

## Ann Hill – City Council

### Business Climate / Regulations Issues

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

Good. The City of Pensacola's one-stop shop for developers seems to be working quite well. At these meetings, there is someone from public works, permitting and the planning board ready to answer questions. I believe the proof is in the pudding – and it's very easy to spot the rapid growth downtown Pensacola is undergoing, especially with luxurious condos, apartments and town homes. Just a few examples are The Waverly, East Garden District and Lily Hall.

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

The most complaints I receive are regarding speeding traffic, historic structure demolition and tree removals. As a member of the FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization, I have worked with the neighborhoods and CRA to push for returning Davis and MLK to two-way traffic and to narrow the lanes to discourage speed. I was a sponsor of the Gonzalez St. Shareway Day that demonstrated the benefits of bike lanes and traffic calming structures. I worked with staff to draft the Demolition Review for Historic Structures outside the preservation districts. I also saved 23 of 36 trees slated for removal on A St. and supported selection of native trees for street tree and park plantings E-scooter regulations continue to be improved with added parking corrals, limited hours and possible citations.

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

1. I would like to eliminate the campaign sign ordinance that prohibits signs being placed on the ROW even with permission of the homeowner.
2. I would like to eliminate the city's ordinance that allows firecrackers in the city parks and especially at the Blue Wahoos Stadium, where many of them fall into the bay.
3. I would like to eliminate the ordinance that promotes lawns instead of meadows in our yards.

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

I am particularly interested in encouraging development of North Palafox. It took about four years of effort, but the state and city are negotiating a North Palafox road diet that will slow traffic and add bike lanes and become more pedestrian friendly. This is what I wrote in response to the draft plan: As the city council member for the southern section of this project, I was

thrilled to receive these much anticipated and welcome draft plans. The early arrival enables me to point out recommended changes sooner rather than later. Thank you!

At the start, I will note:

1. The neighborhood is adamantly opposed to any concrete wall structure/barrier similar to those erected by FDOT on West Cervantes St. in Pensacola.
2. I do not see any such walls in your drawings at this time, but I just want to make this point to make sure no revisions go in that direction.
3. 12' travel lanes (the same width as on the I-10 interstate) need to be reduced to no more than 11'. You could use the additional ROW space as a buffer between the automobile and bike lanes.
4. We would like an eventual tree canopy, so if you can't add landscaping to these plans, please allow for the planting of trees, shrubs and benches along this corridor.
5. Anything we can add to enhance the ADA and pedestrian comfort and safety is appreciated. We hope you will consider all the new technology available.
6. The proper streetlighting style and intensity and maximum sidewalk widths are critical. Please keep that in mind. Palafox is the centerpiece of our historic downtown Pensacola and must be treated as such with as much infrastructural fanfare as funding will allow.

## Operations / Infrastructure Issues

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

Functional consolidation is beneficial for the most part. The city and the county have already consolidated some duplicate services, such as Animal Services, EMS and mass transit. Future consolidation could include trash, bulk pickup and recycling service. I don't support consolidation of fire and police services because the city has such great responsive teams in place. Better coordination by city, county and state in street management is a necessity.

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

As you undoubtedly know, the I-110 homeless encampment is in District 6. I supported the moratorium for two reasons: 1) The Centers for Disease Control recommendation allowing the homeless to remain in place during the course of the pandemic; and 2) A letter from Eric Tars, Legal Director, National Homelessness Law Center; Chelsea Dunn, Attorney, Southern Legal Counsel; Kirk Bailey, Policy Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida; and Jacqueline Azis, Staff Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, threatened to sue the city if the homeless were removed without having a means to relocate them. City Council dedicated \$3 million toward this relocation, which resulted in a successful move, a private safe outdoor space, a women and children's shelter, and an upcoming respite care shelter. We also provided hotel/motel space during this transition.

