



**CITY OF TALLAHASSEE / LEON COUNTY
2016 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**



**CITY OF TALLAHASSEE / LEON COUNTY
2016 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LEON COUNTY COMMISSION
DISTRICT 2**

RESPONDING CANDIDATES:

Jeffrey Bullock

Nancy L. Calhoun

Kirk Headley-Perdue

Jimbo Jackson

Manny Joanos

T.J. Lewis

JEFFREY BULLOCK

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

Lot more business, Great Economic Development

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

By Promoting incentives, helping them get started.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Lesser Environmental Impact

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Health, Safety, Crime

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Promote Economic Development, Law Enforcement

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Getting Community input, put it on the table, vote.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Educational Opportunities, Incentives

NANCY L. CALHOUN

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

Without being acknowledged in District 2, the one section of our county that has been mostly ignored this is a difficult question to answer.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

The climate now is ominous for District 2. Our families are fleeing because of the failing schools. The Chamber needs to take notice and give me some answers.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Duplication of services between county/city, somehow try to streamline and reduce impact fee's.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Equity (Distribution of funds) in the schools, we are becoming segregated. Extend the CRA beyond Orange Avenue, branch out into the southern end, District 2. The widening of Woodville Hwy. has been approved by the state, an opportunity for the County Commission to take notice in the planning/development of this vital corridor. Revitalize and rebuild our older existing neighborhoods throughout the county.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

(Respondent skipped this question)

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Actually, a county commissioner cannot lobby the Florida Legislature.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

The foundation in creating talent, starts at the kindergarten level in our school system. Presently our schools are "D" rated with Ft. Braden (C) and Woodville Elementary (A). We must recruit teachers at every level who are enthusiastic and recognize the vital part they play in our building children's future. The Florida Legislature needs to rethink mandates, testing as teachers are leaving our state. Lobby the legislature for higher teachers salaries, when you get a child while young and train them up in the way they should go....the future is bright and not bleak. Introducing "trades" into the high schools for employment after graduation also, as everyone is not suited for college.

KIRK HEADLEY-PERDUE

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

My long term vision for our community is to provide a stable and healthy culture in the county for businesses to thrive, relocate to, and expand in.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

As a County Commissioner, I would work to reduce paperwork and regulations that encumber and burden our small businesses. We must ensure that our permitting process doesn't favor national chains at the expense of our local small businesses.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The local tax on commercial real-estate rental property

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Reducing Crime, Economical Development, Improving and Maintaining our Parks, Community Centers and infrastructure

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

In District 2 we must invest in our transportation infrastructure like widening roads, installing traffic lights and roundabouts. We must also invest in our water quality and install new fire hydrants, fund more fire and emergency medical services for our rural areas and maintain our greenways. Businesses are drawn to communities with a high quality of life and investing in basic services for our community will make District 2 a more desirable place for businesses to locate.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

As a registered Republican and former Republican nominee for the State legislature, I have great relationships with many members of the incoming House and Senate leadership and would be a strong advocate for our communities needs.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Leon County has some of the top schools and universities in the state and I would partner with our universities to ensure that young professionals would feel a stronger bond with the community and be given the resources and local infrastructure they need to stay in the county after finishing their studies.

JIMBO JACKSON

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

I would hope to see a thriving business economy that welcomes both small business and larger expansion of existing or new business.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I think that we have the resources here in our local education and university system to be developing entrepreneurs and skilled workers to have a flourishing small business network. We need to offer incentives to small business start ups that allow them to grow.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The stringent zoning restrictions and permitting processes and bureaucracy hurdles that hinder business growth.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

1. Citizen Safety, Health, and Well Being 2. Road, sidewalk, and traffic concerns 3. Maintaining a business- friendly community that promotes responsible business development.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

I think we should fully recognize the diversity of contributors to our local economy. I believe as a community we sit on some of the greatest natural resources in North Florida. I would believe that concentrating on improving the attraction to the many lakes, rivers, natural springs, proximity to the coastline, and local forests will attract an mostly untapped group of stakeholders to our community.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

I would provide a voice for our Leon County community that focuses on citizens safety, health, education/training, and economic possibilities. Funding these sorts of initiatives will be a huge investment in the future of our Florida economy.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

As I mentioned, one of the key factors to retaining a prospering workforce is continuing to sell the both the economic and educational value of living and working in our community. Funding for transitional programs in the office of workplace development is a good example of how we can develop and retain skilled and educated workers in our community.

