has At-Large Elections, which means no districts, no precincts, no territories, no party affiliations and no write-ins.**

## **City of Spanish Fort District Map**





# Daphne

— A L A B A M A —

## Message from Mayor Robin LeJeune

Serving as Mayor of Daphne has been a true privilege. I am honored to be your Mayor for the coming term. We will continue to build on the foundation we have started.

Infrastructure will continue to be a priority as we move forward. It's a challenge we've taken on with careful planning and strong partnerships. During my first term, we invested millions in key infrastructure improvements. This includes \$3 million in stormwater upgrades, \$6 million in improvements on Hwy 98 and Lavender Lane in front of Target, and another \$5 million for the Pollard Road and County Rd 64 intersection upgrade and repaving. The repaving part will begin in August 2025. We will continue with more infrastructure improvements in my second term including additional east west corridors to take pressure off County Rd 64, along with the start to the widening of US Hwy 90, continuing our stormwater upgrades throughout the city, and additional road repaving and sidewalks including \$1.2 million

to complete the Pollard Road and Park Drive sidewalks.

Public Safety is and will remain a top priority. In my first term, we have opened a new fire station



and added trained medics---so help arrives quickly when it matters most. We are currently in construction of a new Patrol building and Courtroom, implemented health screenings, and raised pay to support the recruitment and retention of quality first responders. The next four years will see \$3 million invested in new fire trucks, along with a new building for Daphne Search and Rescue.

Recreation and quality of life remain central to our vision. We have secured over \$12 million in federal GOMESA grant funding to improve parks and green space across the city--all without increasing the local tax burden. I am very proud of the improvements to the Daphne Sports Complex, Trione Park, the Tennis and Pickleball Complex at Lott Park, renovation of the playground at Centennial Park, addition of the Purple Park and splash pad along with a new multipurpose field and splash pad at Ruff Wilson Youth Center. We will continue to make quality of life a priority with the construction of a 2,500 seat amphitheater on the Bay at Bayfront Park. This venue will host concerts, outdoor theater and community events, adding new energy to our city's cultural offerings, while working towards a new indoor recreation facility.

The future is bright for Daphne, and I look forward to working with the new Council and our citizens to make it all happen.

# City Council District 1 Candidate Questions

Candidates:

Tommie Conaway - *Incumbent*

Michael Hobbs - Provided No Responses

## **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Tommie Conaway** - I am seeking reelection as a councilwoman to continue serving the residents of Daphne. My pursuit of this goal derives from a deep and ongoing commitment to this community. As a retired school principal,

I've dedicated my life to leadership, education, and uplifting others – values I've carried with me into public service.

Serving as a principal for twenty-one years taught me to listen without judgement but

with purpose, to lead with integrity, and to advocate for the needs of a diverse community. These skills are essential to engage in effective city government where every decision impacts the quality of life for all residents.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Tommie Conaway** - The top three priorities that I would focus on in the coming year in office include strengthening infrastructure, enhancing recreational opportunities, and economic development and workforce expansion.

## **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Tommie Conaway** - The City of Daphne can work closely with Baldwin County Board of Education to advocate for relevant and enhanced resources, safe infrastructure, and smart growth that considers school capacity. It is important to maintain open, respectful communication between educators and local government officials.

## **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Tommie Conaway** - Olde Towne Daphne is rich with history, walkability and small-town charm. It is the city's responsibility to protect its historic character, enhance walkability and accessibility with improved sidewalks, lighting, green space,

and bike friendly paths.

The City of Daphne has improved traffic flow and safety on Highway 98 with better infrastructure, turn lanes, and pedestrian crossings.

## **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Tommie Conaway** - Stormwater management is a critical issue in Daphne. The city has made strides through permitting, outreach, inspections, engineering upgrades and watershed planning.

I would continue to advocate for conservation of green spaces and wetlands, tree preservation ordinances, and community education programs that focus upon environmental concerns.

## **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreations, green space, and walkability?**

**Tommie Conaway** - I would prioritize projects that serve all neighborhoods, especially those with limited access to recreational facilities or green spaces. Every Daphne resident deserves safe places to play, gather, and enjoy nature.

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures – what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Tommie Conaway** - I am open to annexation when it supports our vision for a strong, vibrant Daphne. Annexation requires careful planning, community input and the preservation of what makes Daphne special.

## **City Council District 2 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Steve Olen - *Incumbent*

Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Steve Olen** - It has been my great honor and privilege to serve the people of District 2 as their City Council representative for the past 5 years and work cooperatively with Mayor LeJeune and the other Council members to make Daphne an even more enjoyable place to live, play and work. I am proud of what we have accomplished, but am excited about doing even more for Daphne in the future.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - I was born and raised in Old Town Daphne and have lived in Old Town Daphne for a total of 49 years. My grandchildren are the 5th generation to grow up in Daphne and I want to preserve our quality of life for them and all of our future generations. I bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our city. I spent 35 years in the banking industry working in all areas of lending and management. For the past 9 years I have served as CEO of the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce where our mission is to make the Eastern Shore the best place to live, work and cultivate business. I am working in our community every day!

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Steve Olen** - Continuing to enhance and expand recreation facilities, including the construction of a new all-purpose recreation center and building a new amphitheater at Bayfront Park for concerts, performances and community events; improving stormwater drainage; and better managing growth by strengthening the regulation of development and land use.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - Balancing responsible growth while preserving our heritage and protecting our quality of life and environment as we plan for future growth. I pledge to bring civility, respect, and transparency to the city council as we work with the mayor to create a spirit of unity and community throughout our city. During times of growth, it is important to assess policies, procedures and protocols with those who do the work every day, for opportunities to update and increase efficiency.

### **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Steve Olen** - During my 5 years on the City Council, the City has strongly supported Daphne's public schools by providing 7 School Resource Officers (police officers assigned to schools) to the public schools in Daphne; maintaining the baseball field, the practice football field and the common areas around the athletic facilities at Daphne High School; and contributing \$40,000 each year to SEEDS (Supporting Educational Excellence in Daphne Schools), which SEEDS then uses to provide for specific needs of the public schools at the classroom level. My commitment is to make sure the City continues its strong support of Daphne's public schools.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - Education is the bedrock of our workforce and our future. It is important that our city and community support our schools. The City already supports our public schools. I would like to learn more about the specific needs of each school and how best to connect them to resources available.

### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Steve Olen** - Olde Towne Daphne is the traditional heart of the City and embodies our community culturally and historically. The City must preserve and protect the essential character and charm of Olde Towne. The City can make Olde Towne even better, while fully preserving its charm and character, by maximizing the residents' use and enjoyment of Daphne's magnificent waterfront and by continuing to add new sidewalks and improving walkability in Olde Towne.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - Development of the Highway 98 corridor will be different than that of Olde Towne Daphne. I hope to see Olde Town Daphne remain as the historic city center reflective of our heritage and where we can continue to gather as a community for parades, holiday events, fundraiser, and other gatherings. Highway 98 is the commercial corridor of our city. The development must be thoughtful with a focus on the safety and infrastructure impacts. I would like to gain understanding how we as a city are creating a forward thinking plan for growth.

### **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Steve Olen** - During my 5 years on the City Council, Daphne has invested over \$3.7 million from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and a State of Alabama grant directly into infrastructure for stormwater management. My commitment is to work tirelessly to continue to improve stormwater drainage and to preserve and protect Daphne's incredible natural resources.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - We must always keep in mind that water flows downhill. As we pave more roads, parking lots and have less space to absorb water. Stormwater management must be a priority. Our biggest natural resource is our Bay and its tributaries so stormwater resources and citizen education should be a focus to protect it. Beach erosion is an issue that does need to be addressed in conjunction with water management.

## **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Steve Olen** - A new all-purpose recreation center; a new amphitheater at Bayfront Park for concerts, performances and community events; a boardwalk all the way from Village Point Park to I-10; and wide sidewalks on both sides of Main Street from Lott Park to Potters Mill. During my term on the City Council, Daphne obtained a \$7.2 million grant from the State of Alabama to build an amphitheater at Bayfront Park and procured an \$800,000 grant from the State of Alabama to fund the first phase of the boardwalk project. My commitment is to see that these projects are completed.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - All 3 of these areas are very important to a vibrant community and need to be developed with intention with a forward-thinking plan. Identifying potential environmentally important areas that need to be preserved, developing intentional masterplans so that zoning and planning frameworks can be structured with recreational opportunities and walkable landscapes.

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Steve Olen** - Continued growth outside the City limits is unavoidable. People who live outside the City limits will use Daphne's roads, infrastructure, recreation facilities and other amenities even without annexation. At times, the advantage of annexation is that the City has stricter standards for what is built, and City's Planning Department will do a much better job regulating what is built, than the County.

**Katherine "Casey" Gay Williams** - It needs to make sense and there is not one answer to this complicated question. Careful consideration must be given to available resources of the city now and in the future. Communication with the areas that would be annexed is always a first step.

## **City Council District 3 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Donald "Joel" Coleman - *Incumbent*  
Terri Osborne

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - I have called Daphne home for over 30 years and have raised my 2 daughters here. I have been fortunate to serve the citizens of District 3 as well as the rest of the City in this role for the past 9 years. What we have accomplished in my time in office has truly been beneficial for our community. While I am proud of how far we've come, we are not done yet. As mayor and city council, we've laid a strong foundation to Daphne's long-term vision, and I would like to continue to see that vision continue to be implemented.

**Terri Osborne** - As a long-time Daphne resident of 31 years, I've seen Daphne grow from a sleepy town to a rapidly growing city. The ever-increasing growth and its increasing demands upon our infrastructure and importantly our aquifer-supplied drinking water concerns me. I've been a professional geologist for almost 30 years and have worked on numerous groundwater projects during that time in Baldwin County. I am uniquely qualified on groundwater issues to represent my District on the City Council. We can most definitely build it, and they will come; but will there be enough water to quench their thirst.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - Bayfront Amphitheater – I have served as the Council's lead on this project and we have brought it from just an idea through the design process and it will begin construction this fall. We have secured a \$7.2M GOMESA grant to fund a majority of the improvements. Seeing this through the construction process to opening is at the top of my list of priorities.

Continue work on Infrastructure needs - It is undeniable that Baldwin County is experiencing rapid growth. As our community continues to expand, it is essential that we approach this growth with wisdom, transparency, and decisive leadership. I believe we must invest in infrastructure that meets rising demand. This will help preserve and enhance our quality of life while preserving Daphne's unique character for every family and citizen.

Continuing Smart Approach to Growth: In addition to recently adopted architectural standards and impact fees for development, the city recently partnered with citizens and Orion Planning and Design to develop the Envision Daphne 2042 Comprehensive Plan which considers all aspects of life in Daphne. I look forward to continuing to implement the direction of the plan into our governing regulations and ordinances.

**Terri Osborne** - 1. Quality of life is about the water, especially with Daphne's drinking water supplies. It is stated in the Envision Daphne 2042 Comprehensive Plan that water levels are declining in our aquifers, this is concerning for the future as it shows that Daphne is pumping out more water than rainfall can restore. We need a plan for that time when we can't just keep pumping more water to meet increasing demand

2. In District 3 miles of sidewalk have been built and are connected to the sidewalk system that connects Fairhope along Scenic Highway 98. But just walking down to the Bay is difficult and not safe because of inadequate crossings at the Magnolia Place/Publix Shopping area. We need a safe path for people living in Lake Forest, Sea Cliff condominiums, and the East Bay Apartments to safely access Mobile Bay without having to drive, especially with the new amphitheater being built at Bay Front Park.

3. Daphne needs a more nuanced approach to our increasing growth with its impact on our water resources, our already congested roads, and quality of life for all citizens of Daphne.

## **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - During my time in office, we have had a great partnership with the schools in our area. The City Council voted to approve \$800K toward Daphne High School's Jubilee Stadium's new turf field. The City also donated property for the school's expansion including a new softball field, cafeteria and parking. Our sports and recreation department maintains the

fields and our Public Works department assists with any requests from the principals. Our citizens have shown their commitment to our schools by voting in a 3-mill property tax increase dedicated to the schools within our feeder pattern. We created the Daphne Public School Commission to partner with the schools to utilize those funds. I have 2 daughters at Daphne High School and I believe the relationship with our schools is pivotal and am committed to maintaining it.

**Terri Osborne** - The City of Daphne should most certainly support our Daphne public schools, and this is best done by supporting the Baldwin County Public School Board of Education which oversees Daphne's City Schools in District 2.

#### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - I have worked with the Mayor and my fellow Council members to acquire a \$5M grant from Senator Katie Britt's office for our Downtown Redevelopment Streetscape. We are working on wrapping up the design of utility upgrades, sidewalks, stormwater improvements and overall aesthetics to enhance accessibility while maintaining our downtown area's small town charm.

We recently completed over \$5M worth of improvements to the Highway 98 and Lavender Lane intersection to provide a safer way to access Daphne's Justice Center, Target, Chick-fil-a and the new Whataburger. We are continually working on plans on East-West corridors to help relieve traffic pressure from both Highway 90 and County Road 64.

**Terri Osborne** - Congestion is the number one issue, especially along Main Street/Scenic 98 in Olde Towne Daphne. Progress is great but we need to look at the ripple effects of increased building and commercialization in a predominantly residential area of Daphne.

Congestion again is the number one issue on US Highway 98 going from Daphne to Fairhope. Anyone who has lived for any length of time in Daphne can attest to the traffic gridlock. We are seeing increased building with more shops, restaurants and other businesses along 98. This, of course, leads to more and more traffic and its resulting increase in stress for those traveling along it. A nuanced approach to growth is needed.

#### **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - Our City has some of the strictest stormwater ordinances in Baldwin County already in place. Over the past 5 years we have approved of \$4M of stormwater improvements with over half of that being in Lake Forest. We have partnered with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) for stream restoration projects on both Tiawassee and D'Olive Creeks. They have obtained millions of dollars for these projects and we have continued to remain their largest sponsor in Baldwin County. With a Master's degree in Environmental Engineering, it will remain a focus to engage with MBNEP and other agencies to protect and preserve Daphne's voluminous natural resources.

**Terri Osborne** - We must focus on the proper design of all storm water culverts, especially at the entry and exit points, to the extent construction can provide, to prevent erosion. Fortunately, the City of Daphne is not built on a flood plain like Mobile is and does not suffer from constant flooding of streets from afternoon thunderstorms. Mapping those areas in Daphne where flooding does occur and seeing where these flood waters drain will greatly assist in engineering flood con-

trol and drainage solutions. Boots on the ground during significant rain events, which are getting more frequent, is essential to gather the data needed to properly design storm water collection and routing.

## **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - In my time on the Council, we have made recreational sports a priority. In recent years, we have completed the Daphne Sports Complex which is widely regarded as one of the nicest of its kind in this area. Other projects we have completed include Daphne's Purple Park inclusive playground, two public splash pads and the Daphne Tennis and Pickleball Complex while continuing to maintain green space for passive recreation. In regards to sidewalks, we created an initiative to budget \$250K per year for new sidewalk installation balanced throughout the districts in our city. We have installed new sidewalks in Lake Forest, on County Road 13 and along Pollard Road to mention a few. In district 3 after 20 years of failed attempts, I was able to lead the effort to design and secure a funding grant for the recently installed sidewalk on the west side of Highway 98 connecting many of our residents to shopping and providing access to Daphne's Olde Towne District.

**Terri Osborne** - 1) Walkability - we need more sidewalks that have safe crossings at US Highway 98, especially at the Magnolia Center/Publix shopping area and creating one at the intersection of US highway 98 and Van Buren Street.

2) Green areas - maintain what we have and increase coverage as much as we can. Green areas help keep summer temperatures down, more paved areas increase heat retention and locally hotter summers.

3) Daphne has done a great job in building recreation areas such as the sports park area on Park Drive, the Al Trione Sports Complex on Whispering Pines Road and the new Pickle Ball courts and other amenities at Lott Park in Olde Town Daphne on Main Street. The primary concern is budgeting for maintenance and repairs at these facilities.

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Donald "Joel" Coleman** - With continued growth outside of our City limits, we are not actively seeking any additional annexation. However, development past our city limits is inevitable and, thus, we encourage them to be a part of our City because our stricter architectural, stormwater, street, sidewalk and infrastructure requirements. If new development does not annex into our city, our infrastructure will still be utilized, but we will lose the ability to shape the way we would envision how the development complies with our comprehensive plan as well as to collect any associated development fees.

**Terri Osborne** - Annexation, of course, increases the tax base of the city but also increases expenses for roads and infrastructure. In the end it's a risk assessment. Is it good for the citizens in the area to be annexed? Are the future benefits greater for the city than the risks? If it's an overall win, then yes, I'm for annexation.

## **City Council District 4 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Daniel Brooks - Provided No Responses  
Oliver Roberts

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Oliver Roberts** - My motivation is deeply personal and sits right at my own dinner table. My wife and I chose to build our life in Daphne 10 years ago because we knew it was a special community. Today, as my wife dedicates her career to teaching in the Baldwin County school system and we raise our two children in Daphne's public schools, I'm not just a resident, I'm a stakeholder with a vested interest in our future.

