

Results of Tybee Neighbors Website Survey Questions

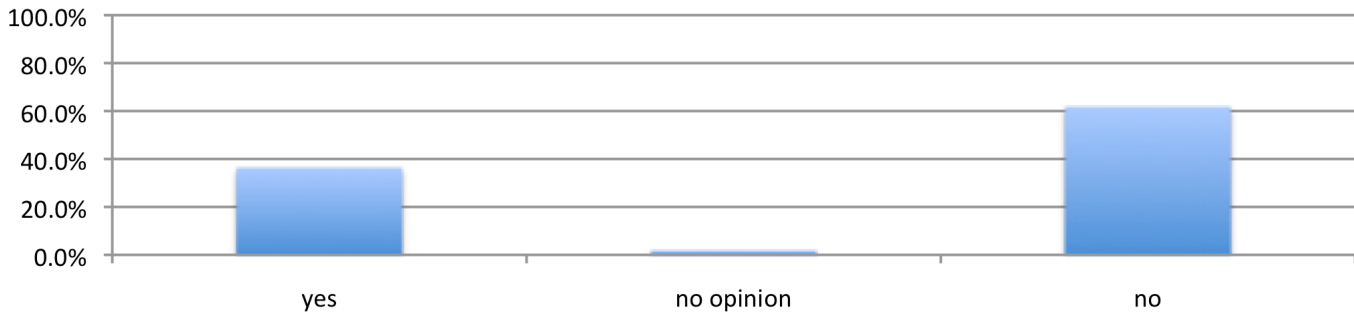
55 responses

Issue #1 --- Four Year Terms

Background: During the November election, Tybee voters will be deciding whether or not to amend the charter of the City of Tybee Island in order to provide for staggered, four-year terms of office for the mayor and council members.

Do you support 4 year staggered terms for the mayor and council members?

	yes	no opinion	no
percent	36.4%	1.8%	61.8%
number	20	1	34



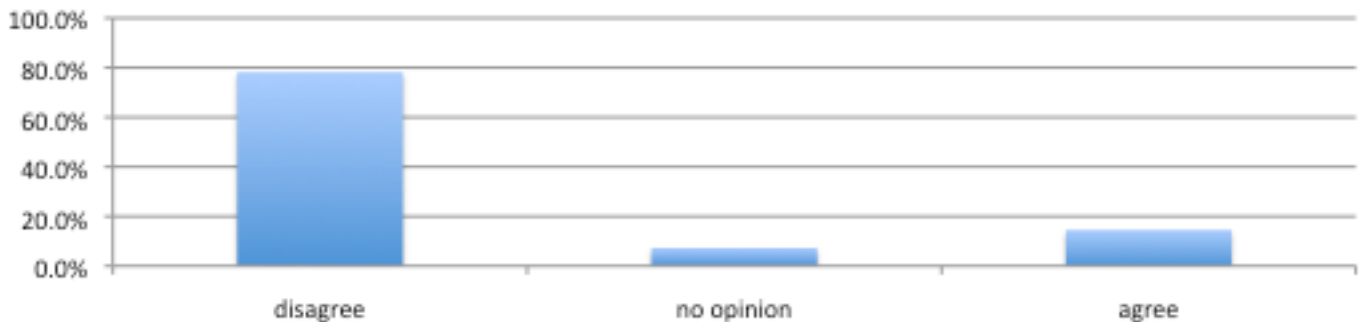
Issue #2 --- Enforce City Codes

Background: In accordance with Tybee's Master Plan, our Zoning Department, the Planning Commission and the City Council are now involved in the complicated process of updating the Land Development Code. This Code deals with zoning and land use issues. The Master Plan short-term work program also requires that the City of Tybee Island improve the level of code enforcement for the land development code.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

I believe that the land development code has been fairly and consistently enforced during the past

	disagree	no opinion	agree
percent	78.2%	7.3%	14.5%
number	43	4	8



	number	percent
Participants 18 or older	55	100.0%
Participants who live on Tybee	54	98.2%
Participants who own on Tybee	51	92.7%

Survey Comments on Four-Year Terms

“ I support strongly a 4 year term for Mayor. The Mayoral position needs time to develop and integrate plans and that is tough with an election looming every 2 years. Because direct representation requires closeness to the electorate, I strongly support keeping 2-year terms for council members. But if our leadership moves to 4-year terms for good reason, I like staggering the election every 2 years. That might stop the vacillation with each new council. I would also suggest the council being elected to individual seats by areas (districts), not the top 6 vote getters! In other words, candidates running for individual seats. This would assure representation of the different areas of Tybee and their area's individual needs. This would also pit opponents to direct competition for each seat. Then we can weigh candidates best suited to each council post, not just the top 6 popular kids in school.”