MANNY JOANOS

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

Robust

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I am a business advocate. I will work to reduce and or eliminate development fees.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Suspend or eliminate concurrency fees

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Jobs/economy - reduce crime - water quality

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Continue to rebuild and enhance public infrastructure. Recruit and grow businesses.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Diligently

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

I will work with each learning and training facility to insure their success. TCC, Workforce, Lively, Goodwill, FAMU and FSU.

T.J. LEWIS

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

By 2024, I hope to see a Tallahassee-Leon County business community that has truly been diversified. One where high tech and green energy companies have established a foundation in the local economy, are employing the highly educated local workforce and are exporting goods and services "Made in Tallahassee". I also hope to see a more robust tourism economy where people from throughout the Florida and the nation have added Tallahassee to their wish list of cities to visit because of our unparalleled natural beauty, great restaurants and a more robust 2024 retail economy. It will be cheaper for residents and visitors to fly in and out of Tallahassee and the local real estate market will be so strong because everyone will want to own a piece of the Tallahassee dream!

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

As a commercial realtor in this community I come into contact with small business owners daily, and one of the greatest concerns I often face when placing them into a new location are the fees imposed on them by Growth Management for changing the use of a building from retail to restaurant or animal care to office. Billed as concurrency fees, these cost can often be enough to kill a deal or deter a small business owner from opening up a shop. I favor a model that incentivizes operating a business closer to your consumer base and repurposing existing buildings, after all this is how we keep our community vibrant and minimize the costs associated with sprawl. Small businesses should be awarded for propping up the local economy and we should make available to them facade improvement grants similar to those offered in the Downtown and Frenchtown CRA to jumpstart their investment in our community.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Sometimes our zoning code can be restrictive to certain businesses and costly to change. I'm not going to suggest Tallahassee do away with our Zoning code, but perhaps we could study the benefits of other types of zoning approaches (form-based approach) to reduce barriers to development and recruiting businesses to certain areas of town.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Neighborhood/Environmental Safety, Education, and Economy Development.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

I'm a huge fan of improving sense of place, particularly in our existing communities where the change can result in the revitalization of a neglected community or recruiting companies into our community. These type of investments in our community, STAY in our community and attract others to want to be a part of it. So whether or not a business remains, the investment remains and is able to continue to facilitate our efforts to recruit businesses and people into Tallahassee. Cascades Park, FAMU Way, and Gaines Streets are examples of this principle in practice. We need more of these type of projects -- which are intact transforming Tallahassee into a world-class community.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

This is a very important issue. Tallahassee's leadership must, NO MATTER WHAT PARTY, embrace the leadership of state Government remembering that the Capitol is the foundation of this community and understanding the economic impact of having legislative sessions occur in this community is imperative. Let us roll out the red carpet for our state leadership no matter the party and do what we can to improve the environment around the Capitol, Supreme Court and Governors mansion to make visits to Tallahassee as inviting as possible.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

This is an important issue to me and it was a central theme during my involvement with the Knight Creative Communities Initiative in 2007. First, I believe we will only be able to retain our highly-educated talent if they can find a solid Job opportunity upon completing their education, therefore, we must work like never before to diversify Tallahassee's economy and make conditions right for the creation of hi-tech and green energy companies. This will involve bringing in an airline that can offer dramatically reduced air fares. Then second, the retained talent needs to be able to find within this community, a quality place to live and we can help this by investing in sense of place projects in existing communities, particularly within District 2 which is home to Innovation and Commonwealth Parks, to make those communities attractive for private dollar investment and inviting to first time homebuyers. This is how we will begin to address Tallahassee's brain-drain issue.