What qualifies me is that I share the same priorities as my neighbors in District 4. I understand the morning traffic on 181 and 64, the importance of safe parks for our kids, and the need to ensure the services we rely on keep up with our city's growth. My qualifications stem from a decade of being an engaged member of this community, and my commitment to the core values of my platform: honest leadership, smart planning, and always putting Daphne's families first.

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Oliver Roberts** - My priorities are a direct reflection of what I hear from families in our district and what we need to do to protect our quality of life for the next generation.

Enhancing Public Safety: This is my top priority. I will work to ensure that our police and fire departments have the necessary resources. This includes not only responding to emergencies but also focusing on proactive measures, such as improving neighborhood street lighting and implementing traffic-calming strategies to make our local roads safer for children, pedestrians, and drivers.

Managing Growth with Smart Infrastructure: We all see the rapid growth around us. We must be proactive, not reactive. I will advocate for a 'fix it first' approach to our existing infrastructure while ensuring that new development projects are accompanied by the necessary upgrades to our roads, utilities, and services, so they don't strain the resources we all depend on.

Investing in Community and Quality of Life: A strong community is about more than just roads and buildings. I will focus on improving our parks, protecting our natural spaces, and enhancing the programs and amenities that make Daphne a wonderful place to live and raise a family.

### **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Oliver Roberts** - As the husband of a dedicated teacher in the Baldwin County school system and a proud father with two children right here in Daphne schools, this issue is fundamental to

my platform. While the City Council doesn't set school curriculum, it has a critical role to play as a strong partner to the Board of Education.

My focus will be on tangible collaboration. This means ensuring there are safe routes to every school by prioritizing sidewalk construction and crosswalk maintenance. It means working with the police department to support our School Resource Officers. And it means fostering open communication with school leadership to see how city resources, like our recreation facilities and public works, can support the needs of our students and teachers. A strong city makes for strong schools, and vice versa.

#### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Oliver Roberts** - This question highlights the need for balanced, smart planning. Olde Towne and the Highway 98 corridor are two very different assets, and we must treat them as such.

For Olde Towne Daphne, my goal is to preserve its unique historic charm while increasing its vibrancy. This involves supporting local small businesses, enhancing walkability and public spaces, and making sure that any new development maintains the character that makes it the heart of our community.

For the Highway 98 corridor, the key is to manage commercial growth responsibly. We need to focus on improving traffic flow and ensuring safe access to businesses. My priority will be to work with city planners to promote high-quality development that benefits our tax base without putting excessive strain on our infrastructure.

#### **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Oliver Roberts** - This is a core infrastructure issue that directly affects homeowners and our beautiful natural environment. As we grow, we must not neglect our stormwater systems. I will support a comprehensive plan to identify and prioritize upgrades for aging drainage infrastructure, especially in neighborhoods susceptible to flooding. Additionally, I believe in smart planning that requires new developments to incorporate modern, low-impact designs that effectively manage runoff. Protecting our property and the health of Mobile Bay is a fundamental responsibility of city leadership.

#### **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Oliver Roberts** - I see these not as luxuries, but as essential investments in our community's health and value. For families, having safe and accessible parks, trails, and sidewalks is a major factor in their quality of life. My priority will be to create a more connected Daphne. This means maintaining and enhancing our existing parks while also looking for strategic opportunities to acquire new green space for the public to enjoy. I believe District 4 deserves more places for families and neighbors to gather, and I will work to expand the parks and recreation opportunities in this area. I will strongly advocate for the completion of our city's sidewalk and trail networks to ensure families can safely walk or bike to our schools, parks, and community centers. These investments pay us back every single day.

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Oliver Roberts** - My position on annexation is guided by one simple principle: any expansion must provide a clear and sustainable benefit to the current residents and taxpayers of Daphne. I am not for growth for growth's sake.

Before I would ever vote to approve an annexation, I would require a thorough analysis to ensure that the projected tax revenue will outweigh the long-term costs of providing city services like police, fire, and sanitation. We must be certain that our infrastructure can support the new area without diminishing the quality of service for our existing neighborhoods. My commitment is to the smart, strategic growth that strengthens our city, not the kind that overburdens it.

## **City Council District 5 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Steve McArthur

Stephanie Ganey-Messinger

William "Billy" Miller

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Steve McArthur** - I have never previously run for political office, but became aware Ron Scott was retiring after 16 years of service and he was concerned there would not be a responsible person volunteering to fill his position. I therefore decided to run for City Council because I have a great deal of technical experience, and I felt a civic responsibility and desire to keep Daphne a great community. A Mechanical Engineer by degree, I spent most of my career as a project engineer in various chemical and heavy industrial plants. Such project engineering work required assembling a consensus for project scopes and budgeting, optimizing designs and evaluating alternatives, determining infrastructure needs and forecasts, and actual construction of projects up to \$30M. My technical experience is well suited for addressing Daphne's needs, although admittedly my purely political experience is limited.

Being retired, I have the available time to work on City Council issues and honestly did not have a good excuse to not volunteer for the position as my professional skills would be well utilized and beneficial to Daphne.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - I was motivated to run for Daphne City Council District 5 by the knowledge that my current council representative decided not to run for reelection. I recently retired and have had multiple people who know me encourage me to enter into the race because they know my passion for politics and love for our community and country. As a lifelong resident of the Eastern Shore whose family has given so much to, I feel I am qualified to represent the city of Daphne and District 5 due to my knowledge of where Daphne has evolved from and its current state over the last 50+ years because I've watched it grow from a small town with a 2 lane highway

with no traffic lights, no Lake Forrest, and barely any businesses into what it is today, a beautiful, vibrant, prosperous city serving its citizens very well. I am proud to live in Daphne, AL.

**William "Billy" Miller** - I'm motivated by a deep sense of responsibility to the city that helped shape my family. Daphne has been the place where my wife and I raised our children, built lasting relationships, and invested our lives. Now that our children are grown, I feel a renewed calling to give back by helping guide the future of the community that gave so much to us. Running for City Council is not just about service; it's about stewardship of the people, values, and opportunities that make Daphne a place we're proud to call home.

Daphne is a diverse city reflected in its population, businesses, tourism, educational opportunities, and community life. I believe the person representing this city should also bring a diverse background. I am a U.S. Air Force veteran who served as a Military Police officer. I have worked in both public and private sectors and consulted within the federal government in areas such as security, construction, administration, and planning. My experience also includes work in hospitality, social services, and spiritual care. Additionally, I serve as a coach and counselor and am currently in a dual role as both staff and faculty at a local school.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Steve McArthur** - I believe the citizens of Daphne have three priority concerns and these would therefore be my focus.

- 1: Infrastructure capacity to keep pace with Daphne's growth, especially related to traffic.
- 2: Growth rate of neighborhoods and developments.
- 3: Recreational and public areas to keep Daphne a desirable community for families.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - My top three priorities are: smart, sustainable growth with concentration on infrastructure readiness, attracting businesses that will bring in additional revenue through sales taxes so we can continue to improve or even grow our services to our citizens, promoting health and wellness of all our citizens, from children to seniors by continuing with our recreation and beautification projects in the city with an emphasis on more spaces for indoor activities due to our intense hot climate.

**William "Billy" Miller** - The top three priorities I would focus on would depend on the voice of the people but the areas I believe include:

**Transparent and Responsive Governance** – I will prioritize listening to our residents and evaluating the City's strategic plan and vision. I aim to improve communication across multiple platforms to ensure that all citizens are informed, engaged, and heard.

**Public Safety and Emergency Readiness** – I will continue to support our first responders with the resources and training they need. As Daphne grows, it's essential that our public safety response remains balanced and effective so that every resident feels equally protected and served.

**Smart and Sustainable Growth** – I will advocate for thoughtful, well-informed development that preserves Daphne's unique charm and character. Growth should enhance our community, not compromise what makes it special.

### **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Steve McArthur** - A well educated work force is a primary consideration when companies and industries are selecting areas to locate. Good schools are therefore the basis for allowing our children to find well paying local jobs and continue to raise families in the Daphne community. I frankly do not have specifics at this time regarding what Daphne should do in supporting the education system, other than I understand its importance and am a strong proponent for improving our education system.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - A city that has an excellent school is a city that will thrive and grow. Our city leaders should be in constant support of our schools in every way possible. An ongoing partnership with each school's leadership is imperative to ensure our future of our city. Partnering with parents to ensure their children are equipped to learn, and parents are equipped to support their children's efforts are fruitful.

**William "Billy" Miller** - The City of Daphne should play an active and collaborative role in supporting our public schools. This includes continuing to allocate property tax revenues to enhance educational programs, provide school-based social workers, strengthen teacher support, and expand tutoring resources. Investing in our schools is an investment in our city's future ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

In addition, our students are the future leaders of Daphne. The city should support efforts to educate them on civic engagement and local government. I appreciate initiatives like the recent Civic Bee hosted by the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce. The earlier we can engage and educate our youth in how their city operates, the better prepared they'll be to contribute as informed and responsible citizens.

### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Steve McArthur** - The Highway 98 corridor is a highly traveled and congested artery, and infrastructure upgrades are complex due to the required involvement with Alabama DOT. I would support the ongoing design developments to alleviate the current issues.

Olde Town Daphne has a current plan to improve Main Street by moving utilities underground, add sidewalks and planter boxes, alter traffic layout and parking, and overall improve the charm of this area. Much of the required funding is already available, and I would support efforts to fully fund this project.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - Olde Towne Daphne is near and dear to my heart because of all the fond childhood memories I have of the small micro town it once was. I envision it become more of a family event type of atmosphere. I would encourage and try to attract small, locally owned businesses that would add to the current character and feel of OTD.

The southern Hwy 98 corridor has really "blossomed" over the last few years. It's time to put some thought into revitalizing the northern, older corridor of 98, nearest to the interstate. That portion of 98 has become somewhat of an eyesore and I feel it would be beneficial to try to attract a nice Steak Restaurant as well as possibly some medical or other professional offices that are revenue producing.

**William "Billy" Miller** - I envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor being guided by thoughtful planning and meaningful community engagement. Growth in these areas should be balanced with the capacity of our local infrastructure to ensure it remains sustainable for residents, businesses, and traffic flow. By listening to the community and planning with intention, we can preserve the charm of Olde Towne while supporting smart, responsible development along the Highway 98 corridor.

## **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Steve McArthur** - Stormwater drainage is understandably a complex and expensive issue, and requires a coordinated effort. I would work closely with all parties to continue to address this issue that affects a great number of our citizens. The stormwater drainage system is driven by gravity and therefore does not have unlimited capacity, and there have to be design trade-offs such as retention ponds. I would support the Daphne engineering group in continuing to address methods and recommendations to mitigate stormwater issues.

Daphne has already been proactive in addressing stormwater discharge flowing through natural environments so as to minimize sediment loading into Mobile Bay. I would support similar environmental practices to maintain the quality of our bay.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - Though storm water drainage projects are not my specialty, I would be very much in support of improving our drainage/runoff issues if and where there are any problems. The BayFront is our greatest natural resource asset in the city. That Bay Front is the signature of 'The Jubilee City'. I grew up going to May Day Park and I take my grandchildren there even today. I want the Bay to be exceptional for years to come.

**William "Billy" Miller** - I support the continued monitoring, planning, and implementation of policies that address stormwater drainage especially in areas of new development. This includes evaluating soil permeability and infrastructure capacity to ensure our systems can handle increased runoff. In recent years, we've seen some progress in stormwater management in the tributaries feeding into the bay and D'Olive Creek, and I believe we must build on that momentum.

Protecting Daphne's natural resources is equally important. The Miocene Aquifer is one of our city's most valuable assets, and we must be diligent in monitoring its usage, maintaining our pumping stations, and ensuring the delivery of safe, clean drinking water. These are critical investments that deserve our full attention and funding.

Additionally, Daphne's designation as a Bee City USA reflects our commitment to environmental stewardship. Supporting pollinators like bees, butterflies, and other insects is vital for the health of our local ecosystem and for preserving our area's agricultural heritage. I will continue to support initiatives that promote sustainability and preserve the natural beauty and health of our community.

## **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Steve McArthur** - These are all integral to making Daphne a great family community and I would make these a priority. I believe the current City Council and Mayor have done a good job with such projects.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - I place high priority on making sure we continue to invest in, improve upon, and grow our green spaces and recreational offerings for our citizens. Walkability in a city is vitally important in this current day and time. I would support not only walkability but also adding bike lanes to our city streets as well. Biking has become an immensely popular outdoor activity all over the US. With the new electric bikes, it could be possible to ride the entire eastern shore if each city would get on board with bike lanes. Where active, healthy citizens are cities thrive.

**William "Billy" Miller** - Investments in recreation, green space, and walkability are essential to promoting the overall wellness of our citizens and preserving the quality of life that makes Daphne such a special place to live. These spaces support physical, mental, and emotional health by encouraging active lifestyles, providing safe and welcoming environments for families, and creating opportunities for connection and community.

As a runner, I've personally benefited from Daphne's trails and outdoor spaces. And as a father, I've seen how additions like the pickleball courts have provided new ways for my daughter and many others in our community to stay active and engaged.

I would prioritize continued investments in parks, trails, and walkable areas that connect our neighborhoods, promote healthy living, and reflect the values of a vibrant, forward-looking community.

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Steve McArthur** - I believe communities need to grow, or they slowly die. The Envision Daphne 2042 comprehensive plan, available through the Daphne website, provides a detailed plan which involves over time expanding Daphne to the East. This is a data driven plan, and identifies positives and negatives related to the assumptions. The goal is to generate a Win-Win situation for all of the citizens, realizing there are hurdles and trade-offs in such a vision plan, but recognize the overall positive benefits of such a path forward.

**Stephanie Ganey-Messinger** - I am in favor of expanding the city boundaries if our road, highways, and other infrastructure is heavily considered by the council and planning department in the annexation process. There are currently multiple homes, families, and businesses right outside of Daphne City limits who are benefitting from our city resources. Be it sports and/or recreation activities, the beautiful shore of Mobile Bay, our parks, library, and several facilities run/provided by the city, we may as well expand the city limits and bring in the property tax revenue.

**William "Billy" Miller** - Annexation should be approached with caution and careful consideration. While growth can bring opportunity, it must be balanced with our ability to maintain the high quality of services that our current residents expect and deserve. I believe any expansion of city boundaries should be evaluated through the lens of infrastructure readiness, public safety support, environmental impact, and long-term sustainability. My priority is to ensure that growth does not outpace our capacity to serve, and that it aligns with the character, values, and strategic vision of Daphne.

## City Council District 6 Candidate Questions

Candidates:  
Benjamin Hughes - *Incumbent*  
Byrian L. Ramsey

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Benjamin Hughes** - I've lived in Daphne my entire life, and I care deeply about this community. I want Daphne to continue being a place where families feel safe, where growth is handled responsibly, and where my children will want to live and raise their own families one day. That's what motivates me to serve.

Professionally, I've spent almost 20 years in public safety, working as a firefighter, paramedic, and flight nurse. That experience has shaped how I approach challenges, how I communicate with people, and how I solve problems

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - My motivation to run for Daphne City Council is rooted in a deep love for our city and a lifelong commitment to public service. As someone who has chosen to live, work, and serve in Lake Forest in Daphne, I see our city not just as a place on a map—but as home. I believe that public service is one of the most honorable ways to give back, and I'm running because I want to help shape a future for Daphne that reflects our

under pressure. I also work in healthcare marketing and co-own a local small business, which gives me a clear understanding of the needs of small business owners and working families.

I currently serve as Council President Pro Tem, chair the Public Safety Committee, and serve on the city's Finance, Public Works, Ordinance, and Buildings and Properties Committees. I also serve as the city liaison to the Recreation Board and as a member of the Daphne Public School Commission.

shared values: transparency, smart growth, public safety, and strong community ties.

One of the most defining moments for me came during the April Flooding. Our community was hurting. Roads were impassable, power was out, and people were overwhelmed. I organized volunteers to clear debris, check on elderly neighbors, and help families who couldn't do it alone. That wasn't an assignment—I wasn't

During my time on the council, I've led efforts to renovate Centennial Park, helped secure funding for new sidewalks in Lake Forest, supported the creation of impact fees on new developments, and led efforts to improve ambulance response coverage in our city.

I've taken this role seriously, and I've shown up every step of the way. My background, my experience, and my track record all reflect a commitment to helping Daphne move forward while staying true to the values that make our city such a great place to live.

elected—I just knew that leadership was needed. That experience lit a fire in me. It reminded me that leadership is not about titles, but about showing up, stepping up, and being there when your community needs you most.