“NO, NO, NO!!! How many times do we have to vote on this? Or is this going to keep coming up until there's a yes answer? Residents sure didn't want certain members of the last council in for four years!!!! (One ex council member when campaigning said to me he was going to spend city \$ like it was his own ~that promise didn't last once he was elected!!! Sure won't have wanted to see him on the council for four years engaging in out of control spending!) IF WE LIKE WHAT A COUNCIL MEMBER IS DOING, WE'LL VOTE him/her BACK IN!!!!”

“If we like how a councilperson is doing, we can vote them back in. Four year terms take away the option of voting them out in two years if we don't.”

“I haven't made up my mind yet. I can see a case for either view.”

“Haven't the citizens of Tybee already rejected this silly idea?”

“There is nothing the GMA can offer this community that would justify allowing 4 year terms for Tybee Council.”

“Think of our current system as a 4 year term with a 2 year review.”

“Think back to Tybee's very worst councilmen, and ask yourself: Would you have liked to be stuck with that person on council for 4 years?”

“It's very disruptive to potentially have a whole new council every 2 years. In my dealings with Savannah financial institutions they regard Tybee government as inherently unstable. It may feel good "to throw the bums out" but it serves no useful purpose other than that.”

“I think that staggered terms will bring better consistency and continuity to the management of Tybee with easier transition to new policies. Most Board of Directors provide staggered terms to prevent a complete start over for every election year.”

“I am opposed to "ALL" members on a 4 year term. If we need 1 or 2 seats as 4 year in order to receive Grants and other State/Federal money, that I would not be against. Not all 6 seats that would be a disservice for the citizens of Tybee.”

“Absolutely the best thing that could be done for Tybee. It will allow an elected council to complete projects, necessary infrastructure improvements, etc.”

“I vote "no" because, I keep thinking that if the last council was still in office, there could be changes that might not be able to be changed or fixed.”

“Didn't we go through this with the last council??”

“Not w/o term limitations. We have seen at all levels of government the disasters created by individuals staying in office election after election after election. No individual should have more than a total of four aggregate years in office. At Tybee, we have not reached a stable population growth. The diversity of the people that have made Tybee home over the past 10 years coupled w/the diversity of the people moving to Tybee has changed the culture of the island. It has been a period of upheaval. Many old timers have left. New faces from different parts of the country have moved to Tybee bringing w/them their ideas how the island should be governed. That will continue for, at least, another decade. The staggered four-year terms w/o limitations are not in the best interest of the residents of Tybee. Those who are in office now should be allowed no more than one more four year term.”

"I like the idea of two year terms for council and mayor because if someone really stinks, the public is not stuck with them for four very long years. I don't know why this issue keeps coming up for discussion time and time again when the public has already voted not to approve four-year terms. It's a waste of taxpayer money to revisit this issue."

"I'm all for the democratic process, but it does seem a waste of \$\$\$ to have this on the ballot again and again!"

"Today there is a move to reduce term limits. I think, particularly on Tybee, the two-year terms keep the councilmen and women closer to the electorate. There are reasons in favor too, but I think at this time it is healthier to continue the status quo."

"Tybee has shown over many years a desire for having their elected officials to be very responsive to the electorate. While this has resulted in some cases a majority of the Council being thrown out, there are usually enough to furnish a knowledge base for the new members. Further, with the city manager form of government, the job of the elected reps is lessened. Tybee currently is facing many new challenges as it morphs from a quirky fishing village stuck in the 50's to an affluent, less quirky, vacation and retirement community. Change is coming quickly and seeking the approval of the voters every two years is needed until the transition is completed."

"I believe the staggered 4 year plan can work. Unfortunately, with the two-year terms, the first year for a new electee is the learning curve, and then the second year becomes the "politicking" year for re-election. Consistency can be achieved with the experienced councilmen still in place while the new ones catch on!"

"4-year terms does not eliminate the need to hold elections every two years since terms would be staggered."

"Tybee is a community undergoing gentrification. Because of the huge profits to be made developers frequently are candidates or sponsor them by buying elections. Residents need to be able to vote these folks to of office after two years when it become obvious that they only serve for self-interest."

"The Georgia General Assembly and U.S. House of Representative run every two -years- why not Tybee council?"

"Politicians listen much better when they are up for re-election."

Survey Comments on Enforcement of Codes

"I think fairness issue is only an issue when it comes to taxation and land values which are largely Chatham County issues, not Tybee development issues. I believe, for the large picture, the Tybee leadership has been 'fair' in the land development codes for the last few years (it was not always so). However, in regards to consistency: the problem is the vacillating council, which, for the last few terms has alternated between different ideologies. Items like infrastructure repair and improvement, police issues and major political items (like regular sand renourishment and DOT projects) need a master plan that is concrete and not up to the whims of changing council ideologies. I have always been impressed by the quality of the people in our council seats and their dedication to the best for Tybee, even if I have sometime disagreed with their positions. However, the council reverses itself almost every 2 years with the sweeping changes. It might also be helpful to limit campaign contributions so that they are equal for each candidate."

