

CANDIDATE VIEWS REGARDING SPRING BIKE WEEK

SUMMARY

The following chart is the opinion of Myrtle Beach Harley-Davidson. Below the chart is what the candidates had to say regarding Spring Bike Week specifically.

	CANDIDATES	Strongly Supports	Supports	Neutral go either way	Against	Strongly Against
Mayoral Candidates	Mark McBride					X
	John Rhodes		X			
	Judy Rodman			X		
City Council Candidates	Regina Chestnut	X				
	Jannie Evans	X				
	Wayne Gray					X
	Mike Lowder			X		
	Chuck Martino			X		
	Clay Nance	X				
	Nissen Osterneck		X			
	Cynthia Powell					X
	Bob Scarborough		X			
	Joanne Vogel song		X			
	Randal Wallace			X		

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

John Rhodes, Mayoral Candidate

- I'm for all tourism.
- We have to enforce the law. Then we will be able to contain situations that cause problems.
- The biggest problem is noise in the neighborhoods. We need to prevent bikers from going through neighborhoods.
- Keep them on the main roads, 21st Ave. or 38th Ave, on the boulevard, etc. and out of neighborhoods.
- Another issue to be addressed is bikers revving up their engines in parking garages where the noise echoes.
- Bike week was promoted by Myrtle Beach long ago. Bike week didn't start yesterday and it won't end tomorrow, no matter who's in office. You have to cooperate.

Judy Rodman, Mayoral Candidate

Real leadership tackles issues like our Bike Weeks head-on and does so long before things get out of hand. Finger-pointing, inflammatory remarks and insults just increase tension and solve nothing.

The fact is that Myrtle Beach is less than 2 miles wide with water on both sides and a few bridges to enter and exit. We would be overwhelmed with 300,000 of almost any group doing the same thing: riding tricycles, twirling batons, or even bird watching! Compound this reality with the noise and traffic generated by these beautiful machines.

I believe we must focus our efforts on reasonable changes to both May Bike Events. First, we must ensure that bikers know they are welcome and that we're doing all we can to maximize their fun and safety. In return for that, we must work with the organizers to find effective ways to improve overall behavior and cut back on noise.

The changes I am recommending include a reduction in the number of both north/south and east/west biker traffic and enforce tougher noise ordinances to reduce traffic and noise within residential neighborhoods; adding new Friendship Teams to provide helpful information to bikers; working with the County to reduce both the number of non-local vendors and the number of days vendors may operate. Finally, it's important that we provide ways to encourage bikers to patronize local businesses whenever possible.

Mark McBride, Incumbent and Mayoral Candidate

Very divisive individual and we do not support his candidacy. Recently said he had the urge to nudge a biker with his car just because of the T-shirt he was wearing. That's not the type of leadership needed to lead this community into the future.

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Regina Chestnut, City Council Candidate

- She's 100% in favor for all the bike weeks.
- Some behaviors need to be conditioned, but the businesses want bike weeks to take place.
- There's no bigger revenue generated than with bike weeks. She doesn't know what could replace the revenue if bike weeks didn't happen.

Jannie Evans, City Council Candidate

- She's in favor of all three bike weeks.
- She believes the dates should not to be changed. She said it's better for both the participants and the economy to leave the dates as they are now.
- She believes the police need to enforce the laws on the books. They're good laws. She doesn't see a need to create new ones.

Wayne Gray, City Council Candidate

Has led the Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to eliminate all Bike Weeks in the Myrtle Beach area.

Recognizing this conflict between the various stakeholders, it is my ambition to reach a compromise so that we create a win-win scenario. First, we must work together, communicate our issues and

concerns and be willing to give and take. I believe it has to be private sector driven and not allow the public jurisdictions to mandate their wishes since they differ from the various cities to the county.

I believe it would be best to have distance between the Harley Rally and the Atlantic Beach Rally. Reducing the Harley Rally in number of days will help and I also would suggest that we have an open conversation about a different time of the year for the Harley Rally such as October when the weather is still enjoyable and the community will be better prepared and I believe more receptive of such a large festival. I respect the annual date of the 65 year tradition; however, given the concerns of the community we should consider alternatives. In addition, the Atlantic Beach Rally has grown beyond its original intent and I believe beyond what Atlantic Beach actually wants. All stakeholders must be willing to work with Atlantic Beach officials to reduce the size and scope of that biker festival so that it limits the impact of neighboring communities and provides for the most benefit to Atlantic Beach.

Mike Lowder, City Council Candidate

- Personally I think that the bike weeks are here to stay.
- Some compromises need to be made. Solutions to the problems are a combination of things.
 - 1) Get enough help to enforce the laws that we have.
 - 2) Address the biggest issues which are traffic, noise and behavior.
- Need to work on some compromises.
- If that does not happen, the clamp will be put down so hard that the bikers will not come back.
- This is a great opportunity to work together and make bikers weeks tolerable for everyone.