I bring that same mindset to everything I do. As President of the Lake Forest Property Owners' Association, which represents over 3,000 homes, I've worked tirelessly to mod-

ernize our community and improve quality of life. Under my leadership, we've increased community engagement, addressed critical infrastructure issues, and implemented long-overdue accountability measures. We brought transparency to budgets, created clearer communication channels with residents, and began projects that had been stalled for years. I led efforts to collaborate with the city—not just to voice concerns—but to be a partner in progress.

Beyond Lake Forest, I've also worked with local business owners, city officials, and community groups to promote responsible development, support local initiatives, and advocate for the needs of District 6 and beyond. I'm proud

of my work with economic development efforts, small business support, and community safety programs.

I have achieved my Doctorate in Organizational Leadership and have more than 30 years of experience in Technology, possessing more than 30 professional certifications, and more than 25 years in leadership. I am a published author with copyrights and have given speeches before the Department of Commerce and the Department of Homeland Security, professionally, and other entities. I have over 30 years of experience in compliance, risk management, and cybersecurity, with much of my work focused on protecting critical infrastructure and supporting organizations that

serve the public good. I've led large teams, managed complex budgets, and navigated high-stakes challenges—skills that will serve me well in city government.

Ultimately, I'm running because I believe our city deserves leadership that listens, leads with integrity, and puts people before politics. I believe in servant leadership—rolling up my sleeves and getting to work for the people who live here. Daphne is growing, and with the right leadership, we can protect the character of our neighborhoods while embracing smart, forward-thinking progress. I am ready to serve, and I'm asking for the opportunity to continue making a difference—this time, as your District 6 Councilman.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

### **Benjamin Hughes - Infrastructure**

As our city continues to grow, so does the strain on our infrastructure. I've been actively involved in addressing these challenges by supporting road paving projects, working to improve high-traffic intersections, and helping advance stormwater improvements. My commitment to strengthening Daphne's infrastructure remains a top priority.

### **Public Safety**

I'm the only current council member and candidate for District 6 with a background in public safety. With nearly 20 years of experience, I understand firsthand the daily challenges faced by our police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel. I will continue to advocate for competitive pay and benefits, make sure they have the tools to do their jobs safely and effectively, and push for expanded mental health resources to support their well-being both on and off duty.

### **Parks and Recreation**

As a father of two with a third child on the way, I know how important it is to have safe, welcoming spaces for families to enjoy. I'm a strong supporter of our parks and recreation system because I've seen how much it matters to our community. I will continue working to ensure our parks are well-maintained, family-friendly, and designed to support healthy childhood development and community connection.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - When elected to the Daphne City Council, my top three priorities in the first year will be:

## 1. Neighborhood Infrastructure and Safety

One of my top priorities is improving the infrastructure that directly impacts our quality of life—roads, drainage, street lighting, sidewalks, and traffic flow. In District 6 and across Daphne, we have areas that need urgent attention, especially in older neighborhoods like Lake Forest. I will push for more transparent capital improvement planning and ensure that neglected areas receive their fair share of investment. Alongside that, I will advocate for stronger partnerships with our police and fire departments to support community-oriented public safety, improve response times, and ensure every resident feels safe in their neighborhood.

## 2. Smart Growth and Responsible Development

Daphne is growing rapidly, and while growth brings opportunity, it must be managed carefully. I will focus on ensuring that future development is balanced with our city's infrastructure capacity, environmental impact, and neighborhood character. This means supporting responsible zoning, requiring developer accountability, and protecting green spaces. I will also work to strengthen the city's long-range planning process to ensure we are not just reacting to growth, but proactively preparing for it in a way that benefits all residents.

## 3. Transparent, Responsive Government

Residents deserve to be informed and heard. Too often, people feel like decisions are made without their input—or worse, without their knowledge. I will prioritize communication and accessibility. That includes pushing for better digital engagement tools, clearer public meeting notices, and open-door policies that invite citizen feedback. I've practiced this as POA President by making communication a two-way street, and I will do the same as your Councilman. I want to bring the Council closer to the people and restore trust in the decision-making process.

These priorities are not just political talking points—they're grounded in the conversations I've had at kitchen tables, community meetings, and front porches all over District 6. I believe city government should reflect the needs of its people and deliver real results. These three focus areas—strong neighborhoods, smart growth, and open government—are the foundation of the kind of leadership I intend to bring to Daphne.

## 3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?

**Benjamin Hughes** - The city has been a strong partner and advocate for our local schools and will continue to support our children. Our children are our most important investment, and I'm dedicated to supporting their education. The City of Daphne is actively partnered with the schools in our feeder pattern and has strong relationships with the educational leaders who lead our children at these schools.

As a member of the Daphne Public School Commission, I work closely with school leaders to allocate funding for enrichment programs that enhance learning and support student development. I'm also a proud supporter of SEEDS. Together, these efforts help provide our students with the tools and opportunities they need to grow and develop, and it's an honor to serve alongside our leaders in education.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - While the Baldwin County Board of Education oversees the direct op-

eration of our public schools, the City of Daphne absolutely has a vital role to play in sup-

porting our students, educators, and school communities. Strong schools are the back-

bone of a thriving city. They attract families, support property values, and help shape the next generation of community leaders. For me, the city's role in supporting public education is both practical and moral—we must be active partners in ensuring that every student has access to a safe, enriching, and opportunity-filled learning environment.

First and foremost, the city must prioritize collaboration. That means maintaining a strong and consistent relationship with our local school principals, PTOs, teachers, and the Baldwin County School Board. We need to be listening to their needs and concerns and working together to find solutions—whether that's around traffic and safety issues, infrastructure needs, or after-school programming. Too often, government entities operate in silos. As a council member, I will work to break

those barriers down and ensure our schools know they have a committed partner in City Hall.

Second, the city must invest in infrastructure and safety surrounding our schools. This includes improving traffic flow during drop-off and pick-up, maintaining safe sidewalks and crosswalks, ensuring adequate lighting, and supporting our School Resource Officers (SROs). We also need to anticipate how future development affects school zones and enrollment so we can advocate for proper planning and avoid overcrowding.

Third, we should support enrichment opportunities and youth development. The city can offer programs through our Parks and Recreation Department, libraries, and community centers that complement what students

are learning in the classroom. We can also work to create internship pipelines with local businesses, city departments, and nonprofits to expose our high school students to career paths and leadership opportunities. Lastly, I believe in celebrating and uplifting our schools. Whether it's recognizing student achievements at council meetings, supporting teacher appreciation efforts, or helping fund small projects that make a big difference, the city should be a visible and vocal champion of our educators and students.

As someone who deeply values education and understands the role it plays in shaping our future workforce and community, I am committed to working hand-in-hand with our schools to ensure they have the support they need to thrive. When our schools succeed, our entire city succeeds.

#### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Benjamin Hughes** - The health of Olde Towne Daphne is important to the long-term success of our entire city. I believe we should protect the traditional feel and charm of the area while also supporting improvements that respect its character. Growth should be thoughtful and reflect the unique identity of Olde Towne.

The Envision 2042 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2024, lays out a clear vision for the future. I support efforts to improve pedestrian access, strengthen architectural standards, and allow for mixed-use development that includes both commercial and residential space.

Along the Highway 98 corridor, we should encourage smart development that improves traffic flow, promotes quality design, and creates opportunities for local businesses. All of this must be done with a focus on preserving what makes Daphne such a special place to live.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - Olde Towne Daphne and the High-

way 98 corridor are two of the most visible and vital areas of

our city, and their continued development represents a sig-

nificant opportunity to shape Daphne's future. My vision centers on achieving the right balance between preserving the unique charm and historical character of Olde Towne, while fostering smart, strategic growth along Highway 98 that supports our economy, infrastructure, and quality of life.

### **Olde Towne Daphne: Preserving Character, Supporting Local**

Olde Towne Daphne is the heart and soul of our city. It's where history, culture, and community come together. I believe development here should be thoughtful, measured, and always rooted in preservation. We must protect the small-town charm, walkability, and green spaces that make Olde Towne special. At the same time, we can support existing and new small businesses, promote beautification efforts, and invest in public infrastructure like sidewalks, lighting, stormwater drainage, and parking solutions.

The city should work closely with business owners and residents in Olde Towne to ensure that any future development aligns with the area's architectural heritage, promotes pedestrian-friendly spaces, and supports a vibrant downtown district without compromising

the peace and identity of nearby neighborhoods.

### **Highway 98 Corridor: Smart Growth with Infrastructure First**

The Highway 98 corridor is a major gateway into Daphne and one of the most traveled routes in Baldwin County.

Development here is inevitable—but how we manage it is critical. I envision a corridor that is thoughtfully developed with clear zoning guidelines, controlled access points to reduce traffic congestion, and commercial growth that supports the needs of our residents without overwhelming our infrastructure.

We need to make sure development along Highway 98 doesn't outpace our roads, utilities, and public safety capacity. Traffic management, stormwater planning, and environmental protection should be considered upfront—not as an afterthought. We also need to preserve natural buffers, improve connectivity between residential areas and commercial centers, and make investments in sidewalks, bike paths, and safe turn lanes that make the corridor more functional and attractive.

Additionally, we should sup-

port locally-owned businesses and diverse commercial options that provide value to the people of Daphne—not just serve as pass-through stops for those traveling through. As part of that, I will advocate for development incentives that prioritize long-term community investment over short-term profit.

### **A United Vision for Both Areas**

The future of Olde Towne and Highway 98 must not be developed in isolation. These two areas are connected economically, socially, and geographically. I support creating a unified planning vision—through updated comprehensive plans, traffic studies, and community input—to ensure development in one area complements the other. Public input will be key; I believe residents should have a strong voice in shaping what these spaces look like for the next generation.

With the right leadership, Daphne can grow in a way that honors its roots while building a future we can all be proud of. I'm committed to ensuring that both Olde Towne and the Highway 98 corridor remain assets to our city, not only for today but for decades to come.

## **5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Benjamin Hughes** - Protecting our environment is essential to maintaining the quality of life we all enjoy in Daphne. Stormwater management is one of the most important parts of that effort, and it's an area I've remained focused on throughout my time on the council.

Over the course of this term, the city has invested millions of dollars in improving our storm-water infrastructure. I've supported those efforts and will continue to push for upgrades that reduce flooding, erosion, and pollution in our waterways. I've also been a strong advocate for continued funding for organizations like the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, which has played a key role in restoring creeks and tributaries in Lake Forest and other parts of the city.

Environmental protection must remain a priority in every decision we make. Whether it's planning future development or maintaining existing infrastructure, we need to ensure we're doing everything we can to protect our natural resources for the generations to come.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - Improving stormwater drainage and protecting our natural resources must be a top priority for Daphne—not just for environmental reasons, but for the safety, health, and long-term sustainability of our community. As someone who has worked hands-on with drainage issues in Lake Forest and other areas in District 6, I understand how serious these challenges are for homeowners, neighborhoods, and the city as a whole. These issues can no longer be treated as reactive maintenance items—they must be addressed through a coordinated, long-term strategy.

### **Invest in Modernized Stormwater Infrastructure**

The first step is investing in updated drainage systems that can handle today's rainfall levels. Many of our stormwater systems were built decades ago and are no longer adequate given our population growth and changes in weather patterns. I will support increased funding for comprehensive drainage improvement projects, especially in flood-prone neighborhoods. This includes cleaning and maintaining existing ditches, culverts,

and detention ponds, as well as installing new infrastructure where needed.

I will also advocate for a city-wide stormwater assessment to identify problem areas, prioritize repairs, and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent strategically—not just where complaints arise, but where impact is greatest.

### **Strengthen Development Regulations**

I strongly support enforcing and updating city ordinances that require developers to manage stormwater runoff on-site. Too often, new developments increase the burden on city systems and downstream neighbors. I would push for stronger requirements on retention/detention ponds, green space preservation, and post-construction runoff limits. Developers should be required to show how their projects will not negatively impact surrounding areas—and held accountable if they do.

We must also ensure that our zoning and planning process includes environmental impact assessments, so we don't unintentionally create drainage or erosion problems when ap-

roving new projects.

### **Expand Use of Green Infrastructure**

I believe Daphne can do more to implement green infrastructure solutions that protect our natural resources while also managing stormwater. This includes the use of rain gardens, permeable pavement, bioswales, and tree canopy preservation in both public projects and private developments. These approaches help filter runoff, reduce erosion, and replenish groundwater naturally.

I would also like to see the city lead by example—integrating green infrastructure into parks, streetscapes, and public buildings to reduce surface runoff and beautify our environment.

### **Protect Wetlands, Waterways, and Shorelines**

Daphne's location along Mobile Bay, with its creeks, wetlands, and wooded areas, is part of what makes our city special. I support the protection of critical environmental assets, including D'Olive Creek, Tiawasee Creek, and the bayfront, through conservation easements, stricter setback requirements, and

strategic land use planning. We must resist the temptation to overdevelop near sensitive areas and instead prioritize preservation.

Additionally, I would support educational initiatives and partnerships with groups like the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, local schools,

and civic organizations to raise awareness about pollution prevention, watershed protection, and the importance of responsible land stewardship.

### **Encourage Regional and Intergovernmental Collaboration**

Drainage doesn't stop at city limits. I will advocate for stronger collaboration with Baldwin County, ALDOT, and nearby municipalities to address shared stormwater challenges, coordinate on regional watershed planning, and ensure funding is available for large-scale projects that benefit multiple communities.

## **6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Benjamin Hughes** - I believe that recreation, green space, and walkability are essential to the quality of life in Daphne. As the city liaison to the Recreation Board, I've had the opportunity to work closely with residents and city leaders to support recreational priorities that make our city a better place to live, raise a family, and stay active.

As a father of two with one on the way, I understand how important safe, welcoming parks are for children and families. That's why I led the effort to renovate Centennial Park in downtown Daphne, securing nearly \$300,000 in improvements to restore this historic space. I'm committed to continuing this work by investing in more parks and public spaces where families can come together and kids can thrive.

But recreation goes beyond playgrounds. We must continue investing in clean, safe, and well-connected green spaces that give people of all ages more opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. That includes walking and running trails, bike paths, and accessible sidewalks. I'm proud to have secured funding for the Ridgewood Drive sidewalk project in Lake Forest, a \$750,000 investment that now connects the east and west sides of our largest neighborhood and provides a key route for safe pedestrian access. There is still a huge need for additional sidewalks in Lake Forest. I will continue advocating for sidewalk expansion to improve walkability and support safe, active lifestyles across our community and throughout District 6.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - Investments in recreation, green space, and walkability are not luxuries—they are essential components of a thriving, healthy, and connected community. As Daphne continues to grow, we must ensure that we're not only expanding housing and commercial development but also thoughtfully investing in the quality of life of our residents. I would strongly prioritize these areas because they contribute directly to public health, proper-

ty values, family engagement, and long-term community satisfaction.

### **Expand and Maintain Parks and Recreational Facilities**

Our parks and sports fields are community hubs, and I fully support expanding access to recreational spaces across all districts. I would prioritize investments in upgrading existing parks—many of which need refreshed equipment, updated restrooms, drainage

solutions, and ADA-compliant features. I also support the strategic development of new park spaces in underserved areas to ensure every family has nearby access to safe and clean outdoor amenities.

Beyond that, I want to see greater diversity in recreational offerings—like shaded picnic areas, splash pads, outdoor fitness stations, and inclusive playgrounds. As councilman, I'd advocate for a master plan that prioritizes both the main

tenance of our current assets and the phased development of new ones based on community needs.

### **Protect and Expand Green Space**

Green space is vital for storm-water control, environmental health, and mental well-being. I would work to preserve existing natural areas through zoning and land-use planning tools that discourage over-development. Additionally, I would explore the use of conservation easements and partnerships with land trusts to protect critical habitats and wooded buffers.

Green spaces can also serve as passive recreation areas—ideal for walking, birdwatching, or simply enjoying nature. These are the types of low-impact, high-value spaces that build pride in place. I believe we need to think long-term and ensure we're setting aside enough green space today to meet the needs of future generations.

### **Improve Walkability and Bike Access**

## **7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Benjamin Hughes** - I support thoughtful and responsible annexation when it benefits the City of Daphne and aligns with our long-term vision for growth. Whether it's commercial or residential, I welcome development that is willing to come into the city and meet our standards. Daphne has some of the strongest land use and development regulations in Baldwin County, and I believe those rules are key to protecting our quality of life.

While we cannot stop development from occurring in areas around us, we can ensure that anything built within our city limits meets higher standards. Over the course of my term, I've supported revisions to our land use ordinances that discourage cookie-cutter subdivisions, limit excessive density, and protect our natural environment. I also voted to implement impact fees

Creating a walkable, pedestrian- and bike-friendly community is one of the most impactful things we can do to connect neighborhoods, reduce traffic, and encourage healthier lifestyles. In many parts of Daphne, residents are unable to safely walk to nearby parks, schools, or stores due to a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, or safe routes. That needs to change.

