

Addendum to Park Board Trustee Application
For
William Clement

I am submitting the following additional information for consideration by council. With the change in format from candidate interviews to written questions, I felt this is additional information the council may want to consider related to my time as Director of the Small Business Development Center for Galveston County and the period of time following my retirement

I was employed as the director of the Small Business Development Center for Galveston County from 2013 to 2016. One of my primary responsibilities was the funding of the center and the development of the SBDC budget. I was exposed to the unique nature the accounting and financing of an organization that receives its money from government, charities and private individuals. When combined with my accounting background, I feel this gives me a unique insight into the requirements of the Galveston Park Board.

Following retirement, my wife and I traveled extensively in our RV. We divided our time between winters in Galveston, summers in Washington State and travel between the two during the spring and fall. We stayed at Jamaica Beach RV Park and were "Winter Texans" from November to April. We were the unofficial Galveston ambassadors to the hundreds of winter Texans that came through the park. I developed a good understanding of what the long term visitor to Galveston wants in terms of amenities and activities. Our summers, June thru August, were spent working for the State of Washington as park hosts. We lived and worked in several different parks where we welcomed visitors, answered questions, supervised the campground and provided support to the park staff. Our spring and fall travels took us to hundreds of parks and campgrounds throughout the western United States. We were able to experience a variety of tourist attractions and meet the people who worked there. I feel these experiences will allow me contribute to the Park Board if I am appointed as a Trustee.

William Clement

Park Board Applicant Questions – Answers due June 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

1. In your own words could you describe what you feel is the relationship of the Park Board to the City of Galveston.

My understanding is that the Galveston Park Board is an agency, created by the legislature and the citizens of the Galveston, to promote and manage tourism on Galveston Island. Trustees are appointed by the City Council for two-year terms. The city reviews and approves the Park Board budget annually with funding primarily coming from money generated by the Hotel Occupancy Tax. The city will receive and maintain custody of funds generated by the HOT. These funds are released and transferred to the park board in accordance to the budget. It is my feeling that the Park Board Trustees should work closely with City Council to promote tourism, support residents, and assist businesses involved in tourism. According to what I have read, the park board is responsible for management of properties and assets owned by the park board and those owned by the city for which there is an inter-local agreement for the board to manage.

2. Do you think the recent changes between the City of Galveston and the Park Board were necessary? Please explain.

The park board and city need to follow the law. If the law requires that funds be maintained in a city account and released to the park board according to the budget approved annually by the city, then that's the procedure that needs to be established and followed. If the board and council feel that changes in policy or law are necessary, then this should be accomplished in a manner that satisfies all parties and follows the law.

3. Do you feel that the promotion of Galveston Island is beneficial to our local businesses?

Absolutely. Tourism is a vital to the well-being of Galveston. I feel the park board has three responsibilities. These are to promote tourism, support the citizens of Galveston, and provide assistance to businesses serving the tourist industry. These are equally important, with protection and support for citizens deserving a little extra attention.

4. What are your thoughts on the recent severance packages approved by the Park Board?

Because of the executive session, I'm not aware of the specific reasons the severance packages were granted to those particular individuals. It is in my experience unusual to provide severance packages to employees of government agencies unless they are in a very senior position and there is a need for this to support recruiting or retention of a specific individual. If appointed as a trustee, I would like to be briefed on the situation by staff and legal counsel. I would also encourage the trustees and council members to work together to develop a policy regarding severance agreements and severance pay. In the future, severance should be approved by both the board and the council following the guidelines previously established.

5. Do you feel that the number of visitors per year has become a concern for the Island and if so what do you feel are some actions by the Park Board that could address this?

The number of visitors per year to the island is a concern and has been for several years. One of the primary responsibilities of the Park Board Trustees should be to manage tourism so that it has a lowest impact possible on the citizens of Galveston. These efforts should focus on several areas. The first is a recruiting and retaining visitors who stay for a longer period of time. These tourists typically spend more and return. The second is to educate visitors, both short and long-term, about the activities available in addition to the beaches. This will spread the crowds and reduce the impact. Galveston has a very unique history and culture and this should be promoted extensively. The third is to develop a program that promotes good citizenship, and then enforces the laws designed to ensure good behavior. It is my impression that visitors have more of a negative impact on the environment and efforts to reduce this are important.