

Ed Dodd Responses

Sebastian Chamber Candidate Questions for 2018 City Council election

1. What issues motivated you to run for this office and what do you plan to accomplish during your term?

During my first two year's as a member of the Council I concentrated much of my efforts in the following areas:

- Restarting the planning processes which were in some instances on hold,
- Storm water system maintenance and updating the overall storm water management plan.
- Septic to Sewer conversion in the CRA and extending the process to the entire city.
- Financial controls to include completing outstanding projects and freeing up excess funds for application to other items.

Thanks to support from other Council members and staff we have made good progress in all of these areas. I plan on continuing my efforts in these areas and work with staff to review the overall budget process.

2. The health of the lagoon has been studied for many years. What specific actions to you think the City Council should take?

The lagoon has a special meaning to Sebastian, it is the heart of our character and identity. We owe it to future generations to come up with a way to clean our environment and protect national and local treasures such as the lagoon. These steps may seem small but they represent things the city can accomplish within the regional, state and federal nature of the problem.

- Continue and expand the septic to sewer grant program.
- Modify the city landscape regulations to include more Florida native plants and less grass which will reduce the need for more chemical lawn treatments.
- Continue support for the Indian River Lagoon Planning Council.
- Continue fixing our storm water drainage system.

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3. Please provide a list of priorities that you feel the city should focus on?

Sebastian is a city in transition because of outside growth issues as well as the age of our infrastructure and main housing areas. In addition to the items in #2 our priorities should be.

- Revision to city land development and building department regulations to support home owner driven home updating projects. For example special projects desk to provide home owners assistance in planning and working through regulations.
- Expansion of our commercial footprint along the 510 commercial corridor.
- Revision of CRA regulations to facilitate mixed-use and commercial projects which contribute to the growth if it as our 'downtown' hub.

4. There is a proposed state constitutional amendment to increase the homestead exemption that will be on the ballot in November. If it passes, the ad valorem tax revenue collected from residents. I will increase the proportion of ad valorem in

This is a tax transfer not a tax decrease. About 42% of the houses in Sebastian are homesteaded, of these properties a sub set with assessed value over \$100,000 will receive an additional exemption. No one can provide me an accurate estimate of the number of properties in Sebastian that will receive the added exemption; however when the impact of the save-our-homes reduction to most homesteaded properties is included in the assessed value calculation the number could be much lower than 42%.

Sebastian is already operating on a very tight budget. We are facing increased infrastructure challenges left behind by General Properties and it is going to be really hard to meet service needs without the revenue. Non-homesteaded property, including residential and commercial, will have to make up the short fall by paying higher ad valorem taxes. It is also important to note that homesteaded property will also be faced with an increase in ad-valorem taxes on the non-homesteaded portion of their tax valuation. These issues will play out during our budget preparation during 2019.

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5. What are Sebastian's strengths and weaknesses?

Sebastian is one of the last 'old Florida' areas on the east coast. We have a great quality of life for people who do not want to live in a glass jungle. Our charm makes the city a desirable place for old and young families to live. The most important thing to remember is that Sebastian is better today than it was yesterday. If we continue to focus on providing the great quality of life while managing how we grow, the city will be a better place in 10 or 15 years than it is today.

We are challenged and will continue to be challenged for some years by the legacy of General Development. These items can be fixed with planning, hard work and some financial investment.

6. Describe your vision of Sebastian five to ten years from now and what would you do to reach that vision?

Sebastian in ten years is a city with a diversity of housing offerings and enlarged commercial area spanning the CRA, 512 commercial district and the 510 commercial district. We are celebrating the increase in young families purchasing starter homes in the highlands and increasing their value by remodeling projects. The finished green-way offers walking and biking trails running from south city limits to our western limit on 512. We are finished building the new boat launch off US1 near our south boundary which will almost double the number of boats that have access to the river each day.

Getting there will not be easy. It will require the city to focus on a vision, produce and work plans, change regulations, TALK, TALK and TALK some more between elected officials and the public. However it can become reality if we work together in a positive manner.

7. What are your thoughts on the expanded annexations taking place in and around Sebastian?

Sebastian is surrounded by a large amount of vacant land, mostly along the US1 and 510 corridors. The state and county have highway building plans for the next few years that will expand the access to this land such as the expansion of 66th Ave, expansion of RT 510, and extension of 82nd Ave. Annexation is the way to put Sebastian in control of how this land is used and on the receiving end of tax revenue to pay for services we will be required to provide even if it is not within our city boundaries.