I would advocate for a City-wide Connectivity Plan—one that prioritizes sidewalks, multi-use paths, safe crosswalks, and bike lanes in both new developments and existing neighborhoods. We should also look at "complete streets" policies that make roads safer for all users—not just vehicles. Importantly, I would prioritize projects based on need and opportunity—starting with areas near schools, high foot-traffic zones, and underserved neighborhoods. Safe walkability is a public safety issue, not just a lifestyle benefit.

### **Community Input and Phased Implementation**

All of these investments should be driven by resident input. As POA President, I've seen how important it is to bring people to the table before decisions are made. Whether we're talking about a new park design, a bike trail connection, or a sidewalk plan, the people who live in these neighborhoods must have a say.

I would push for a phased implementation plan based on available funding, potential partnerships (including grants), and community priorities. My goal would be to ensure every part of Daphne feels included in our progress—especially areas that have been historically overlooked.

In summary, investing in recreation, green space, and walkability isn't just about aesthetics—it's about building a healthier, safer, and more connected Daphne. I'm committed to supporting these initiatives as a council member and working alongside residents to ensure that our city grows in a way that enhances—not erodes—our quality of life.

on new developments, which help ensure that growth pays its fair share and doesn't place an unfair burden on existing taxpayers.

Any future annexation should be evaluated carefully to make sure it aligns with our infrastructure capacity, preserves the character of surrounding neighborhoods, and provides long-term value to Daphne residents. Expansion for the sake of expansion is not the goal—but when annexation helps move our city forward in the right way, I believe it's worth supporting.

**Byrian L. Ramsey** - Annexation is a powerful tool that can shape the future of a city for generations—but if done without careful planning, it can also create long-term challenges that strain resources and erode public trust. My position on annexation is grounded in three key principles: responsible growth, infrastructure readiness, and community benefit.

### **Growth Must Be Strategic, Not Just Expansive**

I do not support annexation simply for the sake of expanding city limits or increasing tax revenue. Each annexation request must be carefully evaluated to ensure it aligns with Daphne's long-term comprehensive plan and serves the best interests of both current and future residents. We must ask the hard questions:

Can our infrastructure support the expansion?

Will public safety services (fire, police, EMS) be able to respond effectively?

Does this annexation preserve our quality of life—or put it at risk?

If we can't answer those questions with confidence, we

should not move forward.

### **Infrastructure Must Come First**

Too often, cities annex areas and then scramble to provide the basic services those areas need—roads, drainage, utilities, garbage, and emergency response. I will not support any annexation proposal that doesn't include a clear and fully funded plan for infrastructure improvements. I also believe developers should bear a fair share of the costs to upgrade roads, drainage, and public safety capacity—not leave that burden on existing taxpayers.

As Councilman, I would advocate for a policy that ensures annexation proposals are accompanied by full cost-benefit analyses, including infrastructure studies and public input, before any decision is made.

### **Respect for Existing Residents and Neighborhood Character**

Annexation should never come at the expense of existing Daphne neighborhoods. Our city must first take care of the areas we already have—especially those that have been historically underserved—before we add more land to our responsibilities. If we're not

meeting current needs, we're not ready to expand.

I also believe any new areas brought into the city should be integrated thoughtfully, with attention to maintaining Daphne's community character, protecting green space, and ensuring compatible zoning. We can grow—but we must grow with intention.

### **Transparent Public Engagement**

Any annexation discussion should be done with full transparency and public input. Residents deserve to know the facts—not just about the potential tax base, but about the long-term impacts on traffic, schools, infrastructure, and quality of life. I will always advocate for open hearings, published annexation studies, and meaningful community engagement before a vote is taken.

In short, I support growth that makes sense—not just on a map, but in the lives of the people who live here. Daphne is a special place because of its neighborhoods, its natural beauty, and its small-town values. I will fight to protect those qualities by ensuring that any future annexation is thoughtful, justified, and responsibly managed.

## **City Council District 7 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:  
Jennifer Green - Unopposed

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Jennifer Green** - As an educator of 24 years, I understand the importance of accountability, public service, and long-term planning. Daphne thrives when it has leaders with a positive vision and the ability to offer practical, inclusive strategies for progress. My experience in education and community service—combined with a deep love for our Jubilee City—equips me to serve effectively. I bring a collaborative spirit, a focus on outcomes, and a deep respect for the voices of our citizens.

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Jennifer Green** - My top three priorities are:

1. Infrastructure Development – Ensuring roads, drainage, and utilities keep pace with growth.
2. Education Oversight – Monitoring the responsible use of the 3-mill education tax to ensure funds are transparently and efficiently allocated.
3. Recreation and Green Space Expansion – Supporting accessible parks, trails, and public spaces to promote wellness and community connection.

### **3. What role should the city play in supporting Daphne's public schools?**

**Jennifer Green** - Although our schools are managed by the Baldwin County Public School System, the City of Daphne has a vital role as a committed partner. As stakeholders, we must advocate for excellence in education and work closely with school leaders to ensure that local needs are met. If elected, I will continue to prioritize our youth and support initiatives that enrich their learning environments.

### **4. How do you envision the continued development of Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor?**

**Jennifer Green** - Olde Towne Daphne and the Highway 98 corridor are at the heart of our city's identity and economic vitality. I support thoughtful development that honors our city's charm while embracing progress. An entertainment district in Olde Towne, for example, could boost local businesses—if done with careful planning around infrastructure and public safety. Smart, intentional growth is key to long-term success.

**5. What measures would you support to improve stormwater drainage and protect the city's natural resources?**

**Jennifer Green** - We must learn from the past and proactively invest in responsible, forward-thinking solutions. I support allocating dedicated funds for stormwater infrastructure and exploring innovative technologies to manage runoff. Protecting Mobile Bay and our wetlands is essential to preserving Daphne's natural beauty. I also support community-led efforts, such as volunteer clean-up and recycling days, to promote environmental stewardship.

**6. How would you prioritize investments in recreation, green space, and walkability?**

**Jennifer Green** - Investing in recreation, green space, and walkability improves quality of life and strengthens community bonds. As Daphne grows, I will advocate for new parks, trails, and public gathering areas that promote health and family life. Every resident deserves access to safe, beautiful, and active outdoor spaces.

**7. Daphne continues to face annexation pressures—what is your position on further expansion of city boundaries?**

**Jennifer Green** - Any future annexation must be strategic and sustainable. While growth is inevitable, it must align with our city's infrastructure capacity and quality-of-life standards. I support working with Baldwin County to raise development standards outside our boundaries, so that expansion doesn't come at the expense of Daphne's character or taxpayers. I am encouraged by the current infrastructure plans aimed at easing traffic and preparing for smart growth, especially around Highway 181 and County Road 64.

**Thank you to all Daphne  
City Council  
Candidates for  
participating  
in the Chamber's  
Municipal Election Guide!**



## Message from Mayor Sherry Sullivan



"It is so important that you vote in the municipal elections on August 26th. Local voting gives you real power to influence your quality of life and shape the community you live in. These elections, more than any other, impact the daily life of you and your family."

## City Council Place 1 Candidate Questions

Candidates:

Jack Burrell - *Incumbent*

Troy Vickers

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Jack Burrell** - I was born with a drive to use my energy and talents to serve others. Known to others as someone that sets goals and accomplishes them, I have served an elected office since an early age having served as a class officer going back to junior high school and including Senior Class President, elected officer positions in college and now as a Fairhope City Councilman. I've lived in this city for 26 years and volunteered locally for 13 years before being elected to the Council in 2012. I am the most experienced candidate in this race and hold Advanced Certified Municipal Official status from the Alabama League of Municipalities. I have developed relationships with local, county, state, and federal officials, including the Governor, congress-

man, and US Senators. Other key qualifications include: Member of the Fairhope Airport Authority, Chairman of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization, Member of the Fairhope Industrial Board, Member of the Fairhope Pirate Booster Club and a Volunteer Broadcaster for Pirate Nation Live, Past President of the Fairhope Educational Enrichment Foundation Board of Directors, Member and Past President of the Eastern Shore Sertoma Club, Member of the Fairhope Lions Club, Co-Chair with my wife, the Eastern Shore Arts Center Fall Fundraiser, and numerous other civic organizations all of which I am not just a name, but actively participate in.

**Troy Vickers** -I am President of VOGEHS Consulting, LLC and bring years of engineering expertise and leadership experience to my efforts to serve the Fairhope community. As a professional engineer registered in Alabama and other southern states, I have a proven track record in environmental compliance, crisis management, and strategic operations. My dedication to historical preservation, environmental protection, and community development shapes my vision of the future Fairhope.

My vision is rooted in actionable goals and initiatives that aim to improve the lives of residents. I plan to champion policies such as Fairhope First and focus on prioritizing and improving infrastructure, safety, and monetary policy. My experience and track record make me uniquely qualified to navigate the challenges of governance with pragmatism, respect, and compassion. By prioritizing collaboration and sustainability, I am committed to creating lasting change but based on Fairhope's past.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Jack Burrell** - a) Complete the infrastructure projects that are critical to our city. Namely, the exceptionally large water and sewer projects that we are heavily into now. We also need to complete the cast iron replacement project of the gas department which is now in Phase II of IV.

b) We need to complete our vision for the large recreational spaces south of town so that we can better serve the ever-expanding recreational needs of our youth and adults alike. We will need to construct an additional police precinct and a new fire station soon; all of which are currently in the works.

c) We need to continue to revise our building and zoning ordinances so that we grow in a smart way – not stopping growth but maintaining a sustainable rate and sustainable population without losing the charm that makes Fairhope so special..

**Troy Vickers** - 1. Managing/Control of growth  
2. Historical Preservation  
3. Transparency in Government

## **3.What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's small-town charm and historic character with continued population and tourism growth?**

**Jack Burrell** - I will continue to build on a legacy of maintaining the charm and historic character of Fairhope. I have supported four moratoriums, and I stand ready to implement further moratoriums as necessary to deal with growth issues, while creating policies related to zoning to address excessive growth in a more permanent manner. I have voted in opposition to apartment complexes and will oppose those in the future I feel are detrimental to our city. I have supported common sense legislation dealing with the Greeno Road Corridor such as the creation of

the Highway Transitional District. I helped pass ordinances to preserve the Central Business District's character, such as height limits, noise regulations, and controls on business types and densities. I voted to establish the Fairhope Historic Commission. The current actions are subject to ongoing review and revision as needed to uphold the desired character of our city.

I will continue to support policies and resolutions which create recreational opportunities, including parks and green spaces based on a comprehensive plan that is both attainable and fiscally responsible. I played a significant role in acquiring 330 acres of land for recreational and outdoor use. Those parcels I have played a pivotal role in, none of which existed in their current preserved state before my tenure include: 1) the 108-acre Flying Creek Nature Preserve, 2) the 115-acre recreational land at County Roads 13 and 32 for which a Master Plan is being developed right now, 3) the 40-acre Colony Nature Park and Disc Golf Course at Twin Beech and County Road 13, 4) Gaston Plaza – a.k.a. the clock corner bought, preserved, and renovated thus preventing a hotel from being built on this iconic corner, 5) the 40-acre Barnwell Sports Complex at alt US 98 near US 98, 6) the 14-acre historic Anna T. Jeanes School property which is now assisting The Hope Community, 7) the 10-acre historic site of the Fairhope K-1 Center (old Fairhope High School) including Founders Park to be used as a park and entrepreneurial center of excellence.

**Troy Vickers** - Fairhope has great people, great climate, great culture of hospitality, great location on Mobile Bay, art and entertainment, world class restaurants, and a great history. Once someone visits, they remember Fairhope and living here then becomes a strong possibility. We have grown in population by 70% in the past 15 years. Our infrastructure (sewer, water, police force, fire department, electrical, medical services, streets, schools, etc.) has not kept pace with that growth and the current efforts are 8-10 years late. Growth will continue because of the reasons above. The challenge is how do we respond to current conditions and plan for future growth. We must limit growth to all extent possible until infrastructure can handle current demands and infrastructure increased before additional growth adds demand.

We must protect Fairhope's charm, history, and family values. We need to strengthen the historical preservation ordinance to require new construction within a historical district to match/blend facades with the existing structures.

#### **4. Due to Fairhope's strong tourism economy, how do you plan to address traffic congestion and parking challenges in the downtown area?**

**Jack Burrell** - a) We should continue to direct visitors and citizens to the parking garage, which is still underutilized most days. I support more wayfinding and even symbols painted on the streets to direct people to the central parking garage. I was a key player in the acquisition of the downtown parking shuttle which people may use when parking in the garage. This still needs more exposure as it is still underutilized. I worked with the Eastern Shore MPO, which I chair, to get needed funds to improve the parking garage area now known as "Arts Alley," giving the garage area a much-needed facelift making it more inviting to citizens and guests alike.

b) Earlier this year, the Council commissioned experts to study parking needs in the Central Business District and recommend the number and location of new spaces. I await the results and recommendations of this study to take more permanent measures.

c) Every year, we have improved our traffic patterns to accommodate growth and an influx of visitors. Recently, the construction of a roundabout at the Flower Clock began and should be

completed in a few months, we received and are considering a roundabout at Fairhope Ave and Ingleside, turn lanes should begin construction soon at Volanta Ave and US 98 soon, four other roundabouts have been completed in the city during my tenure. We invest approximately \$1M in resurfacing projects each year, I was instrumental in getting turns lanes at Gayer and US 98 and Twin Beech and US 98. In recent years, several pedestrian crosswalks, some equipped with caution lights, have been installed, as well as sidewalks, including upcoming additions along Fairwood Blvd. This pattern of continuous improvement will continue under my watch.

**Troy Vickers** - The answers to these problems require extensive dialogue with the business owners in the downtown area. I will work closely with retailers and restaurants through town hall conversations to determine the needs and their ideas on solutions. I then will have further town hall conversations with citizens and users of the downtown area and merchants. Everyone should have the opportunity to be heard on this critical issue.

## **5. How will you ensure transparency and responsiveness in city government decision-making?**

**Jack Burrell** - I have a strong history of action concerning transparency. In my first term, I introduced and passed legislation enabling public input on agenda items before voting. This legislation also allows for public participation at the end of each meeting for citizens to voice their opinions on anything else they wish to bring before Council. As Council President, I have never limited the number of people that can speak and have been generous with our time. In addition, the ordinance I wrote and Council approved required City Council Meetings and Planning Commission meetings to be live-streamed. I have always been responsive to people's questions and inquiries even when I may have a differing opinion; with an explanation as to why I took a particular stance. Anyone familiar with Fairhope City Council meetings knows I ask many questions before voting. I try to put myself in the citizen's shoes and ask the questions they would ask.

**Troy Vickers** - The citizens of Fairhope demand and should be granted complete transparency into the government that they fund. The information that is provided to the citizens should not require a CPA education to understand. Revenues and expenses should be readily understood with sufficient details to allow citizens to understand if their tax payments are being spent wisely and in accordance with their wishes. Likewise, budgets should also be easily understood by the citizens. These must also be easily available with sufficient explanation. Progress reports should be issued periodically (possibly quarterly) to allow citizens to understand what is happening in their community. Citizens must be encouraged to be part of their government by having respectful dialogue in city council meetings.

## **City Council Place 2 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:  
Joshua Gammon  
Corey Martin - *Incumbent*

## **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Joshua Gammon** - I have been motivated by encouragement from friends, family, and colleagues, a desire to serve my community, and a belief that I can contribute to our city's future success. I believe that my experience in the private sector has given me extensive knowledge on managing finances, community engagement, leading teams, and solving complex problems. My career in hospitality has taught me how to effectively communicate, properly listen to others to determine their needs, and uphold the highest standards possible. While I don't think I have all of the answers, I do know how to ask the right questions and think critically about our complex challenges. If they would allow me, I would be honored to serve the people of Fairhope as a city councilman.

**Corey Martin** - 1a. The motivation is the opportunity to be a leader servant in this life. It's an opportunity that I love because it gives me a chance to help other people.

1b. What qualifies me are the character criteria we should all look for in our leadership-Accountability, Integrity, Perserverance, Scholarship, and most importantly, Uplift.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Joshua Gammon** - • First and foremost, we must act quickly to slow the tremendous rate of growth in our city. This means enacting a new moratorium on all large developments in city limits. We cannot move forward with the other improvements needed in our city until we can collectively catch our breath. During this period a review of current building regulations and standards should be completed.

• The second priority of mine would be to work on accelerating the infrastructure improvements currently in progress, as well as expanding the improvements to prepare the city for the next 10-20 years of growth. This means the drilling of additional wells for water, improving our sewage facilities and pump stations, and ensuring our roads, sidewalks, parks, and playgrounds are in pristine condition. We are the crown jewel of the Eastern Shore, and as such should have the best infrastructure to match that reputation. It is embarrassing that we have sewage spilling into the bay, playgrounds with broken down equipment, and multiple water shortages in the last few years. We can do better, and I intend to make these improvements a priority.

