

WEST GALVESTON ISLAND PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting

West Galveston Island Property Owners Association

The WGIPOA held a Board of Directors Meeting on February 17, 2019 at the Galveston Country Club. Jerry Mohn called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. A quorum was established by the attendance of Bill Ferrary – Bermuda Beach, Kim Van Camp – Condo, Jay Lendrum – Dunes of West Beach, Bet Jennings – Laffites Cove, Melanie Perry – Palm Beach, Dick Kuriger – Pirates Beach & Cove, Scott Childs – Point San Luis, Peggy Zahler – Spanish Grant Beach, and Craig Vance – Terramar. Susan Gonzales – CKM was present.

Jerry Mohn introduced officials and candidates stating that due to time constraints there will be no candidate speeches. Elected officials and candidates included Jack Roady, Galveston County District Attorney, Carolyn Sunseri, City Council Member District 6, and Jim Schweitzer, Justice of the Peace Precinct 2. Other candidates included Donnie Quintanilla for Judge County Court #2, Marie Robb, candidate for Galveston College Regent, Mike Nelson, candidate for Justice of the Peace Precinct 2; Tom Dickens for Galveston County District Attorney, and, Jackie Cole candidate for City Council District 6.

Peggy Zahler lead the Candidate Forum.

Opening Statement by all Candidates: Please introduce yourself and discuss what you think are the most important responsibilities of the office and your qualifications for meeting these responsibilities.

Wayne Faircloth (State Representative District 23) – Has held two terms as State Representative, is a resident in Galveston and is asking for your vote again.

Mayes Middleton (State Representative District 23) – Is a native of Galveston, owns an Oil Company and stated career politics is not good.

Mark Henry (County Judge) – As Judge have reduced tax rate for 7 years in a row, reduced the bond indebtedness by 40%, and 1st time received triple bond rating. We need the storm surge protect and the pelican island access.

Lonnie Cox (County Judge) – have been with the 56th District and am now running for County Judge. This position is over the County, mosquitos, working with the City of Galveston. The focal point is to work with all the officials. Have a master's Degree and is an Attorney.

Joe Giusti (County Commissioner Pct. 2) - February 20 is the 1st day of early voting and March 6th is election day. Born and raised in Pct. 2, and I care about what happens on the Island. Previously was in policing.

Kevin O'Brien (County Commissioner Pct. 2) – Former County Commissioner and Emergency Management. The guy on the ground taking care of business.

Question for all candidates: With the news received Tuesday that \$3.2B of Hurricane Harvey Relief funds have been earmarked for the Ike Dike/surge suppression system, please explain what you will do to ensure that the funds will be used effectively/efficiently to bring

the project to completion. What will you do to ensure that additional funding will be appropriated such that the project can be completed?

Wayne Faircloth (State Representative District 23) – Funding is designated for Sabine Pass – we need to fight for these funds. We need \$3.2 billion to build a coastal spine.

Mayes Middleton (State Representative District 23) – We need to work together. The Trump Infrastructure Bill is another way to get more funding.

Mark Henry (County Judge) - \$3.2 billion is needed for a coast spine. As Chair of the Gulf Coast Community Recovery Committee he will work with legislation and the Senator. He has worked for seven (7) years to educate legislators on the Coastal Spine.

Lonnie Cox (County Judge) – Stated in fake news \$3.2 billion was basically for repair and Galveston is not included. Expect the Corp. of Engineers to lay out an unpopular plan, most cost-effective plan is a barrier along the highway.

Joe Giusti (County Commissioner Pct. 2) – It is not designed to come to us, we need to make sure it does.

Kevin O'Brien (County Commissioner Pct. 2) – The County responsibility is to make sure things happen on the ground.

State Representative District 23 – Wayne Faircloth and Mayes Middleton

Question 1: Discuss your thoughts regarding the recent legislative session where there were several issues associated with the state's attempt to make decisions for municipalities/counties; for example, short term rentals, tree ordinances, bathroom bill, etc. To what extent, if any, do you support the state making decisions that have been the responsibility of the local jurisdictions.

Mayes Middleton (State Representative District 23) – stated he believes in local control, individual tax payers need to make the decisions. There are circumstances where the State needs to step in, but not on the local issues.

Wayne Faircloth (State Representative District 23) – Local control vs. State control A Tax Cap Bill was sent to the House and nothing happened. Local control – no one knows better how to spend our money than you do. We contributed \$70 million to the State. Local questions concerning trees, rentals, etc. belong to the local decision makers.

Question 2: Discuss your ideas regarding the state's approach to capping the increase in property taxes. Please discuss your ideas regarding increasing appraisals. To many citizens, increasing appraisals is a greater threat than the tax rate. In summary, please discuss your proposed solution to the burden of increasing taxes on your constituents.

Wayne Faircloth (State Representative District 23) – we have 600 people per day moving to Texas and 30 companies. Taxes are important for City Roads, etc. Ask the State Comptroller - make schools re-certify, \$6 million went to the State, 1% went to

Galveston County. Appraisals – the State does not live off property taxes, they live off sales taxes. Legislation died in the Senate not the Congress.

Mayes Middleton (State Representative District 23) – You are being taxed out of your home. Nothing has been done by the legislation. Two Bills died for lack of support. Governor Abbot presented a Bill to cap at 2 %.

County Judge – Mark Henry and Lonnie Cox

Question 1: Discuss your position on the Pelican Bridge and the options available. How important is rail to the strategic planning and growth of Galveston and Pelican Island? Discuss the timeline and deadlines associated with current available funding. What will you do to move this project forward?

Lonnie Cox (County Judge) – Discussed the options on the Pelican Bridge. The land bridge would reduce silt building up in the Port of Galveston and would prompt the Federal Government funding. Need Rail to develop business on the Island.

Mark Henry (County Judge) – The land bridge is the best option. Cost \$300 million and would take 7 years to construct. Texas A & M does not want the campus split by a land bridge. The Rail is not a good option due to the cost.

Question 2: It has been reported that the County taxes are 26 percent higher than surrounding counties. If that is true, why is this the case, and what will you do to work toward making our taxes more comparable to surrounding counties. If this is not true, then please discuss your approach to addressing county taxes.

Mark Henry (County Judge) – It is true, and it is about the only source of funding. Other Counties have sales tax, hotel occupancy fees. The tax rate has gone down 7 years in a row.

Lonnie Cox (County Judge) – We are the highest – we should budget 25% for a reserve of \$37 million.

County Commissioner Precinct 2 – Joe Giusti and Kevin O’Brien

Question 1: Since both of you have been our County Commissioner, what do you consider the major issues/problems/challenges on the West End, and what will you do to resolve each? While you were Pct. 2 County Commissioner, what do you consider your major accomplishments?

Kevin O’Brien (County Commissioner Pct. 2) – Pct. 2 Commission for two years. Painted the Cap of the Seawall & made repairs, put in handicap ramps. On Campeche flooding got TX Dot to raise the street in six different sections, also got TX Dot to repair 61st. Street.

Joe Giusti (County Commissioner Pct. 2) -A lot of projects started before he came on and he worked towards completing those projects. Handles the mosquito. The Bolivar project money went to drainage projects in Galveston.