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

While I have served on council, the city has taken a serious look at infrastructure and has earmarked funding where it needed to be. The city of Pensacola borrowed \$15 million and pledged the Local Option Gas Tax revenue to resurfacing 1,800 blocks. Much of that work is complete and this program is expected to increase the percentage of city streets rated in "good repair" to nearly 80. The city also has completed or planned several stormwater enhancement projects along Main St., Barrancas and 9th Avenues and at the Hollice T. Williams Stormwater Park. I agree with all of these and hope that work on S. DeVilliers flooding will one day solve the flooding and sewer overflow issues there. The city has also received several grants and FEMA funds – for resilience planning, waterfront repairs, port warehouses and improvements, airport projects, and a public marina and kayak launch at the Maritime Park. The city also offers kayak and other water recreation rentals now at Bayview Park

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

With the new Gen. Chappie James Bridge comes the need for a smooth transition to Gregory St., Bayview Parkway and 17th Avenue. Can we successfully implement a road diet, or will traffic jams become commonplace? Public hearings and collaboration with the county and state are imperative. We need a safe pedestrian crossing at 14th and Bayfront. We need to connect all the sidewalks to nowhere along 17th. We need to make sure the streets below Cervantes do not become alternate routes when traffic backs up at the light at 17th.

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

Unlike the previous mayor, the current mayor has either attended or sent a representative to nearly all city council meetings. Staff members who also attend are readily available to answer council questions. The former's mayor's mandate that city council members cannot talk to division/department heads without permission has been relaxed, and as long as council members refrain from ordering staff to perform tasks, information can be easily shared. It is a good working relationship, with political maneuvering kept to a minimum.

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

I call it THE ANN PLAN, and I have successfully put much of it into practice.

Safety: Increase street lighting, add sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and ADA accessibility. Add dedicated bicycle and foot patrol officers.

Environment: Testing our bay, stream and bayou water for enterococcus so that we can promote the Pensacola Bay Paddle Trail I've been promoting. I helped open Bruce Beach to the public and pushed for the 9 public spots at Baylen Slips. #Boatability was added to my #bikeability and #walkability mottos.

History, Preservation: Sponsored both the Juneteenth and America's First Settlement Trail. Voted to establish the annual John Sunday day and supported the plans for the Gen. Chappie James Memorial at Wayside Park.

## **Economic Development Issues**

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

The city participates in attracting new business through the mayor's trips, Chamber inquiries, Visit Pensacola and the Emerald Coast Regional Council. My office is also always open to people who are interested in locating here. I think the remote employment opportunities just keep growing. Council's particular role in my opinion is to keep improving the quality of life in Pensacola so that those who visit want to come back to live and establish a new business.

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

The City seems to be making headway with cyber and other tech industry, hotels and travel-related entertainment, museums and history. I hope we can expand on the America's Cup and any Olympics-style rowing or boating team. I'd like to see the GE wind turbine production expand as well as solar panel production and installation. It would be nice to have a cruise ship dock here or if we could host a retired aircraft carrier. I think we should encourage the amateur ice skating and hockey teams that want to be on the ice year-round.

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

Actually, I've spent some time going over the city's excess properties, and in the process saved both the historic Malcolm Yonge Centre being used as a gym used for a private school that works with at-risk students and the historic Alice S. Williams Library, which council hopes to restore at one time. Council has rented the former Amtrak Station to the Women Vets, which will also be home to a memorial. While the other city-owned properties are not as abundant as I thought at first glance, we do have a great number of vacant lots that are owned by the county. I am working with the city and the Pensacola-Escambia County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to offer these lots as incentive for affordable housing builders. I do not believe we have too many parks in Pensacola and do not favor selling them.

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

1. Move the Visitors Center to the Community Maritime Park
2. Build a permanent all-season ice rink

3. Buy the Zelica Grotto Hall by Sanders Beach and become HQ of the Olympics rowing club.

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

For three years, I have promoted the Pensacola Baywalk pedestrian walkway and the Pensacola Bay Paddle Trail. We need to keep our waterfront as public and as accessible as possible. I love the living shoreline, the Veterans Memorial Park and the Missing Children's Memorial. I am on the board of the Pensacola & Perdido Bays Estuary Program and hope that one day we will have oysters and dolphins and may even manatees to watch as we walk that path. Taking out every tree and antique-style light fixture from Baylen to Alcaniz along Main Street turned what should have been an amazing Hashtag project into a travesty. The bike path needs to go along Cedar, not Main St. I served on the Community Maritime Park board for about five years and feel very strongly that we do not need luxury housing on the remaining park parcels. I would like to keep the park as green as possible. Any development should be open to the public. The plans for a parking structure are what nightmares are made of. I don't think we need to spend \$8 million on Bruce Beach. People who contact me want it to be natural, with key historical markers and native plants.