• Finally, I would work with the council to pass a suspension of the city sales tax on groceries. Taxing these necessities is, in my opinion, something that should not be allowed. With the passage of recent legislation, the city is able to reduce their portion of the tax independent of the state. Fairhope has been blessed with a robust surplus of funds year after year. As a conservative, I believe that when taxes can be reduced, we should do it. Let's return the hardworking citizens of Fairhope some of their money and eliminate this tax.

**Corey Martin** - 1. Infrastructure  
2. Utility Resiliency  
3. Recreation

## **3. What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's small-town charm and historic character with continued population and tourism growth?**

**Joshua Gammon** - Our growth and tourism present both challenges and opportunities for our historic city. The first thing we do to protect our charm is ensure that our downtown area re-

mains the gem of the city. We do that by ensuring that businesses feel supported by the city, parking and transportation downtown is easy, all city-maintained items are in pristine condition, and that we have standards and thorough reviews for any remodels and new constructions. There shouldn't be a flower out of line, a light pole with chipped paint, or a trash can that isn't clean. To maintain the charm, we have to ensure that downtown remains an experience in and of itself. That isn't done by the city alone but requires a close partnership with the businesses that make up the downtown area and the reason folks choose to spend their money in our city. As it relates to population growth, we must manage it intelligently. It starts by slowing growth with an additional moratorium on large tract developments. We need to take a breath before we attempt the pace of growth we've been experiencing. When we do grow, we don't need any more cookie-cutter homes in our community. Let's ensure that builders are creative in their designs but blend with the surrounding area, neighborhoods have adequate greenspace, and developments are supported by area residents.

**Corey Martin** - We can't stop people from buying property because property rights are well established in the constitution. However, we can create policies and procedures that control the density as we continue to grow.

#### **4. Due to Fairhope's strong tourism economy, how do you plan to address traffic congestion and parking challenges in the downtown area?**

**Joshua Gammon** - Parking downtown is one of the most common complaints that I hear when speaking with voters. It is something that needs to be solved during the next term to support our downtown and local businesses. It begins with evaluating the feasibility of paid parking, parking time limits, adding additional street parking, and the construction of additional parking structures. It may take one of these ideas, or a combination of them, to effectively solve the challenges we face. As I see it, we must ensure that shopping downtown is quick and convenient for those looking to stop by quickly for a gift, but also conducive to those wishing to park once and spend their whole day shopping and dining downtown. These two different customers most likely require different solutions. At the end of the day parking cannot be a detractor for shoppers or downtown businesses will lose and the city will suffer.

**Corey Martin** - The Mayor and City Council are aware of the growth and the strain this has created for parking. That is why the administration decided to do a parking study to provide vital information on how to strategically plan for the future transportation infrastructure in Fairhope.

#### **5. How will you ensure transparency and responsiveness in city government decision-making?**

**Joshua Gammon** - As far as my personal transparency is concerned, I intend on holding frequent townhall meetings throughout the year should I be elected. This will allow citizens to engage with me in a more longform format than a 3-minute comment during council meetings allows. To be an effective leader you have to elicit feedback from your constituents. When I am approached with a problem or concern, I intend to respond as quickly as possible to the inquiry. Sometimes that can mean we need to research the matter more, but a lack of response is unacceptable. In addition, I would like us to take a proactive approach to governance. This means anticipating problems before they arise, effectively communicating to residents about potential disruptions, and thinking about many steps in advanced of decisions being made. While we must be nimble in responding to the many challenges that will arise on a day-to-day basis, we can rest easier if we know the overall direction of the city is already set and moving in a positive direction.

**Corey Martin** - I will follow the laws, plain and simple. Meaning, all things are in the open at a public meeting. The system created for transparency works; I will continue to follow the Opening Meeting Act and the Sunshine Laws. When a citizen reaches out to me with any concern or issue, I am always willing to respond with a listening ear and work towards a solution.

## **City Council Place 3 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

**Jimmy Conyers - Incumbent**  
**Tracy Gatewood**

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Jimmy Conyers** - I am motivated to run for public office by a desire to serve others and to bring numerous projects in process and in planning stages to completion. I believe my previous two terms serving as a Councilman in Fairhope help qualify me to represent our City. Additionally, my role as Baldwin County Market President for a local, community bank, gives me valuable insight into financial and personnel management. Having moved here in 2003, raising a family, and being active in a wide variety of civic and business organizations throughout the past 22 years has also helped prepare me.

**Tracy Gatewood** - As a leader, it motivates me to take action when I notice course correction required to return to true conservative values. Decisions are being made relating to cultural issues that go against what I believe most residents of the city embrace.

In addition, I bring good experience to a City Council seat; 13 years in commercial real estate, 18 years in marketing and public relations, and small business ownership. I was raised in a small business family and will advocate for small business owners. As a real estate practitioner, I bring an economic development angle to enhance and improve the city's offerings. This creates more available revenue to fund the budget. I love Fairhope and want to see it secured for generations as well as protect its brand: downtown and the waterfront. I am a values-driven individual and will make decisions through that lens.

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Jimmy Conyers** - 1) Completion of Phase 1 of Flying Creek Nature Preserve (north 72 acres), planning, project management and completion of Phase 2 of Flying Creek Nature Preserve (south 36 acres). Preserving this 108 acre property as a permanent green space was one of my primary visions when I first ran for City Council in 2016. To know that we have protected this space for our citizens to enjoy for generations is the achievement I am most proud of during my service on Council.

2) Completion of the numerous ongoing critical utility infrastructure projects for water, sewer, gas, and electric as well as long term planning for continued upgrades and improvements.

3) Completion of the K-1 Center renovation project in conjunction with Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance to serve as a small business / tech incubator for the entrepreneurial start-up companies.

**Tracy Gatewood** - Ensuring proper funding for the execution of the Comprehensive Plan that has been agreed upon and recommended to the residents of Fairhope by its Stakeholders. (including a Performing Arts Center). 2024 Fairhope Comp Plan\_web.pdf

Focus on attracting high quality products and services lacking in the market. Currently surrounding municipalities are profiting off Fairhope residents as they are forced to drive out of the city to find many goods and services. This would produce additional revenue, bring in jobs and allow for an increase of funding in the reserves and rainy-day fund. We have many retirees and older single adults in the city, funds that protect them (rainy day or otherwise), should be over-funded.

Prioritize an upgrade of city infrastructure; 50-year-old overburdened pipes that are failing, inadequate water wells, and other inadequate systems have created an emergency. Our city doubled its size in 2020, so upgrades and repairs can no longer be delayed, even at the expense of other priorities.

### **3.What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's small-town charm and historic character with continued population and tourism growth?**

**Jimmy Conyers** - As long as Fairhope continues to be an amazing place to live and visit, we will continue to have population and tourism growth. Many of our small businesses, restaurants, and retail shops are heavily dependent on tourism. Protecting the charm of the Central Business District is not only necessary for the local economy, but also for quality of life. There are protections in place regarding building height, number of stories, zoning requirements within the CBD, etc. Fairhope continues to search for ways to improve our zoning ordinance and we have enacted 4 or 5 moratoriums during the past two terms to address a wide variety of growth related issues.

**Tracy Gatewood** - I will preserve and protect the brand; the downtown and the waterfront, as this is what attracts tourism dollars and serves our locals. We will utilize the commercial and residential nodes already established in the Comprehensive Plan that lie outside of downtown for development only after our current infrastructure is secure and fully operational.

We are not the first city to experience the impact of fast growth. The Council and Chamber leadership can participate in annual benchmarking trips to resort areas that have dealt with similar issues, ie Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, etc. Discuss best practices with those city leaders and study those towns. Shared practices expedite planning and execution in areas that are not addressed by the Comprehensive Plan.

### **4. Due to Fairhope's strong tourism economy, how do you plan to address traffic congestion and parking challenges in the downtown area?**

**Jimmy Conyers** - As City Council liaison to the Parking Authority, I can say that we have a dedicated group of citizens serving on this committee working hard to not only understand the primary challenges, but to help find reasonable solutions, including long-term planning to address this ongoing issue. We are currently in the midst of a parking study being conducted by a third party consultant, and this committee anxiously awaits the delivery of that report. We need

to keep many options on the table from additional parking garages in town, modifying parking requirements for different types of occupancy, increased signage and awareness of the existing parking deck. I believe all available options ought to be discussed.

**Tracy Gatewood** - There is no simple answer and unfortunately, the selection may involve choices that are unpopular: the list includes: parking meters (see Downtown Auburn), paving another flat lot (see downtown Tuscaloosa), blocking core streets, making them walkable-only (see downtown Charlottesville). Parking garages are extremely expensive and cost prohibitive. The downtown shuttle is rarely utilized. Employees must park in an offsite section of downtown to free up visitor parking. Each time I go downtown, I have always found a good parking spot.

## **5. How will you ensure transparency and responsiveness in city government decision-making?**

**Jimmy Conyers** - I believe the City is transparent in government decision making. Council meetings are live-streamed to provide more opportunities for citizens to watch. There are two opportunities during Council meetings for public participation. I know the City Council members view themselves as servants and are often happy to speak to or meet with any citizen to address concerns or answer questions. I feel the Mayor goes above and beyond to present issues in a transparent manner, we have numerous budget related discussions during work sessions leading up to the passage of a final budget. I fully view the Council position as a role of service, I believe the Mayor and the other Council members feel the same way. I am always willing to have a conversation with citizens to answer questions, discuss concerns and issues, or listen to opportunities and suggestions for improvement.

This is your City, I just consider it an honor to serve.

**Tracy Gatewood** - I have heard a recurring theme pertaining to a lack of transparency and communication. Topics that involve citywide issues should come from the Mayor's office or a Director of Public Communications. Individual or neighborhood issues can be discussed with council members. Each council member is assigned to 2-3 committees, as one of the points of contact, I will share updates on my meetings.

## **City Council Place 4 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Howell Gibbens

David Luc - No Responses Provided

Jay Robinson - *Incumbent*

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Howell Gibbens** - Five years ago I ran for City Council because I didn't like the rate of change in our town. My slogan then was "Let's Slow Down". Today the problem is the same and so is my

slogan. There are plenty of families like mine in Fairhope who live in modest 800 or 1200 square foot houses. These citizens need a voice. There are also quite a few people here who don't like having to live in one of the fastest growing cities in Alabama, and who believe that "If you're not growing, you're dying" is nothing but a worn-out phrase made famous by Tony Robbins. That cliché has no relevance for a small town with a rich history, character and charm. Some say that slowing our growth is hard, and that pushing back against powerful, well funded interests will take enormous will and determination. Our little town is worth such effort.

**Jay Robinson** - I'm running for reelection because I care deeply about Fairhope and want to continue serving the community that my family and I call home. Over the past four years, I've worked hard to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and make decisions that reflect the values and long-term interests of our residents. I'm a husband, father of four, a coach, a neighbor and a lawyer—and that perspective shapes the way I approach public service. I believe that people who are actively involved in our schools, our recreation programs, and our day-to-day community life should have a seat at the table, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do that. My experience as an attorney allows me to view City issues with a unique focus to help ensure we make decisions that don't jeopardize taxpayer dollars.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Howell Gibbens** - 1) Speaking clearly about slowing down Fairhope's rate of change. This means correcting anyone who uses the cliché that I just mentioned, or says that they support "smart growth", which means nothing. I prefer the phrase "organic growth", maybe because I attended Fairhope's Organic School. Organic growth can be easily understood to mean that we don't grow by fits and starts, but slowly and after proper deliberation. I'm tired of hearing things like, "Did you hear what they're gonna do down on 24?" followed by a lot of head shaking.

- 2) Get more people to step up and run. We had 8 candidates for 5 places in 2020. This year we have 11, which is a big improvement. I want to see at least 15 candidates (3 for each seat) in 2029. I will personally help any common citizen set up a website like mine. It's not that hard.
- 3) Fix the sundial behind the public library. It's pointing West instead of North.

**Jay Robinson** - 1. Managing Growth Thoughtfully – Fairhope continues to grow because it's a wonderful place to live, but that growth must be guided with care. I'll continue supporting smart, measured development—including temporary moratoriums where needed—that protects our small-town charm, preserves neighborhood character, and ensures we're making decisions that reflect the long-term interests of our community.

2. Investing in Infrastructure – We've made real progress in recent years, with over \$60 million invested in roads, drainage, utilities, and other essential systems. But there's still more to do. I'll keep working hard to ensure our infrastructure keeps pace with demand while staying aligned with the values that make Fairhope so special.

3. Protecting and Expanding Green Space & Recreation – From our parks and trails to youth sports facilities, tennis and pickleball courts, and all our shared community spaces—these are part of what makes Fairhope truly one of a kind. I'll continue working to preserve and enhance these places, not just for today's families, but for future generations to enjoy.

### **3.What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's small-town charm and historic character with continued population and tourism growth?**

**Howell Gibbens** - The first step is to strongly reject the premise of that question. I take it to mean that you believe that we have no control over population and tourism growth. That had better not be true, because if it is, why bother with an election? Fairhope can either be a nice town with character and charm or it can be one of the fastest growing cities in Alabama. It cannot be both. So, let me rephrase your question.

What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's desirability as a place to move to and visit with its stubborn refusal to change or give up any charm?" My answer – Some people will have to wait.

**Jay Robinson** - Fairhope's charm is one of its greatest assets—and it's something we simply can't afford to lose as we grow. My vision is to guide that growth in a way that protects our historic character, preserves our strong sense of community, and ensures Fairhope remains a place where families, retirees, small businesses, and visitors all feel welcome.

That means continuing to enforce and refine our zoning and land-use policies to protect neighborhoods and historic areas. It also means encouraging development that fits Fairhope's scale and aesthetic, supports walkability, and safeguards our green space. Tourism will always be part of our local economy, but I believe it can complement—not compete with—our quality of life when managed thoughtfully and with care.

### **4. Due to Fairhope's strong tourism economy, how do you plan to address traffic congestion and parking challenges in the downtown area?**

**Howell Gibbens** - This is a good question and a very tough nut to crack. Personally, I would love to rebuild the People's Railroad as a tram from the Pier to downtown, and extend it out to Greeno. If we could also finally get around to reopening the marina on the Municipal Pier, visitors could come to town for shopping and dining in their Bay Boats. I realize that this is wildly unrealistic, but it would be great. In the meantime we will have to continue to struggle as best we can, until it gets so bad that we have no choice but to impose some kind of Congestion Charge, as is done in London. Which is ridiculous.

**Jay Robinson** - Traffic and parking are real concerns, especially during peak seasons. I support practical solutions like expanding our shuttle access during major events, investing in pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and continuing to explore creative parking options that fit our downtown aesthetic. I also believe in keeping an open dialogue with business owners and residents, to make sure our downtown remains vibrant, accessible, and welcoming for everyone.

### **5. How will you ensure transparency and responsiveness in city government decision-making?**

**Howell Gibbens** - I can be reached at 251-270-9987 anytime or at [howellgibbens.com](http://howellgibbens.com)

**Jay Robinson** - Transparency starts with communication. I've always tried to be approachable and responsive to questions or concerns—whether it's at a council meeting, at the ballfield, or in the grocery store aisle. I believe the city should make it as easy as possible for residents to follow what's happening and weigh in before decisions are made. That means clear online tools, regular updates, and open-minded leadership that listens and responds. I don't have all the answers, but I do believe in honest conversations and working together to do what's best for Fairhope.

## **City Council Place 5 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Andrea Faust Booth - No Responses Provided  
George Ferniany

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**George Ferniany** - I've lived and worked in Fairhope for many years as a small business owner, community volunteer, and now in business development and I care deeply about the future of our city. I'm running because I believe we need thoughtfull, responsible growth that protects the character of Fairhope while addressing real issues like overdevelopment, infrastructure, parking, and long-term planning. I'd be honored to serve and bring a practical, common-sense approach to the council.

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**George Ferniany** - First, I would focus on managing the rapid growth Fairhope has been experiencing more carefully. I'll focus on ensuring new development aligns with the city's long-term vision, protects our small-town character, and doesn't outspace our infrastructure. This means supporting smart zoning decisions and holding developers accountable to community standards.

Second, we need to address key infrastructure challenges now - not later. That includes improving traffic flow and parking downtown, upgrading roads and utilities, and working with local leaders to ensure our hospital and emergency services can support a growing population. PLanning ahead will help us avoid expensive, reactive fixes down the line.

Third, I believe decisions should be made with the people of Fairhope, not just for them. I'll advocate for open communication between City Hall and residents, increased transparency in how growth decisions are made, and more opportunities for citizens to have a voice in shaping our future.

### **3.What is your vision for balancing Fairhope's small-town charm and historic character with continued population and tourism growth?**

**George Ferniany** - We can't stop change, but we can shape it - by making smart, long-term decisions that protect what makes Fairhope special. That means holding to high design standards, *investing in infrastructure before it's overwhelmed*, and ensuring new development fits the scale and spirit of our community. Growth should enhance Fairhope - not erase it, and with careful planning and resident input, I believe we can strike that balance. I also believe that by working closley with State and Federal agencies and with local environmental groups like Mobile Baykeeper we can improve and protect the quality of our beautiful Bay for future generations to enjoy.