**CITY OF TALLAHASSEE / LEON COUNTY
2016 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LEON COUNTY COMMISSION
AT-LARGE SEAT 1**

RESPONDING CANDIDATES:

David T. Hawkins

Mary Ann Lindley

DAVID T. HAWKINS

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

I envision making it easier for new start-up entrepreneurs, giving them special incentives for sustainable practices. I would be an advocate for businesses and residents that own 5 or more acres of open land that would like to create a mini Solar Farm.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

When starting a new business many people do not realize what is involved. I would be a major advocate for the County to design special workshops for new and future business owners, advising them on what it takes to open a business in Leon County. Workshops dealing with what is needed from the business owner, what Licenses are needed, what Forms & Applications are needed, how to feel out those Forms and Applications, how and where the Taxes are to be paid, where to go to get the Licenses, Applications and Forms. The business owners will also need to know any Ordinances, Rules and Laws that might pertain to their business. Professionals can run the workshops and local business owners can be guest speakers to tell about what they experienced starting their business. From personal experience, I truly believe that these workshops are very much needed.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

I truly believe that the new "Mobility Fee" Regulation should be rewritten (and renamed). As it stands, developers pay for the turn lanes and traffic lights that are needed for their developments, which I believe they should. The part I have a problem with is, the County & City Commissioners are also wanting to make the developers to pay a fee for the extra traffic that will be using the roads. That is just wrong. The County and City has already zoned the properties and should know well in advance that once the property gets developed there will be extra traffic in that area so the developer should not be financially punished for something that is inevitable.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

<01> Lowering the Crime Rate <02> Improving the local Economy & Job Rate <03> Improving the Health of the Poor and the Elderly.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Putting someone to work so they can provide for themselves and their family and be a productive Citizen in their community is what is needed. If elected, I will be a major advocate to help low income individuals and those who are recently released from being incarcerated to get them Trade Skill Training so they can get a Job. I will work with Lively Vo-Tech to donate 2 or 3 seats in each of their Courses while the County and the City pays for the Books and any Shop Fee's so these individuals can learn a Trade making it easier for them to find a Job. Lively Vo-Tech offers an array of Career Starting Courses.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

I believe that to improve the relationships between the community and the Leadership at the State Capital would be easier if the two were to interact together at community events weather it is at the “Down Town Get Downs”, a local “Car Show”, “Spring Time Tallahassee” events, or other local events that draw people together. The community needs to know and see that the Leaders really do care about their needs and the needs of the community. Holding an “Open House” event at the Capital once or twice a year would also go a long way.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Improving the “Job Market” will also improve our local economy. It’s not going to happen overnight so you start by working on making it easier for new start-up businesses to happen. I would be an advocate for incentives for our local Businesses to create internships for our College Students in hopes that a lot of those Students will want to stay, work and live in Tallahassee / Leon County and maybe someday even open their own business here.

MARY ANN LINDLEY

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

To have reinvigorated skilled-trades training that goes hand-in-hand with job creation and economic development in manufacturing as well as start-ups for local business development. Through our Office of Economic Vitality and Blueprint resources to maximize both local-business growth and those we can attract by reaching out to bring new businesses to our area. This includes leveraging the Leon County Research & Development Authority's assets to attract high-tech research that leads high-wage jobs. Fundamentally, my vision is to enhance job-creation, both high tech and those skilled careers that don't require a college degree. I am currently working on ways to restore an environmental asset, Lake Jackson, to its previous status as a world-class recreation area, part of one of our biggest tourism and visitor draws, our trails and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

Leon County eliminated its business license tax in 2010 and our City partners eliminated it this year. We will most likely replace our concurrency fees that are generally inequitable with either a mobility fee or some variation that would incentivize builders to construct in urban and suburban areas, where people want to live and that won't increase expensive sprawling growth. The County's efforts to improve infrastructure, including landscaping, sidewalks for walkability/connectivity amounts to a partnership with small businesses looking for lively appealing locations. Infrastructure can enhance business opportunities for North Monroe corridor, for example, our a sewer to Woodville will be an asset to locating in commercial areas there. The County's Development Services and Environmental Management division provides a good balance, but oversight by elected officials to keep up with community needs and demands is important. Through our Community Redevelopment programs we can add to the appeal of new businesses in areas in need of revitalization such as South Monroe - and the poster-child example, Gaines Street. County support for DOMI station for start-up and entrepreneurial enterprise must remain constant. In short, local government must be a catalyst for local enterprise efforts, which to me always comes back to the fundamental need: creating jobs to help our citizens earn a good living and be independent financially enough to, in turn, give back to their community.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The concurrency fee cannot be gotten rid of, for new growth will almost always add to the cost of infrastructure, but we do need to make it more fair so that the last business to come into an area doesn't create the straw that would break the camel's back and so they are charged unfairly. As I said, Leon County repealed its business license tax in 2010.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