Clay Nance, City Council Candidate

We are in the hospitality business. As long as visitors abide by our laws, our city should welcome them for as long as they wish to be here. ANYONE unwilling to obey laws already on the books should be encouraged by our police department to vacation elsewhere.

Nissen Osterneck, City Council Candidate

- Bike weeks bring a lot of revenue to the area, and he is definitely in favor of them.
- He would like to see three things happen:
 - 1) Better communication - City, county and state police departments need to communicate better with each other and with the bike organizational leaders.
 - 2) Structure – Maybe hire more police to be better prepared, with safety being the number one issue. Some people have issues with noise.
 - 3) He would like to see more money stay with local businesses. He thinks out-of-state vendors need to pay more for permits than local business do.
- He thinks there's a small group who doesn't want bike weeks, but thinks we should all embrace the bikers.

Cynthia Powell, City Council Candidate

- Her entire campaign is Take Back the Month of May. Strongly against all Bike Weeks.

Bob Scarborough, City Council Candidate

- My personal feeling is it's good business for Myrtle Beach. There's lawlessness in both festivals and that needs to be addressed.
- It definitely brings people to the beach. The volume of traffic is not an issue for me, but ignoring or breaking the laws is something to be dealt with.
 - Everyone who lives here has an investment in the festivals, whether it's good or bad.
 - Quality of life—a number of people try to figure out how to survive it.
 - It boosts revenue in some businesses
 - It makes some businesses lose revenue. Some businesses close down because of the bike weeks.
- The laws need to be enforced. Everyone needs to work together and be of one voice—encouraging the participants to obey the law. Politicians should make sure the laws are being observed.

Joanne Vogelsong, City Council Candidate

Bikers come to town - they are "tourists". They spend money here, so they are "tourists". Some break the law- "arrest them". Many of them come back later with their families - "they are tourists". We are a "tourist" town!

Randal Wallace, City Council Candidate

- I would like to see the noise problem solved. The community is up in arms because of the noise problems. We need to let the bikers know that we are not going to tolerate noise in the neighborhoods and encourage bikers to keep out of the neighborhoods and stay on Hwy. 17 and just the main roads. The noise needs to stop.
- Everyone is welcome to come here to the beach—we urge everyone to behave.
- We should not tell bikers don't come here.
- Another issue that needs to be addressed is obscene tee shirts.
- Behavior of participants in the Atlantic Beach bike week should also be addresses. One thing should be that they dress properly.
- We need to all come together, balance things out and deal with it.

Chuck Martino – City Council Candidate

Not sure how to respond to the open end question for a quantitative rating, but I would say that I am very supportive of any event in town that is made of law abiding and behavior controlled participants and does not impact the residents in the residential area with noise, traffic and bad behavior or display. I believe that everyone is welcome under those guidelines and protected under the Constitution, until they infringe on the rights of others, and I believe we have reached that point and action needs to be taken to correct.

That being said, I am very unhappy during each of the Bike Events with the following:
lack of respect for neighborhoods and ignoring road barricades

- Noise in the evenings along residential streets
- Lode and vulgar behavior and display as well as clothing
- Deliberate violation of our laws such as speed, noise and behavior

- The offensive items sold by vendors and merchants, tailored to the bike crowds
- The mixing of drinking and driving and presenting a hazard and threat of death or damage to themselves and others
- The tremendous expense to the city to provide crowd and law enforcement

Some things I believe need to occur and occur immediately to avoid a draconian approach to control, which I will support, if the industry and the enthusiasts don't exercise some self control in these areas:

- Strict abeyance of neighborhood barricades
- Boycott of vendors and merchants with vulgar merchandise
- Respect for the residents through voluntary compliance of noise and traffic laws
- Dealers and dealers association bringing down or hiring enough security to handle all the vendors and assist with law enforcement where permitted under state statute, or paying the overtime we spend as a result of the events
- Some public good to come from the event such as significant money raised for charity, roads or public improvements
- No alcohol sold within 1000 feet of any vendors or events
- Organize events and routes to avoid city streets after 10pm and encourage use of rts 22 and 31 as alternatives

Some draconian steps I will be willing to support to control the events and protect our residents if the enthusiasts and dealers do not step forward:

- No further contracts with the Convention Center by any Dealer or Dealer association or related entity for the purpose of gathering bikers and instead sponsor concerts or events for local residents to enjoy and avoid the congested streets
- Strict enforcement with Police at Neighborhood barricades
- Establish DUI Check Points at various times of night and revolving locations specifically to deter traffic near neighborhoods
- Increased Noise Ordinance enforcement ALL day long
- Close some roads for parades and marches of other interest groups
- Modify all speed limits downward on all roads during large events to 15 mph to slow things done and discourage traffic, if necessary
- More police and law enforcement officers
- Denial of all vendor permits and special Events Permits in the City during the large event weekends except to Churches, Charity and Not for Profit Organizations