"Lately, yes. How far back?"

"Perhaps it has been a little better as of late, but one only need look at Oceanview Court to see what unobjective and undue influence can do. The Ft. Screven Villas at 7 Oceanview are a classic example of planning gone awry. A 9-unit condo sits in the middle of three triplexes, four duplexes and two single-family homes. It has insufficient parking, 2 spaces per unit, given that it is actually a hotel with no permanent residents."

"I am not familiar enough with the current status of enforcement. I do feel that way too often decisions are made with way too much leniency concerning requests for variances, particularly when it comes to money."

"I do not believe the development codes have been fairly and consistently enforced. The Planning Commission has granted too many variances without demanding proof of hardship. I also think the city staff for code enforcement is lacking in vigilance and manpower to police building projects on the island. Too many times builders and developers have employed the old trick "go ahead and build, then claim 'hardship' and ask for forgiveness approach, and the city council grants it. All builders, developers and residents should be treated the same."

"I agree for the most part. But there have been occasions where it hasn't been enforced. I think reviewing it and updating the code is always a good idea."

"I think the "sins of the past" are blatantly evident.."

"The City officials responsible for enforcing the Land Development Code have not been able to keep up w/the rapid changes we have seen at Tybee over the past 20 years. This is particularly true over the past ten years. The Planning Commission should be involved in "planning," not zoning issues. The City needs to resurrect the Zoning Board and make it again responsible for hearings regarding zoning

issues. This would free-up the Planning Commission to make a 5-year and a 10-year Master Plan for the island as well as assist the Council - which is suppose to create and provide over-sight to the implementation of the ordinances to govern the City - to create logical, enforceable ordinances.”

“The problem, in my opinion, is that although council passes ordinances, there is no real enforcement on Tybee. Unless this issue is resolved, what's the point?”

“I believe that Code Enforcement has been unfair for a long time. I have seen some people get special treatment and permits when others have to do what they are told, case closed. It is time for an honest and fair code enforcer to enforce these codes. If you don't enforce the codes, then why have them.”

“It is important that each applicant is treated equally. That certainly doesn't always happen. Best way to end that is to make sure people making the decisions can stay neutral.”

“Too many variances granted; this makes me wonder why the ordinance existed in the first place!”

“It is obvious that the codes have flaws, but so does the island as a whole since many properties were built upon before there were codes and many families that owned larger parcels just divided it for other family members without any guidelines to follow. Consequently, as those parcels have been resold thru the years, hardships have occurred at no fault of the new owner who may not have had the benefit of all information that could affect the property. Fairness and practicality need to be used as a guideline more than trying to find a hardship to justify a decision.”

“Council needs to revise the section of the code dealing with hardship of the land and include hardship to the property owner. Despite taking an oath of office to enforce the Tybee charter and ordinances all councils, year in and year out, consistently grant variances for health, safety, preservation and historical reasons. I believe that our ordinances should be consistent with our practices and not place our elected officials in the position of violating their oath of office because it is the "right thing to do." Having said that, I believe staff should deny variance requests that do not meet code requirements the same as they would for other sections of the code. By mindlessly passing on these illegal requests, they allow the issue to be politicized and are not doing their jobs.”

“The City of Tybee must develop efficient enforcement policies to ensure that our codes are being followed. Rather than depending on citizens to report violations, ALL city employees (police officers, parking services staff, DPW and WS employees, etc.) should be trained to spot and report violations to the appropriate staff. Staff members responsible for code enforcement should be held accountable for enforcement.”

“Planning Commission, saddled with the job of ruling on applications for "hardship" variances for major and minor parts of the LDC has oftener broadly interpreted the meaning of "hardship" or misunderstood its meaning as regards variances. Also, many sections of the codes are conflicting, confusing and difficult to enforce. Reduction of excess verbiage and duplication, and simplification {an example is the proposed language concerning fence height at corners-needlessly complex. Language could say only "fences shall not obstruct drivers' vision at street corners"}”

“The codes are being reviewed, but with no reference to the Master Plan, which was the reason for reviewing them in the first place.”

“Clearly, Tybee needs some real professionals in the zoning office, and a Marshall that can see the job through.”

“Our City LDL Codes are enforced on the "WHIM" of Tybee Zoning Department. Depending on if they "like" you or not. If you are friends or drinking buddy's with staff --- your infractions will go unnoticed. Zoning Department consistently gives out incorrect information on City Code. When a citizen then completes whatever, then Zoning decides to enforce City Code. The Police Department is not the only department needing renovation.”

“The City is doing slightly better in enforcing the land development code; but still needs improvement.”