#### **4. Due to Fairhope's strong tourism economy, how do you plan to address traffic congestion and parking challenges in the downtown area?**

**George Ferniany** - Fairhope's strong tourism economy is a blessing - but it also brings real challenges, especially when it comes to traffic congestion and limited parking in our downtown core. As your representative, I will work to address these issues with smart, long-term solutions that respect Fairhope's unique character.

1. Expand parking access thoughtfully. Some suggested changes could include transitioning from angled to parallel parking on key streets like Fairhope Ave. This could reduce vehicle overhang and improve sight lines. This may improve traffic flow as currently traffic must stop when someone is backing out of an angled parking space. This is only a suggestion and could be restricted to certain blocks where congestion is worse or space is tight. Another alternative to consider is Reverse Angle or Back in angled parking which would improve visibility and is safer for cyclists and pedestrians. These changes would require public education and would have to be designed and worked out by the engineers in the Public Works department. Other considerations could designate spots reserved for compact vehicles only on tighter streets which would keep larger trucks and SUVs from blocking lanes or sightlines. There are many other alternative solutions to the traffic and parking situation downtown such as Shared use agreements with churches, banks, or offices. Public-private partnerships.

#### **5. How will you ensure transparency and responsiveness in city government decision-making?**

**George Ferniany** - As your City Council Representative, I will make transparency and responsiveness a top priority. Our residents deserve to know what's happening in their city - and to have a real voice in the decisions that affect them.

Accessible meetings: I support expanded live streaming and archiving of public meetings, so more people can stay informed even if they can't attend in person.

Resident engagement: I will actively listen to citizen feedback.

Proactive reporting: I'll advocate for regular progress updates on major city projects, zoning proposals, and infrastructure work, so the community knows where things stand.

Open door representation: I'll be hands-on accessible council member. I'll answer your calls, respond to your emails, and be present in our neighborhoods.

**Thank you to all Fairhope City Council  
Candidates for participating in  
the Chamber's Municipal Election Guide!**



# WELCOME TO SPANISH FORT City of Spanish Fort

## Mayoral Candidates:



**Brad Bass**



**Lauren Cress**



**Michael McMillan**  
*Incumbent*

## Spanish Fort Mayoral Candidate Questions

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city? What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Brad Bass** - I grew up in Spanish Fort when it was our own version of Mayberry. To witness the growth over the years, it's exciting to know where we are now and see where we've come from. I worry that we are a city without a long-term vision in one of the fastest growing counties in the country. We may never be our neighbors that surround us, but the people of Spanish Fort want and deserve to be the best small city in south Alabama.

We must attract businesses to help fill our empty retail space on both ends of the city and generate revenue we sorely need.

Annexation must be addressed, our neighborhoods that are currently split between city limits and the county must be annexed to improve public safety and city services for those areas.

A city app that each and every citizen and business owner can have access to, needs to be created to improve communication and transparency from city hall. The app would communicate everything from city government meetings, council agendas, community activities, and monthly mayor's minute.

**Lauren Cress** - I am led by my love for my family to put myself forth as a candidate for mayor. I have worked for the city of Spanish Fort for almost a decade. I have the skills and knowledge necessary to represent the people of Spanish Fort and to address current and future issues moving forward. Outside of the role of parent that motivates me to push this city to thrive, representing the citizens of Spanish Fort as their mayor would be my only job; I have no competing business interests to distract me from focusing solely on helping this city provide a better quality of life for every resident.

As mayor, I intend to adjust the focus of Spanish Fort's administration efforts back in line with the original vision for our city, retaining and building on the connections and roots of the community Spanish Fort was founded on.

**Michael McMillan** - To continue to serve and enhance the City in an effective manner. My experience in dealing with other elected officials and agencies within the state and national levels has proven to be very beneficial to our great City- proven by the numerous grants and partnerships developed.

Top three goals-

Public safety will always be priority #1. We will continue to support and provide all necessities to our Fire and Police departments.

Complete the details involved in developing our new sports fields for our youth.

Annexation to square our borders and bring all involved into our city along with continuing to push ALDOT to improve our road system.

## **2. Spanish Fort is one of the fastest-growing communities in Baldwin County. How do you plan to manage this growth while maintaining the city's character and infrastructure capacity?**

**Brad Bass** - Our current leadership has done a great job putting a pause on multifamily housing. This must continue moving forward. Many of the buildings constructed along the 31 corridor the last 10 years have taken pride in their Spanish style design. This must be a focus moving forward with the new comprehensive plan so there is a consistent architectural control, and we keep our small-town feel. With the upcoming I-10 river bridge, we may need a stronger law enforcement presence on the western side of the city.

**Lauren Cress** - I will be revisiting the current design of our roadways and developments to create more pedestrian-friendly access between neighborhoods and businesses. I will work toward a future that offers a variety of opportunities for recreation and fellowship by courting family-experience based businesses, and creating an environment that attracts small businesses that fulfill community needs and service-based retail stores for a steady, sustainable economic foundation.

Moving forward, by working closely with City council and keeping a clear, consistent, public line of communication with local business owners and community leaders, city administration can direct and control the flow of growth in a manner that supports and lifts this growing community towards a thriving future of residents and business owners who find joy and satisfaction in their neighborhoods and city streets.

**Michael McMillan** - Spanish Fort is growing at a managed rate of around 2.3- 2.5%. We have accomplished this with a management plan that has not approved multi-family housing within our city limits in over 13 years. This allows our city to remain a single- family residential community without putting a strain on our infrastructure such as utilities and school overcrowding.

**3. Traffic congestion along Highway 31 and Highway 225 has become a major concern for residents. What specific infrastructure projects will you prioritize to address congestion and improve road safety?**

**Brad Bass** - ALDOT controls the main project that would help alleviate many of our traffic issues, widening Highway 31 east of 181. Partnering with our legislative delegation to push this project up the ALDOT list would be a priority. While outside of the City of Spanish Fort, if the beach express is extended to I65, it would help tremendously with summer traffic that is rerouted down Highway 31 and Highway 225 constantly.

**Lauren Cress** - My number one priority moving forward is to utilize the work ALDOT has put in to their Alabama Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to gain funding for updating Spanish Fort Boulevard with a focus on pedestrian safety. By changing the environment of the road to one that is less friendly to speeding vehicles and more friendly to residents walking and biking, the flow of traffic will gradually shift back towards routes that feel more open and faster. The largest impact on safety will be in slowing down the dangerously high speed traffic that currently cuts through the center of our city and diverting it back to the interstate where it belongs. I also intend to work closely with city of Loxley administration to do whatever is necessary to facilitate finishing the construction of the Fish River bridge to complete Bedrock Blvd. This will significantly ease the burden of traffic east and north of Eastern Shore Centre.

**Michael McMillan** - We have pushed ALDOT for answers for these issues. The US 31 corridor management plan that will enable detailed plans for the widening of this highway is due out this fall. This will widen 31 from highway 181 all the way to US highway 59. This is the only answer for this highway. Once identified, this will allow for the push for funding to move this forward. The highway 225 project will start within the next few weeks to widening that state road from Oak Ridge subdivision to the northern most entrance of Spanish Fort estates. This will include turning lanes at Spanish Main along with Blakeley Way. This was accomplished using a state tip grant at no cost to our citizens, again showing that experience when dealing with ALDOT and state officials matter.

**4. With rapid population growth, what role should the mayor play in working with the Baldwin County Board of Education to address future needs and the potential for overcrowding in the schools?**

**Brad Bass** - Every school in the city of Spanish Fort is currently A rated. This has been achieved by the hard work of our teachers and leadership staff at each school in the feeder pattern. While classroom sizes have grown over the last few years, we currently have two state of the art elementary schools on respective sides of the feeder pattern. Much of this has been

achieved due to the 3mil approval close to 7 years ago. We have been able to staff many part time teachers, paraprofessionals, and reading coaches to get our kids to the next level. We must advocate for this to continue as the 10-year expiration date approaches.

**Lauren Cress** - In every decision regarding zoning, permitting, road construction, and city planning, the mayor and city council should always be equipped with the latest information regarding current and future capacity for our schools. Working with the Baldwin County Board of Education to ensure that each student residing within the bounds of our city is receiving the quality of education our residents have come to expect is a top priority when working towards the best quality of life for our citizens. Ensuring a clear, consistent, public line of communication with local school organizations and community leaders to address issues as they arise is key. Spanish Fort is blessed with an existing board of community members in our Spanish Fort Public Schools Commission. This board, along with a mayor and city council invested in quality of life for all residents, will ensure that each child that resides in our city has the strongest of advocacy to pursue their needs with the Baldwin County Board of Education.

**Michael McMillan** - Controlled growth is the answer which we have covered above with our lack of approval of multi-family facilities. It is important that cities communicate with the BCBE about potential developments so plans can be made to address any needs.

## **5. What is your vision for revitalizing the Spanish Fort Town Center and surrounding commercial areas to make them more vibrant and economically sustainable?**

**Brad Bass** - I believe if we can land one hub style retailer to the SFTC we will see other retailers jump into the development. The infrastructure that is currently in place is a developer's dream. Mass grading has already been done on much of the acreage and there are no wetland issues that need to be addressed. A recruitment team needs to be formed to strategize around attendance at both national and local level ICSC conference events.

**Lauren Cress** - By creating a city environment that welcomes residents to walk and bike within their space and prioritizes their safety when doing so, access becomes less onerous and more of an afternoon adventure that doesn't involve being trapped in horrible traffic:

- A family bike ride to Spanish Fort Container Park for lunch, counting fish in the tank at Bass Pro, and a last stop at Spanish Fort Shopping Center to check out new released Pokemon at Gulf Coast Hobbies while mom straps the takeout your having for dinner into the bike basket before heading home.
- Stopping by Papa John's for a drink on your walk to Spirit Park for an afternoon game with friends, then dropping in for dinner at Happy Sushi or Beef O'Brady's on the way home.
- Planning an afternoon movie, dinner, and drinks with billiards at Eastern Shore Bowling before leisurely strolling home under the steady glow of street lights and the watchful eye of Spanish Fort Police.
- Making a quick trip to ACE Hardware for garden soil without the heightened anxiety of dodging reckless, speeding vehicles as you navigate the few hundred feet across Spanish Fort Blvd from the intersection at 225 to the shopping center.

Scenes like these are the backbone of a thriving, sustainable small town economy. Spanish Fort is not a city of factories and industry, it's a city of people whose needs are based in active leisure and who desire unique, high quality retail stores and experienced-based businesses to

enjoy their time outside of work.

I believe that focusing on quality of life for the residents of this city will naturally create an environment that attracts sustainable commercial growth tailored to the needs of the community.

**Michael McMillan** - First, you must recognize that brick and mortar businesses are on the decline. Regardless of this, conversations are ongoing with several potential businesses to locate in this facility. We have two parcels that front the interstate so we must protect these valuable pieces. I believe that mixed use is the best answer in these areas and have had several discussions with potential investors to move this forward. The city has just recently invested in a pickleball facility that will also help bring people to the Town Center.

## **6. As the city expands, so do demands on police, fire, and EMS. What investments or policy changes would you support to ensure these services grow with the community?**

**Brad Bass** - Our police department hasn't had a head count increase in 17 years. With the growth of our city and potential annexation on the horizon we need to expand to a minimum of one extra officer per shift.

For years our city has done a great job with a police station at the Eastern Shore Center that is cost free. Adding a centralized police station would add the missing piece from our municipal corridor and proactively close the gap between its current location and the increased traffic on the west side of the city that will come when the I10 bridge project is completed.

We have a state-of-the-art fire station under construction. I would love to see us figure out a way to finish the second story as it was originally designed sooner rather than later. Upgrades to Station 4 by Spanish Fort Middle School need to be addressed immediately.

**Lauren Cress** - Spanish Fort's Police Chief, Fire Chief, and the personnel under them are experienced and well-versed in the needs of our growing community. As mayor, I would consider them to be vital voices in staffing decisions as we prepare for the future of Spanish Fort. Specifically, I intend to work with local businesses and Spanish Fort Police to form future bicycle patrol units for neighborhoods and foot patrol units in high pedestrian traffic areas, residents and business owners will have the reassurance of constant presence of well-known faces, familiar with the area, often available within shouting distance to deter crime and increase the overall well-being of the entire city.

I also intend to work closely with Spanish Fort Fire to promote recruitment of new volunteers, firefighters and paramedic staff to keep our Fire & Rescue secure in the knowledge that they have the manpower necessary to serve their community at the quality of service they consistently provide. I 100% believe proper staffing is essential to reducing stress on emergency services personnel and keeping our community safe.

**Michael McMillan** - As always, public safety will remain priority #1. We have annually discussed with our Fire and Police chiefs during our budget process to assure we address any needs they have. The Council reviews their request and makes recommendations on these opportunities. We currently are fully staffed in our police department which is something that few other departments can say.

## **7. How will you increase transparency in city government and ensure residents have more opportunities to provide input on major decisions?**

**Brad Bass** - I want to see the city invest in a City/Community App that would push communication out to the citizens and small business owners about city council and planning commission meetings, activities and events at the community center and various parks, and any pertinent school activities that the public needs to know about.

**Lauren Cress** - Within the legal limits of my mayoral powers,

- I will continue to livestream and keep a publicly available archive of meetings and will expand the archive to include ALL public meetings that can be legally included and will request the reasoning for Closed Sessions be clearly and publicly stated before each session begins, then repeated for the public record at the end of each session.
- I will assign the creation of an easily searchable database of all current city policies and documents that are legally available to the public and have it freely available on the city's official website. A FOIA request will not be required for these documents, but requesting a physical copy from the city will still incur a printing fee.
- I will be present at every city event I am able to attend, will use these opportunities to announce all items on upcoming council agendas and make every effort to be available before, during, and after these events to seek and welcome public input.
- I will make every effort to utilize all available media outlets and online platforms to keep the public informed of impending council decisions.
- I will utilize the city's website to the fullest extent, creating a true digital town square, specific to our community, open for constant comment and communication on all upcoming city agendas, and responsive to issues the city is accountable for.
- I will work diligently to clearly define what the residents of this city have a right to expect from their elected municipal representatives: what the city is and is not able to address, and to make sure residents have the information or the assistance necessary to get help on matters city representatives cannot address.

**Michael McMillan** - As always, we will continue to broadcast our planning commission and council meetings. In addition, we post all agendas not only on our websites but also in multiple different locations in the city. We also have public participation at all of our meetings.

## **8. What is your vision for enhancing parks, recreational opportunities, and community events to strengthen Spanish Fort's identity and quality of life?**

**Brad Bass** - We have green space that has been heavily invested in the last few years by way of Go Mesa grants. If we can make the recreational facility a reality east of the Eastern Shore Center, it would be great if it doesn't add additional traffic to a choke point in the city. Many families are currently having to travel to neighboring communities because we are out of space for baseball and softball.

Our seniors are starting to outgrow their space at the community center. If we can increase revenue from added retail stores, I would like to see a senior facility that was truly their own. Partnering with local restaurants to help serve more frequent meals for those in need. And offer resources for seniors that we aren't currently, such as pharmacy pick up, rides to the senior center, day watching services for spouses and family who are primary caregivers.

Spanish Fort has always been a tight knit, giving community. We need to embrace this again regardless of how much we have grown.

**Lauren Cress** - In line with my goal of a safe, pedestrian-friendly city environment, I will seek to extend the Eastern Shore Trail through Spanish Fort, connecting it to the future Honor Park, and eventually to the Highlands PUD.

Within the legal limits of my mayoral powers, I will work diligently to keep a clear, open line of communication with residents and local business owners in regards to all future projects in the construction of Honor Park and will respectfully receive the feedback of all residents who are directly affected by those projects. I will request issues that affect the community be brought for public comment at council meetings and be open for public input before final decisions are made.

I also intend to work towards a system to connect the city parks for more ease of use and access for all residents and to hold more city-sponsored family events similar to the Outdoor Movie Nights hosted with the library. I would very much enjoy a future in Spanish Fort where the city offers at least one opportunity a month for residents to walk out of their house, bike down the road, and join their neighbors in an event that showcases what our city has to offer while bringing joy and entertainment to the residents.

**Michael McMillan** - During this term alone, we have increased our community events to enhance the experience of living in our city. We have also acquired multiple tracks of land for future parks for our citizens to enjoy. We bought at no cost to our constituents 144 acres on Bay Minette creek, 5 acres on the causeway along with 5 acres at shellbank landing that are currently being design or are awaiting bids so they can be developed. These acquisitions of over \$13,000,000 were accomplished using GOMESA funds because of the relationships this administration has established with state officials. In addition, supplemental funding of over \$5,000,000 has been awarded the city to start developing these projects. Our sidewalk projects are moving forward with over six miles of new pavement being completed during this term. In addition, we recently unveiled a plan to develop 60 acres of land for our youth leagues. This project will be funded through multiple sources including the Baldwin County commission 30 cube program, land donations from numerous people and the Cooperative Improvement District. This development has been in the works for over three years and required the City to have our state representatives introduce and pass laws that would allow for the Eastern Shore Center to expand and fund the development. This would not have happened without the experience it takes to move this through the process.

