

Baton Rouge Growth Coalition

EBR Mayor Questions

1. At the present time, the permitting and inspection department is slow in the issuing of permits and inspections. What would be your solution to this continuing problem?

I propose launching an app that is used in a few governments in th U.S. which provides the Mayor/President the opportunity to review how efficient government is. Developed by Public Stuff, the app allows citizens to input needs for service, complaints and compliments. Permitting and inspections would be an area included in th app. The app provides reports by issues (ie: pot holes, water main breaks, flooding, etc.), by geographic areas and by time of completion of work (to name a few reports). As Mayor/President, I would review all of the city metrics including permits and inspections.

If the need determined, I would add additional staff. Additional staff would be paid for by permit and inspection fees and by revenue of development.

2. There have been proposals by some council members to allow for third party review of plans in lieu of the Permit Office. Do you support the use of third party review? YES _____ OR NO ☒ _____ Would you consider the outsourcing of the Permit and Inspection Office to a commercial entity? YES _____ OR NO ☒ _____

Outsourcing avoids the problem. There is a need to determine why plans reviews are slow and sometimes inaccurate. Development is ever changing, staff needs training to keep up with new materials, processes and techniques. Performance standards must be set and adhered to. Furthermore, a third party review will slow the permit and inspection process.

3. Some council members have suggested a moratorium of new development along Highland Road. What is your position on governmental moratorium on development? What is your position on the Highland Road moratorium?

The moratorium on Highland Road is a reasonable and necessary position. The UBC code is outdated, making for an opportunity to overdevelop the area. A moratorium is an opportunity to improve access on the corridor and develop the corridor appropriately.

**4. What plans do you have concerning policy and development within the city?
Do you support the concept of Smart Growth?**

We must incentivize development in older and poorer communities. Transportation funding must be used in an equitable manner where we improve development fairly throughout the parish. CATS has the opportunity to submit grant applications for millions of capital dollars which can be used, and should be used, for small commercial developments in poorer and blighted areas in the parish. The city/parish needs a planning department to work along side CATS to secure capital funds.

Additionally, as Mayor/President I will look at the cost and impact of growing new areas. Growth in new areas mean city/parish provides infrastructure and must deliver services such as water, police and fire. There is a cost to those services and developers must pick up more of those costs. Reinvigorating older neighborhoods infrastructure and services are already in place.

I would look for the Growth Coalition to assist in the development and plicy making of the city/parish planning department.

I support Smart Growth and Smart Growth principles.

5. The current pay plan for certain Parish employees is not competitive with the industry in our area. How do you plan to address this issue?

As Mayor/President I would commission a compensation and class study. From the study, I would look to make EBR more efficient, without layoffs. Efficiencies will fund pay increases as identified in the class and compensation study.

6. The City-Parish is contractually obligated to maintain the Comite Diversion Canal, if and when it is completed. What is your position on the construction of the Canal and what actions would you take to complete the project?

My position is that I would use any means necessary including meeting with the state and federal officials to ensure that this project is fully funded and moves swiftly to prevent future flooding in this area. In the future, I will propose a plan of sustainability that will maintain and upgrade the Comite Diversion as needed to prevent any future flooding and I will make this a top priority.

7. The Mayor's office will have an appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Please describe the type of person you would like to appoint.

As Mayor/President I will appoint people to planning and zoning who approach planning and zoning reasonable, fair and balanced. Appointees will have an understanding of the overall plan for the parish and a thorough understanding of planning and zoning to assist making the parish plan happen.

8. The Flood of 2016 has caused major issues for the parish in a number of different areas. What do you see as the challenges that we face and how do you plan to address those challenges?

As devastating as the flood was it is an opportunity to rebuild and repair infrastructure and invest in communities where limited investment traditionally occurred. Rebuilding some communities which were impoverished prior to the flood would not benefit the victims of the flood or the parish. As Mayor/President I will deconcentrate poverty, encourage and incentivize better housing stock and inspire other private investment.

9. The school system has a major impact on the wellbeing of the economy of the Parish. What roles do you see for the Mayor as it relates to the school system? Will you support the creation of the St. George incorporation?

The system is the life blood of the parish. Essentially, the system has to function as such. As Mayor/President I will focus the school system on pre-school education and what I call family focused learning. Pre-school is an opportunity to build necessary skills prior to entering the parish school system. "Family focused learning" is an opportunity to teach parents with substandard academic performance tools to support student learning. Without teaching academically deficit parents all subjects "family focused learning" teaches parents techniques of teaching by learning. Parents ask questions which verify students learning.

I do not support St. George establishing a school district separate from EBR. Separating St George will fracture the educational system, all schools must improve performance.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Denise Marcelle, Mayoral Candidate of East Baton Rouge Parish