(1) Enhancing job creation for all demographic areas and in both high tech and skilled careers; (2) protecting the livability and quality of life, environmental, recreation, historic and artistic assets; (3) making our high-crime areas safer and reducing crime in general through community policing, activities and jobs for youth, and support of our law-enforcement agencies.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Investing in our air travel and commercial air facilities; supporting both water-quality and stormwater/sewer/septic upgrades; support and partnership with universities in creating a convention center; creation of new employment opportunities to balance fewer of the historic reliance on state-government jobs, meaning stronger partnerships with universities research development as well as with CareerSource and other workforce development efforts; maximizing entrepreneurship, high-tech, small local business expansion and nontraditional/social entrepreneurship that engages younger generations.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Leon County has been engaging with state government increasingly and plans to continue doing so through both our lobbying team working effectively with both sides of the aisle -- my Leon Works initiative just won \$100,000 this year to continue with our annual Leon Works Expo for high school students to learn about careers in skilled trades and to start an apprenticeship program. As county commissioners, we speak to legislative committees on topics of concern to our area even as we champion home rule in many areas where distinctive local concerns are different from those in other areas of the state.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Enhancing our quality of life through the many areas I've mentioned is a big draw to young professionals who increasingly want to work where they decide they like living. Workforce development that means our community has employees ready to take jobs that companies looking to move here need is always going to be important.



**CITY OF TALLAHASSEE / LEON COUNTY
2016 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TALLAHASSEE CITY COMMISSION
SEAT 1**

RESPONDING CANDIDATES:

Gary Gayle

Luther Lee

Scott Maddox

Bruce Strouble Jr.

GARY GAYLE

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

Fast tracked permitting process, incubator programs for young entrepreneurs, solid international airport,

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

Incubator programs that help young prospective entrepreneurs flesh out their ideas and develop their business plan/structure

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Business property taxes and permitting fees

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Building the Foundation - Neighborhood disparity, social and economic injustices, infant mortality rate and performance of our schools

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Building the Foundation - Neighborhood disparity, social and economic injustices, infant mortality rate, performance of our schools

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Utilize community and civic organizations as leverage to build consensus, participate in bill development Activities

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Utilize LCS as a feeder and expand through partnership the TCC to FSU/FAMU program and tie in the vocational institutions

LUTHER LEE

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

To be even more business friendly. Lower property taxes and sensible regulation. I would like to see local businesses flourishing and working closely with the local universities and colleges to mentor, develop, and recruit talent so that the graduates will stay in Tallahassee.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I would push for policies that favor local business and give them priority. I would vote to keep property taxes low and would work closely with state legislators to find ways of reducing the burden of reemployment tax.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

Section 18-32 - Levy of Business Tax

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Economy, Business, Reducing Crime

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

Invest in transit connecting homes and jobs, invest in making retail districts more walkable and bikable. Invest in strategies such as rebuilding our infrastructure, renovating abandoned housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

Create personal relationships with the legislators. Invite them into the community to share all the glory that is Tallahassee. I would present logical arguments for why they should invest and show how the ROI would benefit Tallahassee and, in turn, benefit Florida

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

I would lead the way on creating and maintaining partnerships with local universities and implement internships and business mentoring programs. I would try to involve students in the business of government. For example, reach out to the universities to hold contests where marketing students compete for the chance to have their strategy used for a local tourism campaign.

SCOTT MADDOX

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

Tallahassee has a vibrant business community, but we must continue to diversify our economy. I want to have local government work as a partner to our business community, and looks for ways to make businesses thrive in our community.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I have owned small businesses in Tallahassee for over thirty years. The biggest thing I can do is to ensure that our City Commission has a pro business outlook when considering policy matters.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The Business Tax. Fortunately, my motion passed to eliminate this tax on local businesses.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

1. Lowering the crime rate. 2. Expand air service. 3. Continue to diversify our economy

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

We should look toward infrastructure needs that will enable new businesses to locate here.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

I have an outstanding relationship with several Republican legislators.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

I think working with FSU, FAMU and TCC is critical to address this issue.

BRUCE STROUBLE JR.