**9. What steps will you take to collaborate with neighboring municipalities and Baldwin County on shared issues like infrastructure funding, emergency preparedness, and economic development?**

**Brad Bass** - Collaboration with the City of Daphne and the City of Fairhope with traffic engineers to better synchronize traffic signals from the top of the hill in Spanish Fort on Highway 98 all the way to the Fairhope recreation department on 98 would be huge. Leasing vacuum truck equipment from other municipalities like Fairhope would go a long way to helping with current drainage issues within Spanish Fort.

**Lauren Cress** - • Top priority will be working with Loxley and state & federal government representatives to facilitate the completion of the Bedrock Blvd project in any way possible.

- Collaborating with city of Daphne and Baldwin County to prioritize safety and security of residents and businesses in overlapping jurisdictional areas.
- Continuing to work with the Baldwin County Commission and the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization to prioritize quality of life for current residents in future infrastructure plans for Baldwin County.
- Working with the Commission to ensure future projects in the Extraterritorial Planning Jurisdiction areas prioritize pedestrian safety, ease of access, and don't overload current utilities and road capacity.
- Keeping an open line of communication with the county emergency services to stay on top of all updates in emergency preparedness and prioritizing public education of Spanish Fort residents by utilizing all available in-person and digital platforms to ensure their safety in times of emergency.

**Michael McMillan** - As always, the City of Spanish Fort has and will continue to partner with other agencies to forward all opportunities to enhance our city's vision for the future.

## **City Council District 1 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:  
Mitch Fisher  
Curt Smith - *Incumbent*

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Mitch Fisher** - Growing up in Spanish Fort, I've seen this city expand from a rural suburb into a major hub north of 10,000 residents. After earning my doctorate in civil engineering from Auburn University, my wife and I wanted to start our family in an area we loved for its sense of community and family friendly atmosphere. Now with a 8 month-old daughter, I want to see this city be as good to her growing up as it was for me. Besides growing up here, I am proud to say I am the only candidate to have attended Rockwell Elementary, Spanish Fort Elementary, and Spanish Fort High School; giving me a comparatively unique perspective of the city. Professionally, my specialization is in transportation planning, travel behavior, and data quality; where I assist federal, state, and local entities best utilize their transportation data to understand their citizens and plan for future growth. I believe my expertise would be invaluable to ensuring our city navigates growth proactively and responsibly.

**Curt Smith** - My wife Cheryl and I moved to Spanish Fort 17 years ago. She is a teacher at Spanish Fort Middle School, and I work for Baldwin County Schools in the Technology Department. We have 2 daughters who both graduated from Spanish Fort High School and have gone on to earn college degrees and have successful lives. We've been blessed by this community

in so many ways, including great friends, incredible schools, easy access to nature, and a security in knowing we have excellent police and fire protection. I'd like another term to serve the folks in Spanish Fort and return the blessings we've been given.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Mitch Fisher** - My top priorities unique to District 1 are congestion on Highway 31, attracting more businesses to the Eastern Shore Centre, and continued growth, both commercial and residential, along Highway 31 outside the city limits. I believe pursuing more open cooperation with state, county, and local entities would ensure growth is smartly managed and considers residential needs and themes.

**Curt Smith** - Health, Safety, and Welfare. We've made progress in all three of these areas during my time on the council, and I know we can continue to get even better. We've improved health by adding parks, installed sidewalks, implementing better Mosquito control, and improved garbage pickup for example. We've made Spanish Fort safer by moving from a volunteer Fire Department to a paid Fire Department within the city. We support our Fire and Police Departments with over 65% of the budget to make sure they are properly staffed and equipped to keep us all safe. We are building a new Fire Station and purchasing a new fire truck right now! Regarding welfare, all the efforts we make to keep citizens and visitors to our city healthy and safe only improve our property values. Homes sell quickly in Spanish Fort. New businesses come to Spanish Fort and prosper.

## **3. As a councilmember, you make critical zoning and land use decisions. What principles guide your decisions on new subdivisions, apartment complexes, and commercial developments?**

**Mitch Fisher** - I believe that growth needs to be proactively managed. This includes thoroughly reviewing for direct and indirect impacts, coordinating with surrounding land owners, identifying possible infrastructure strains, and considering long term effects a decision may bring. These types of decisions do not exist in a vacuum, and planning needs to understand how it'll fit into the grand scheme and vision of the city.

**Curt Smith** - First, we must always look back to our Comprehensive Plan and current zoning when considering growth. People who invest in property in Spanish Fort deserve to know not only what be allowed on their property, but on the property surrounding them. We also must pay close attention to our Table of Permitted Uses when allowing a land use. As a young city (we are only 30 years old) our Table of Permitted Uses has been updated multiple times during my tenure to address ambiguities, and to add new uses that did not exist before. For example, 30 years ago EV Charging Stations did not exist! And finally, we must listen to public comment. I am very happy to say that we do listen, and that input from our neighbors has made the difference on many occasions!

## **4. What specific road or traffic improvement projects do you believe should be prioritized for Spanish Fort, and how would you advocate for funding them?**

**Mitch Fisher** - As a resident of District 1, congestion on Highway 31 is always a concern. ALDOT traffic data places the two lane section of Highway 31 east of the 181 interchange at over 20,600 vehicles per day in 2024. Comparatively, west along the four lane section of Highway 31 showed nearly 15,500 vehicles per day. While there are plans for its eventual widening, in the meantime, cost effective and innovative measures could be taken to improve travel times and safety along the route, particularly at the Old 31 intersections and during the school year.

**Curt Smith** - In my district, we have a major issue with Hwy 31 congestion. I will continue to advocate to widen the highway to 4 lanes all the way up to Stapleton. In the meantime, we are requiring traffic studies with each new development along the highway and will see added deceleration lanes and red lights very soon. We also were able to get speed limit reductions from ALDOT near neighborhood entrances. We know that it will take years before we see 4 lanes, we are moving forward with a plan to extend Old Hwy 31 (which runs parallel to Hwy 31) to connect to Eastern Shore Blvd just to the north of the Eastern Shore Lanes bowling alley. We are very grateful that we have partners on this project to offset the cost! The owners of the property adjacent to the bowling alley are donating land, the county is paying half of the cost for the road construction, and the Eastern Shore CID fees will pay for the other half. I believe this will relieve at least some traffic on Hwy 31.

## **5. What ideas do you have to help rejuvenate underutilized retail areas like the Spanish Fort Town Center and promote small business growth in Spanish Fort?**

**Mitch Fisher** - I'm a big believer in the concept of mixed used planning and creating walkable environments to drive foot traffic and business. There needs to be a healthy mix of commercial space, office space, residential complexes, hotels, and public recreational facilities well connected to encourage growth. Areas where the main focus is strictly commercial rely solely on their anchor stores driving traffic. If those stores struggle, then the surrounding businesses struggle, leading to burnout among the smaller businesses. By proactively managing our co-operative improvement districts to balance these core tenets, we can rejuvenate these spaces into attractive destinations for business owners, citizens, and visitors alike.

**Curt Smith** - I am excited to see the new Pickleball Courts open, along with the new kids park, splash pad and pavilion. I really believe that we've done the right thing in the past by denying new apartment complexes and warehouses to locate in the Town Center, as we want to preserve this for retail. We do benefit from sales tax from the Town Center currently but of course would love to see that increase – but not do so by changing the long term plan.

## **6. How should the city expand or improve parks, sports facilities, and recreational programs, particularly for youth and families?**

**Mitch Fisher** - Compared to Daphne and Fairhope, Spanish Fort is both a younger city by median age, and has a much higher share of children 15 and under. While I do believe the city has done a great job increasing recreational and sports facilities within budget, I believe we can take it a step further by developing facilities capable of supporting larger youth sporting tournaments, beginning the groundwork for an aquatics center, and securing more public access to the Delta.

**Curt Smith** - We are excited about several plans that are already in motion! We have a plan to add multi use parks to the east of the Eastern Shore Center. These proposed parks would give us what has been requested for years – the ability to host travel ball tournament play. And it could not come at a more opportune time, just after we will have 2 new hotels across from the bowling alley! If the Pickleball Courts are as successful as I think they will be, I can easily see expanding the number of courts and making it a destination for tournament play. And for those of us that like to get out and just enjoy nature without a ball, I am so excited to see both Honor Park (the 150 acre waterfront park on Hwy 225) and Valor Park (on the causeway, just to the east of the Battleship) getting developed! We live in a beautiful place and I look forward to walking on trails, enjoying waterfront views, and just enjoying God's gift to us!

## **City Council District 2 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Carl Gustafson - *Incumbent, Unopposed*

### **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Carl Gustafson** - Five years ago, I ran for Spanish Fort City Council District 2 with a mission to build upon what previous Councils have accomplished instead of going with the status quo. I created the framework for the cities first Junior City Council to engage young people. Interviewing people while doing research in various cities regarding dog parks, I was able to hand off information that went into our new Loyalty park. Lastly, I advocated for the purchase of the Shellbank property on the causeway in an effort to protect the delta and insure it didn't become Condo's and townhomes.

### **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Carl Gustafson** - • Adjusting the City limits. There are neighborhoods where some residents are in the city while others, in some cases on the other side of the street, are not. This will give consistency and give all residents a voice in a city they claim as theirs.

- Modernize the cities brand to further reflect the new Spanish Fort, now and in the future including advocating for monument City limit signs to welcome people to the city.
- Focus on various ways to attract businesses to Spanish Fort.

### **3. As a councilmember, you make critical zoning and land use decisions. What principles guide your decisions on new subdivisions, apartment complexes, and commercial developments?**

**Carl Gustafson** - As a Real Estate Broker, I strongly believe in landowners rights to develop property but believe there needs to be a balance between those rights to develop property and the smart strategic development of the City. Currently, Spanish Fort is interviewing companies to help with development of a master plan which will help guide those decisions.

### **4. What specific road or traffic improvement projects do you believe should be prioritized for Spanish Fort, and how would you advocate for funding them?**

**Carl Gustafson** - Many of the roads throughout the Eastern Shore are State or County roads. Spanish Fort is no different. We are working hand in hand with Baldwin County through its 30 cubed funding program as a collaborative effort to make significant traffic changes to alleviate congestion on Hwy 31 and Hwy 181. These efforts will direct traffic away from the intersection to areas that can create a more efficient flow of traffic.

**5. What ideas do you have to help rejuvenate underutilized retail areas like the Spanish Fort Town Center and promote small business growth in Spanish Fort?**

**Carl Gustafson** - At the League of Municipalities annual conference as a delegate for Spanish Fort, I attended a breakout session in an effort to glean successful ideas. Many cities have used incentive packages to lure in business. I believe a combination of creating a limited number of incentives, coupled with enhancing our current underutilized facilities making them more attractive to businesses holds the key to this issue. Currently, in an effort to enhance and encourage traffic into the Spanish Fort Town Center, Pickleball courts were added and the children's park is in the process of being renovated. Renovation of the current splash pad is in the works.

**6. How should the city expand or improve parks, sports facilities, and recreational programs, particularly for youth and families?**

**Carl Gustafson** - This is an area I'm proud to say Spanish Fort has done exceptionally well. Spirit Park was renovated, Integrity Park soccer fields doubled in size and basketball courts were added. As mentioned in question #5, we are also renovating recently acquired parks. Currently we are working on a project that will create 10 multipurpose ballparks complete with walking trails and sidewalks near the Eastern Shore Center. Valor Park on the causeway, delayed because of the causeway and bridge construction, will someday become a reality. The cities crown jewel, 144 acres of beautiful land along the Delta aptly named Honor Park, through a collaboration of citizens and planning companies, is starting to develop with a grant from the Alabama GOMESA fund. It will take a number of years to develop this vast park but it will have something for everyone and truly be a showcase of Spanish Fort.

## **City Council District 3 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Shane Perry - *Incumbent*

Drew Ramsey

**1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Shane Perry** - Growing up in Fairhope, I saw people helping people and realized that if we work together to help our neighbors, we find a sense of joy and purpose in our life, and this has driven my servant spirit and motivates me to run for office.

I have been part of Spanish Fort since I married a Spanish Fort Girl in 1986(Vicki) we raised 4 children here and worked in our community hand in hand with our fellow neighbors to make this a better place to live. The most important thing I think about being qualified is that you have a heart for your community and feel a need to help your fellow neighbors.

**Drew Ramsey** - My name is Drew Ramsey. My wife, Brittany, and I, along with our two sons, George (14) and Sam (13), moved to Spanish Fort in 2020 — and we hope to spend the rest of our lives here. We truly love this community and are proud to call it home.

I'm a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served as a team leader in a Scout Platoon with the 82nd Airborne Division. My time in the military taught me invaluable lessons in leadership— lessons that have shaped every aspect of my personal and professional life. In the Army, everything centered around the mission, and I've carried that mindset with me ever since.

Following my military service, I earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Troy University (2001) and a Master of Science in Operations Management from the University of Alabama (2008). Over the years, my career has spanned financial consulting, operations consulting, transportation planning, and construction.

In 2016, I founded Azalea Home and Custom Furniture, a small business specializing in hand-crafted cabinetry and furniture. Nearly a decade later, I'm proud of what we've built — not just beautiful, functional products, but a team that understands and believes in our mission: to create pieces that bring joy and meaning to our customers' homes. Just like in the military, I believe that every team member plays a vital role in achieving that mission, and I strive to lead with that principle in mind.

I decided to run for City Council because I became increasingly concerned about the stagnate commercial growth in Spanish Fort. I noticed local businesses were closing or relocating — in many cases just across the Interstate to Daphne, where they are now thriving. I began attending and watching City Council meetings and was struck by the lack of engagement and communication from our representative. Spanish Fort deserves fresh ideas and strong, effective leadership. I'm running because I believe in this community and want to be a proactive, informed voice for District 3.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Shane Perry** - # Support the Natural Beauty of Spanish Fort

(Responsible Growth, Protect our Environment, Enhance the Beauty of the City with Flower beds and Trees to make the city more attractive and make people want to slow down and visit a while, maybe spending some dollars with our Small Business's)

# Make Education a priority

(Supporting our Schools and Working with SFEEF and our 3 Mil Committees to ensure a successful Future for our Students)

# Ensure the safety of our Citizens

(Providing our Police and Fire with all the resources they need to continue being the best in our area.)

**Drew Ramsey** - My top priorities are:

- Commercial Growth
- Improved Planning
- Public Safety and Supporting our First Responders

### **3. As a councilmember, you make critical zoning and land use decisions. What principles guide your decisions on new subdivisions, apartment complexes, and commercial developments?**

**Shane Perry** - This is about what our citizens want and is it a good fit for our city. Is it something that would enhance our city and make it a better place to live? Will it disturb the natural beauty of our city? Increase traffic?

**Drew Ramsey** - I believe making zoning and land decisions is one of the most critical responsibilities of a councilmember. These decisions shape how our community grows – not just physically, but in terms of economy, safety, quality of life, and the character of our city. When evaluating proposals for new subdivisions, apartment complexes, or commercial developments, several core principles will guide my decisions.

Compatibility with the City's Comprehensive Plan — We absolutely need a new comprehensive plan for our city- one that ensures new development is intentional, not reactive.

Infrastructure Capacity and Impact — Can our roads, schools, water, sewer, and emergency services handle this? Spanish Fort has experienced rapid residential growth, and it is critical that we ensure our infrastructure is keeping pace.

Traffic and Public Safety — I would evaluate how a project will affect traffic flow, congestion, and emergency response. Projects need traffic studies and, when necessary, must include improvements like turning lanes, signals, or sidewalks.

Economic Impact — For commercial developments especially: Will this strengthen our tax base, create jobs, and serve Spanish Fort residents? I would like to see developments that bring long-term value, not short-term gains or vacancies.

Environmental and Stormwater Considerations — Our area is prone to heavy rainfall and flooding, so stormwater management is critical. I would also prioritize green space preservation, responsible grading, and environmental buffers.

### **4. What specific road or traffic improvement projects do you believe should be prioritized for Spanish Fort, and how would you advocate for funding them?**

**Shane Perry** - 4 lane Hwy 31 all the way to 59 and this is on the list to complete with the MPO. Continue the 225 improvements making it faster and safer working with ALDOT.

**Drew Ramsey** - CR 13 Extension Across I 10 to Bass Pro Blvd — A direct link from CR 13 over I-10 to Bass Pro Blvd would create a strategic bypass for US 98, easing congestion in Spanish Fort and benefiting businesses along CR 13 in Daphne. It unlocks economic growth by improving access to the Spanish Fort Town Center and surrounding retail districts.

I would attempt to partner with Baldwin County Commission and the Eastern Shore MPO to commission a feasibility study showcasing traffic relief and economic gain. I believe we could pursue federal and state funds via ALDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and grant projects, like RAISE or the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) by emphasizing network resiliency and congestion mitigation.

I would next propose a northward extension of CR 13 toward US 31 / SR 225. Extending CR 13

north to US 31—and potentially connecting near SR 225—adds a parallel route to the 225/31/98 intersection. This would disperse commuter flow from existing congestion points, reducing gridlock during peak hours. I would propose we gather traffic count data near the 225/31/98 junction to highlight recurring congestion – also to show the multiple car accidents that have occurred at this series of intersections and submit the extension for inclusion in ALDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan.

## **5. What ideas do you have to help rejuvenate underutilized retail areas like the Spanish Fort Town Center and promote small business growth in Spanish Fort?**

**Shane Perry** - Host Regular Events + Themed Markets Like (Fairhope First Friday)

- Organize:
  - Night Markets
  - Farmer's Markets
  - Live Music Saturdays
  - Seasonal events (like Shrimp Festival pop-ups or Christmas villages)
- These events build community, attract tourists, and generate buzz.
- Collaborate with local bands, artists, and schools for programming.
- A "Spanish Fort Local" merchant co-op could coordinate events, marketing, similar to Foleys downtown alliance.
- A Spanish Fort Local App very similar to the one that Laurel Mississippi has.

**Drew Ramsey** - I would begin by engaging directly with the management company of the Spanish Fort Town Center to gain a clear understanding of the current challenges and any opportunities they've already identified. Their insight is essential to evaluating what's working – and what's not.

From there, I believe we should focus on attracting key restaurants, retailers, and entertainment venues that will serve both residents and visitors. Building strong relationships with commercial developers is critical, and I would explore the possibility of offering strategic incentives to attract businesses that align with our vision and enhance the retail, dining, and service options available in Spanish Fort.

Securing a prominent anchor store would be a foundational step — one that not only draws our local community to the Town Center, but also serves as a catalyst for attracting additional restaurants and retailers, helping to revitalize the area and support long-term economic growth. Small businesses are the lifeblood of Spanish Fort — they are vital to the character, economy, and sense of community that make our city special.

I would love to explore the creation of a Small Business Grant Program that allows local entrepreneurs to apply for funding, with a select number of recipients chosen each year based on clear and meaningful criteria. This initiative would not only support growth and innovation but also spotlight the important work our small businesses are doing throughout the community.

Additionally, I see strong potential in establishing a small business incubator space in Spanish Fort. These facilities, which have gained popularity across the country, offer shared workspaces for entrepreneurs, startups, and home-based businesses. They foster collaboration, provide a professional environment outside the home, and encourage greater engagement with the

broader business community. It's also a great way to bring more people into our local economy — from shared workspaces to nearby restaurants and shops. By supporting small businesses both financially and structurally, we can strengthen our local economy and create a thriving ecosystem of innovation and community connection.

## **6. How should the city expand or improve parks, sports facilities, and recreational programs, particularly for youth and families?**

**Shane Perry** - The future of Sports and Rec is pretty bright in the Fort. We have on the drawing board Honor Park providing a world class outdoor experience with 142 acres walking trails and playground experiences with a Disc Golf Course and a Kayak launch.

The city is also working on a Sports Destination Venue with Partners that will bring in a multifield Park at the Eastern Shore Center providing fields for our citizens and opportunities for the Center.

Build an Event Center to host our schools' programs and meet the needs of our community. School Concerts, Plays, Dance Recitals, Fundraisers, anything that needs a large space.

**Drew Ramsey** - Both of my sons have participated in youth sports through the Spanish Fort Sports Association and other local programs. Through that experience, it has become increasingly clear that our current athletic facilities are falling behind those of our neighboring communities — whether due to aging infrastructure or a lack of space caused by rapid residential growth.

At this point, nearby cities have surpassed us in both the quality and capacity of their recreational offerings. As a result, they are reaping the economic benefits of hosting youth sports tournaments, while many of our families must travel outside of Spanish Fort for their children to compete. This is a key area that demands our attention.

A new multi-sport field complex is urgently needed. Such a facility would not only provide a much-needed upgrade for our children and families but would also serve as an economic driver, drawing visitors to Spanish Fort who would shop in our stores and dine in our restaurants. In addition, we should explore the development of an indoor recreation facility. Our outdoor fields are stretched to capacity — and so are our indoor basketball and volleyball courts. These sports continue to grow in popularity, and like our ballparks, they hold the potential to attract tournament play and the associated economic activity to our city.

## **City Council District 4 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Stephen Winn - *Incumbent, Unopposed*

## **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Stephen Winn** - I have lived in Spanish Fort for 23 years and call it home now. My wife has been a teacher at Spanish Fort Elementary for 20 years and both of my children have benefited from the amazing school system and youth sports/activities in our city. It is certainly time for me to give back to the city I call home.

In November of 2024, I submitted my resume to be considered to serve as the interim District 4 representative. I was interviewed and then voted by the city council and mayor to serve until the 2025 election.

In June 2025, I submitted my intention to run for the District 4 seat in August 2025. The deadline for all applicants to qualify to run expired and I am currently running unopposed.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Stephen Winn** - • Continue to support Public Safety. Our police department and fire and rescue department do an amazing job! They are the backbone to keeping our city safe, so I will continually work with them to address their needs as they arise.

- Continue to support the Spanish Fort school feeder pattern. Our teachers and administrators do an amazing job in preparing our youth for the future. I will continue to support and advocate for the 3 mill property tax that goes directly to our feeder pattern.
- Continue to support steady growth in a fiscally conservative manner.

## **3. As a councilmember, you make critical zoning and land use decisions. What principles guide your decisions on new subdivisions, apartment complexes, and commercial developments?**

**Stephen Winn** - Smart growth, transparency and protecting our wetlands and natural habitats are the three most important factors to consider when making decisions on zoning and land use.

It is imperative to make sure our schools, roads and utilities can handle the growth that new developments present.

It is important to meet with local businesses and residents that may be affected by the potential growth, and listen to their concerns and consider their input.

Spanish Fort is blessed with many beautiful natural attractions, therefore it is important to consider the impact on our environment to maintain its beauty and preserve all wetlands and natural habitats.

## **4. What specific road or traffic improvement projects do you believe should be prioritized for Spanish Fort, and how would you advocate for funding them?**

**Stephen Winn** - Plans for traffic congestion at the US 31 and US 98 intersection should be addressed prior to the start of the new I-10 Bayway project.

I would implore the State ATRIP-II program as well as working with state and local representatives to address all road improvement projects in Spanish Fort.

**5. What ideas do you have to help rejuvenate underutilized retail areas like the Spanish Fort Town Center and promote small business growth in Spanish Fort?**

**Stephen Winn** - I believe we should invest in a market research study to be conducted on the Spanish Fort Town Center to help prioritize the steps that need to take place for enhancement/improvement to existing buildings and space.

Polling residents of Spanish Fort and surrounding areas would also help identify a local need for this area.

I would like to reach out to colleges across Alabama and neighboring states to explore the idea of utilizing this space for satellite campuses.

Recent enhancements like adding pickle ball courts and upgrading the playground near the container park is a great first step in rejuvenating this area.

**6. How should the city expand or improve parks, sports facilities, and recreational programs, particularly for youth and families?**

**Stephen Winn** - Immediate attention should be directed to the baseball fields adjacent to SFES. Money has been allocated to build new restrooms and concession stand, but the fields need to be addressed as well. My goal in the coming months is to reach out to the BCSS to address these needs.

The city recently introduced a conceptual master plan for Honor Park located near Bay Minette Basin and Bay Minette Creek. This 142 acre property is funded by a \$3 Million GoMesa grant and will include a nature preserve, walking trail and more.

Loyalty Dog Park was just opened on Huckleberry Lane and provides a beautiful space for families to bring their dogs to play.

One week ago, the city announced plans for a 10 field baseball complex adjacent to the Eastern Shore Center funded by the Cooperative Improvement District and partnership with Baldwin County's 30 Cubed Program. In addition to the 10 baseball fields, this development will include walking trails and a Miracle Field that will allow children with physical and cognitive disabilities to participate in baseball.

## **City Council District 5 Candidate Questions**

Candidates:

Michael Baust - No Responses Provided

Mary Brabner - *Incumbent*

Steven LeMoine

## **1. What motivates you to run for public office, and what qualifies you to represent your city?**

**Mary Brabner** - I have been a resident of Spanish Fort, Spanish Fort Estates in particular, since February 1993. Over that span of time I have seen so many changes to our sleepy little, once-named Mayberry, to the thriving destination that Spanish Fort has become. I remember going to the old fire station behind the post office to vote to become a city. I have always had a desire to serve, first as PTA President at Spanish Fort Elementary, then to the Planning Commission where I learned about the growth opportunities that the city was facing and how to manage that growth, and now serving on the Council. Serving in each of these roles, and keeping the needs and wants of the residents of Spanish Fort at heart has always been my goal. I am running for re-election to continue making progress on the projects we have in the works while managing our growth and its effects on our city. Infrastructure, staffing, drainage are just a few of the areas that we need to stay focused on to continue to be a vibrant community. As a long-time resident of Spanish Fort I have met and talked with countless residents about their needs and wants so we can do our best to implement them. I am easily approachable also. I am visible in the neighborhood, grocery store, at church, on the tennis court and you can find me soon at the pickleball courts.

**Steven LeMoine** - The opportunity to serve the City of Spanish Fort and all our community is motivated by a lifelong passion to serve others. This passion was the foundation that fueled the drive to build homes with Habitat for Humanity in various states to backpacking medical and school supplies in the refugee camps of Thailand on the Burma border. Then as life progressed, I applied and was asked to join the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board, where I served for over 8 years in Michigan (a Township around 11,000 people). Fast forward to now, where my family and I have the opportunity to reside in beautiful Spanish Fort, the passion to serve only continues. Since moving in October 2020, I have joined and worked closely as a Certified Volunteer with the Spanish Fort Fire Department where I further demonstrated my commitment to the city by obtaining a National License as a Registered EMT. I was further asked to serve on the City of Spanish Fort 3 mil education committee. This committee provided the background and inner networking education for how the schools are funded and how important the 3-mil funding is for key educational and development programs. While serving on this Committee, an opening occurred on the Planning Commission, which I again said "yes" to the City of Spanish Fort and accepted this opportunity to further serve. So as seen in this background, the extensive political experience prior to moving here from another state, coupled with my dedication since moving in October of 2020 shows not only a dedication that is hard to match, but a passion that just grows to be a servant leader for our community.

For all the members of our community wondering about the business acumen, I have a Masters in Healthcare Administration with a certificate in Information Systems, along with a Bachelor of Science - concentration in Health Care Administration and a Minor in Business Administration. On a personal note, the Spanish Fort Fire Rescue Department kindly awarded me the Volunteer Fire Fighter of the Year in 2021 and 2023 and the Volunteer Rookie of the Year in 2021.

Wrapping up all the prior political experience, 20+ years of healthcare leadership experience (which includes the vast majority collaborating with communities and healthcare teams to grow high quality programs), the commitment to oneself and a city by voluntarily becoming a Certified Fire Fighter and serving almost weekly since December 2020 the City of Spanish Fort....I feel all these demonstrated experiences fill the "qualities and qualifications" the community is looking for in District 5 City Council member and an overall City of Spanish Fort Council member.

## **2. What are the top three priorities you would focus on in the coming year in office?**

**Mary Brabner** - A. Updating the current Master Plan to make sure that we have followed the original plan and adapt the new plan with the growth that has occurred, especially along the widened highway 31. Open discussion with the residents is crucial in creating the vision for the future of our city. The Comprehensive Plan is not a document solely created by city leaders, it is a document that incorporates the views and desires of our citizens.

B. Getting a handle on the drainage issues that our city faces. We are experiencing 100 year floods too often and we need a plan to minimize the damage throughout the city. Grant writing will be an essential tool for us to acquire the funds necessary to tackle our drainage issues. We also need to educate everyone about drainage easements and the property owner's responsibility if there is an easement on their property.

C. We need to build out the parks that the city has purchased thru GOMESA funds and the new ballfields by the Eastern Shore Center. The availability of outdoor parks and recreation will give our citizens opportunities to explore the delta, recreate with family and friends as well as offer additional sport fields for team building for our youth.

**Steven LeMoine** - First - Communication: There has been a complete lack in "proactive" communication with the overall citizens of District 5, for at least as long as I have lived in the district since June 2021. The citizens deserve a more proactive approach, so they are not surprised by any discussions at the City Council meetings or any of the city committees. I pledge to be proactive, as demonstrated since starting the campaign, and inclusive of the community's ideas driving the agendas. Quarterly sessions with the community to hear consistently their priorities.

Second - City / Resident Infrastructure: The citizens of District 5, along with many citizens of Spanish Fort, have expressed concern for the current city infrastructure to support growth (business or homes). Collaborating with the City of Spanish Fort and our community on ideas to help mitigate the impacts of growth is a priority.

Third - Strategic Growth: The City of Spanish Fort is due this year / next year for a refresh of the city Master Plan. This document is key in laying the framework for strategic growth that supports a thriving business and residential community.

## **3. As a councilmember, you make critical zoning and land use decisions. What principles guide your decisions on new subdivisions, apartment complexes, and commercial developments?**

**Mary Brabner** - On many occasions I have deferred to our Comprehensive Plan when making those decisions. If the proposed business fits within the zoning category then it should be allowed. If the land owner is asking for the property to be rezoned then I look at the surrounding properties and how the rezoning could affect those property owners before making a decision. When considering subdivisions and apartment complexes we include the Baldwin County Board of Education to make sure that they are prepared to handle the influx of students that the project may bring.

**Steven LeMoine** - The principles that guide me are the City Master Plan. This is the cohesive document that is created in collaboration with the community to bring the key elements of growth to the table. This document is key in my evaluation of decisions.

**4. What specific road or traffic improvement projects do you believe should be prioritized for Spanish Fort, and how would you advocate for funding them?**

**Mary Brabner** - Selfishly, I'd like to finish the sidewalk along Spanish Main that we recently started but I know that there's an \$800,000 price tag to complete it. I have been included in meetings with ALDOT and the intersections of Highway 98 at 31, Highways 225 and 31, and the exit from Spanish Main to Highway 31 are on the drawing board for revision. These large intersections, with merging traffic, are congestion prone areas and recently had 2 different wrecks involving large trucks. These intersections have to be addressed very soon, and luckily, those funds won't come from the city budget since they are state highways.

**Steven LeMoine** - A few top priorities for short and long term: Hwy 31, 225, school zone intersections and safety, potential entrances/exits on I 10 (funding: always open to any and all ideas for funding sources)

**5. What ideas do you have to help rejuvenate underutilized retail areas like the Spanish Fort Town Center and promote small business growth in Spanish Fort?**

**Mary Brabner** - First of all, the city is not involved in the leasing of properties at either mall. Any tax rebate or incentive we might offer to attract new business would not be fair to the existing businesses that have not had city incentives to get started. We hope that the addition of pickle-ball courts and upgrades to the pavilion and kids park will bring additional traffic to the container park. I am hopeful that there will be a resurgence of businesses at the container park. If we want to promote small business growth then we, me included, have to make an conscious effort to slow down our online shopping and actually go into a store and make a purchase.

**Steven LeMoine** - This is a great question, as it ties to the question above. Currently, we have a City Master Plan for our guiding principles on where we hope to grow business and residential districts. In this location specifically, we just have to keep "selling" the ideas and concepts on what the future can be as business move there. I have heard so many different ideas from big-box buildings to smaller businesses but starting a business it tough (I hear). I believe we have to do our best as a city to help facilitate easy access to new businesses so we can be a business-friendly city.

**6. How should the city expand or improve parks, sports facilities, and recreational programs, particularly for youth and families?**

**Mary Brabner** - We are doing this right now! Last week we unveiled a plan that we have been working on for a few years to expand the Cooperative Improvement District at the Eastern Shore Centre and build a new sports complex with 10 baseball fields. We have also presented conceptual plans for Honor Park on Highway 225 just south of Bay Minette Basin and the park on the causeway west of Felix's. The city has been very proactive in adding parks and recreational facilities for our residents to enjoy.

**Steven LeMoine** - This question also ties back to the City Master Plan, in my opinion. We should have a vision of how many parks we feel is adequate to maintain the natural feel of Spanish Fort and maintain the wonderful outdoor spaces we have along the water. With a well thought out City Master Plan, we can have areas identified for the allocation of sports and recreational. I also believe there is a strong interest in the performing arts and a place to hear and see the talents of our students, public and other traveling groups would be great to consider in these discussions. The public is critical to be a part of these discussions. This is one area I firmly believe I bring an advantage to the District 5 position, as building programs and collaborating with communities is what my passion is driven on.