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

In 2024, I want to see that the City of Tallahassee has made vast strides towards becoming Florida leading locale in terms of quality of life. In order for this to take place we must strive to promote fair and equitable access to public resources. In 2024 I want to be able to honestly say that in Tallahassee Florida your race, ethnicity or gender, family income, or zip code are not the key determinants in your chance for success.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I would work to establish incentives for starting and maintaining a business in Tallahassee. This would include developmental fee waivers, expansion of the facilities improvement grant program, subsidies for local produce procurement, and improved expedition of permits. These incentives would be made available for enterprises that were willing to undertake specific objectives such as targeted hiring, environmental stewardship, and living wage agreements.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

(Respondent skipped this question)

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

We must promote equitable development as a means to address disparities in access to resources and opportunity throughout the city. We must treat our local businesses as a priority in our plans for economic development and growth. Lastly we must not compromise quality of our local environment.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

The Blueprint Sales Tax funds could be used to offset tax breaks and or provide subsidies and grants for organizations that support living wages, targeted hiring and job training, as well as environmental stewardship protocols (i.e. waste reduction, energy efficiency and local procurement). The funds could also be utilized to provide additional funding for the expansion of the Entrepreneurial Excellence Program as well as increased support for the Domi Station Business Incubator. Another priority would be to fund the expansion of the Minority, Women, & Small Business Enterprise Division of the Office of Economic Vitality so that they can conduct aggressive outreach. Lastly, it would be important to focus on supporting and enhancing the service delivery and competitiveness of our local businesses.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

My campaign slogan is that "we solve problems best when we put people over politics". In order to improve relations with republican leaders at the state level it would be important to focus on shared interest. Most leaders despite political affiliation have shared goals for economic stability and reductions in crime. Increasing communication, and focusing on areas of agreement would potentially allow for compromises, which would allow for increased investment into the community.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

I believe it is important for Tallahassee to create a "cradle to career pipeline". We must expand our work readiness programs so that they can focus on our high school populations. Through partnerships with our local colleges and Universities we can make sure that graduates develop relationships with local employers. Lastly, it will be important to make sure there is support provided for programs that enhance the cultural experience of the city as a means of keeping residents engaged and involved. Ultimately we must do more to make sure Tallahassee is a place where individuals want to call home!



**CITY OF TALLAHASSEE / LEON COUNTY
2016 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TALLAHASSEE CITY COMMISSION
SEAT 2**

RESPONDING CANDIDATES:

Steve Hougland

Curtis Richardson

STEVEN HOUGLAND

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

The elimination of the City Business Tax is a good start toward improving the business climate, but more should be done. I support repealing last year's 13% property tax increase, reducing fees, and streamlining the permitting process. I envision public/private partnerships that connect government and the universities to the community as a means of creating economic development and good paying jobs that retain local talent. I also envision a streamlined permitting process that will fast-track permitting, spur real estate development, and help create non-government jobs.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I would work hard to reduce property taxes, reduce fees, and streamline the permitting process.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The business permitting process is still too expensive and prohibitive. I would look for ways to remove barriers to business development and fast-track permitting.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

Reducing property taxes/wasteful spending, creating better jobs, and reducing crime.

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

I support the business incubator concept and public/private partnerships to create a balance that represents the community's needs. I also support local "sense of place" projects. All of these projects should include significant stakeholder input to ensure inclusive and collaborative outcomes.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

I support continuing the City's lobbying efforts at both the local and national level. I would also maintain a close, working relationship with state legislators to communicate local needs.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

Tallahassee is home to one of the most educated populations in the state, and I would work hard with the Chamber, Universities, and businesses to attract and retain local business talent. I support the business incubator concept as one means to help develop and retain local business talent. I would also support a collaborative effort between the city, the Mag Lab, universities, and local businesses to create local, high- tech and medical industry jobs.

CURTIS RICHARDSON

In 2024, Tallahassee and Leon County will celebrate our community's 200th anniversary. What is your vision for our business community in 2024?

As the seat of state government, historically the city of Tallahassee, Leon County and this region has largely depended on the jobs created by government and our higher education institutions as the foundation of our economy. These jobs were readily available and paid a decent wage. Starting with the election of Jeb Bush as Governor, we began to see the elimination of government jobs which continues even today. The salaries have failed to keep pace with inflation due to the lack of across-the board pay increases and hiring has become highly partisan. In light of this, local government and business leaders realize there is a sense of urgency to grow our private sector base and create high-wage high-skill jobs to both retain our university and college graduates and skilled blue-collar workers. By 2024 I envision a more robust business community that leads the way in fueling our economy and creating the needed jobs in our area. I see Tallahassee and this region as a desirable place for small business start-up and growth and an attractive place for businesses looking to relocate or expand. I see our local Chambers of Commerce taking more of a lead role in working with local and state government to grow positive industry in our area.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community's economy, how would you as an elected official work to make owning and operating a business in Tallahassee/Leon County easier for residents?

I agree that small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create many of the jobs that allow our residents to provide for themselves and their families and they contribute to the revenue needed to provide government services. In addition, small businesses contribute to nonprofit causes that provide for those who are in need. As an elected official I will continue to work closely with individual business owners and business groups to determine what their needs are in order to be successful. I will work to ensure that the cost of doing business in Tallahassee is kept at a reasonable level and make sure we don't enact rules, regulations or ordinances that stifle business growth. I will continue to ensure that the city gives preference to local businesses when contracting for goods and services.. I will continue to support business incubators that provide those with an idea for starting a business the support they need in order to be successful.

What is one regulation that our community should consider getting rid of in an effort to improve business outcomes?

The City Commission, in partnership with the Tallahassee Area Chamber, recently took an important step in this direction. At the request of the Chamber the Commission voted to eliminate the business license tax. In 2018 when this takes effect, we will be the only city in the state that does not impose this tax.

What do you believe should be the top three priorities of our community?

1) Addressing the crime rate, especially violent crimes, in our community 2) Growing our economy and creating private sector high-wage, high-skill jobs 3) Preserving and protecting our neighborhoods while growing responsibly

With the extension of the Blueprint Sales Tax, our community will now have an Economic Development investment fund available through the new Office of Economic Vitality. What strategic investments should we make to improve our economic outcomes?

I was proud to serve as vice-chairman of the sales tax committee that advocated for the extension of the sales tax to fund infrastructure projects for the community and invest in economic development initiatives. These initiatives were identified through the work of Imagine Tallahassee, a citizen lead group of which I was a member. Twelve percent of the proceeds generated from the tax, estimated to be about \$90 million over the next 20 years, will be devoted to economic development initiatives. There will be broad-based citizen oversight and monitoring of how these funds are spent. Those initiatives identified by IT as priorities for the community to invest in include business incubation, growing local small businesses that are interested, providing incentives for attracting businesses from other areas and providing capital for minority and women-owned businesses. There are also funds dedicated to providing education and training for individuals to ensure that we have a ready workforce to assume the jobs of the future.

How would you work to improve our community's relationships with the Republican leadership at the State Capitol in order to generate more state investment in the community?

I believe that much of our community's relationship with the Governor's office and the legislature is determined by the prevailing political dynamics. Those dynamics we can't control and must find a way to work with them. It is important that we establish a positive working relationship with our state government to ensure that we are provided an equitable return on our tax dollars. Since my tenure in the legislature from 2000-2008, it was recognized that we needed to introduce legislators, their families, the Governor and his staff and agency personnel to our community while they were in town. They need to see what is special and unique about our city and what makes it a wonderful place to live and what our needs are. There needs to be much more cooperation between local government and state agencies. As chair-elect of the CRTPA, our area's transportation planning agency, I will make it a priority to work with the State DOT in developing our area's transportation needs and long-term plan. I am also willing to re-engage with my former legislative colleagues, many of whom are now in leadership positions, to advocate for our community's interests. Finally, I think local Republican leaders can take an active role in seeking resources for our home region. Certainly we can put aside partisan politics to work together on behalf of our great city.

Creating and maintaining a talent pipeline that addresses local workforce needs is key to supporting existing businesses. If elected, what role would you play in insuring that talent retention and development is a top priority for our community?

During the work of the Sales Tax Committee we realized that in order to be successful at building our private sector base and grow our economy, we had to focus on local workforce needs of our area's businesses. We must provide a trained and educated workforce to meet the manpower needs of our businesses. We must partner with local workforce training and education institutions to make this happen. Tallahassee Community(TCC), Lively and Workforce Capital Region are some of the institutions that play an important role in this endeavor. We must also draw from the talent pool created by our university graduates, most of whom are forced to look elsewhere for employment. We also need to work with our secondary schools to provide education, training and industry certifications for those students who desire to enter the workforce upon graduation. Local government can play a role by providing training and employment opportunities for graduating students when the need is there. This can be accomplished by working closely with college placement offices and school guidance counselors.