

First question, we're asking everyone this: In five words or less, what is the theme of your campaign?

It's to make sure that Malibu can survive the financial problems we've got coming up.

Good. Well, I'm gonna jump down to another question then. The city manager is predicting there's gonna be a crisis in the budget next year because of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Where would you propose to cut from the budget?

Well, first off, we don't have the actual budget yet so we don't know what the numbers are, but you can look at some broad categories and I think Reva Feldman, the city manager, said it was actually a "dire situation." I mean, that's how critical it is. We've got to cut about five million dollars as of the latest forecast into the next fiscal year. So you're going to have to defer a lot of projects that we find near and dear—not cancel, just gonna have to be deferred. There's going to have to be a focus on trying to control the staff expense because that's a major expense for us. Then, we've gotta see if we can do anything with some of the fixed costs. Fixed costs aren't fixed all the time. That may mean going to the sheriff's department and seeing if we can get the same coverage for less or try and mitigate how we spend money today. This is gonna be a line-by-line budget analysis. One of the things I think is really critical is you're gonna have to look at the staffing numbers in city hall and say, "Do we really need all these people doing the job that we used to do?" Or do we do a—what I call a—zero-based staffing where you go back and look at every job, see how many people you need to do it, what's critical, what's not. So it's a top-to-bottom review. The other thing we gotta do is we've gotta generate more income. I know the government's not a business, but you gotta run it like a business. And you gotta come up with the income, as well as the expense. Property taxes hold steady now at about 45-46 percent of the general fund. But our sales tax and our transient occupancy tax are where we're taking the biggest hits. We gotta figure out ways to get those reinvigorated.

My understanding of how Malibu works, at least in comparison to Santa Monica, is that most of our taxes do come from property tax anyway and that sales tax, that's really like a Santa Monica thing because they've got all the businesses and stuff. Do you really think that that will be significant when you're talking about sales tax and the transient stuff? Is that gonna be that big of a deal?

Well, yeah, it is. Because people talk about, "We're lucky to have our property tax," and we are, but it's only about 46 percent of our total revenue of that, let's call it, 30-million-dollar general fund, that's kind of a working number that I've seen for this year and next year. It may be less, it may be more, but let's assume it's 30 million. We've got a \$5 million shortfall. Of that 30 million, about 45-46 percent comes from property tax. The rest of it is sales tax, occupancy taxes, some special transfer fees. I mean, you go down the whole list, there's numerous places we get the other 54-55 percent. But the main one, and the one, if you can fix the problem, is sales tax and occupancy tax.

Got it, OK. I'm also really happy you brought up the sheriff's department budget because we were definitely gonna ask about it. Do you think it's reasonable that Malibu increased it's sheriff's department budget when LA County decreased it?

First off, LA County and us are two different issues. We pay a fixed amount under our contract with the sheriff's department to provide us the deputy coverage. In effect, we've contracted for X-number of deputies to be on scene X-number of hours per day and so forth. The fact that they have to cut back in the county shouldn't have any real impact on us, although you have to perceive that if there's a major incident somewhere, they're gonna draw our deputies to that incident, just like if we have a major incident, we're gonna draw those deputies to our side. So we should be OK with the same deputies we have today. We're not gonna have any shortfalls, supposedly. But I think the issue is not so much the—and it's actually 23.5 equivalent deputies to get 15 on ... ah, I wanna say this properly: 15 daily deputies. And what that is, is from midnight to midnight, there's supposed to be 15 deputies working our territory.

OK.

We should keep that. But is there a cheaper way to do it? Should we have maybe one-person cars vs. two-person cars? Do we use, uh, they call it "CSOs" to do traffic enforcement instead of having a deputy write a ticket? You know, things like that where we can go, "Let's, let's save a dime here and a dollar there." That's what we're gonna have to work out.

OK.

I'm giving you long answers because this isn't radio or TV, but I wanted to give you an answer that you can work with.

Thank you. We're gonna get back around to that. Um, let's do: Just tell me about your history in Malibu and what prepares you to take on this role.

Alright. Well, I've been here over 20 years. Actually, we spent—my family actually lived in Agoura Hills about 18 years before that, so we were just on the other side of the hill and we knew a lot of people here in Malibu, anyway, so it was like we just moved next door when we moved to our place that we built here in Malibu starting about 1998. And I came here because I love this place! This, to me, is the most wonderful spot on Earth. I grew up in a small town actually outside of Memphis and I feel like this is the small town I always enjoyed as a kid. And it's just ... perfect. So how am I prepared to move ahead?

Yeah.

I've always had my volunteer hat on here. When I was working, uh, very vigorously—I was the chief operating officer of a major company until 2007 when we sold it, and then I had more time to do things here to help the community. I took CERT training, became a CERT team member, advanced my AM radio license so I could be a back-up AM radio in the event of an emergency. And in 20 ... 18—I had to think what year it was!—I became a member of the Public Safety Commission and now I'm vice chairman of the Public Safety Commission. So I've had my hand trying to help the city as much as I can. And also I've always been a member of my Homeowners' Association, usually being the president or vice president or treasurer, to help our little hamlet, as we call it, on Latigo Canyon.

OK. Do you feel—and again, we're gonna ask everybody this—do you feel you have the name recognition needed to win the election?

No!

Interesting.

You know, this is a town of 12,000 people. And probably my biggest shortfall is people don't know me. That's one of the things I'm working on very diligently: trying to talk to as many people as I can, meet and greet wherever I can, get my exposure out, because I think once people know me, I'm a very qualified candidate. I think I've had a very good success record when I've had a chance to spend as little as five minutes with somebody. That's the reason why you see my ... well, in light of COVID and the restrictions we have, I've had to rely heavily upon digital and media coverage in order to get my name out. But, once out, I seem to be doing all right.

OK. I thought that was an interesting answer because you do have a lot of endorsements, from Karen, who is on city council right now, a lot of former mayors.

As I said, once people know me, I'm a first-tier candidate for them. And by the way, Karen appointed me to the public safety commission.

Yeah! So let's talk about that. What was your record like when you were on Public Safety Commission?

Well, it continues on! I think some of the accomplishments we've done in public safety since I've been there ... you know, the Woolsey Fire was a tremendous impact on the city. And that's one of the reasons why I put my hand up and said, "I'd like to be on public safety."

Mmhmm.

And the evacuation plans, the way we try and manage the notification to people—I call it "alert and advise"—we worked diligently on that. The evacuation plans, trying to get the traffic lights back-up power, I'll give you sort of a broad overview and then we can go into more detail if you want.

OK.

Um, the other thing we've been working on diligently is trying to get the traffic better situated in Malibu. The parking situation, like this last weekend, last two weekends and this coming weekend, we've had tow trucks at our insistence here in Malibu so that when a CSO or deputy needs to get a tow, they basically hold up their hand and here comes a tow truck! And that's helped enforce our laws, try and get our streets cleaner. Especially around fire hydrants! We've had more people that just think a fire hydrant is just another parking place. And here we are in high fire season coming up, we've gotta stop that. So evacuation plans, parking, general fire preparation. We've even done such mundane things as having Botts dots in front of the fire hydrants. You probably haven't noticed them, but you will after this conversation.

OK.

There's supposed to be a blue bots dot, a little plastic marker you see in the street for dividing lanes, in front of every fire hydrant on the side of the street where the fire hydrant is. So when a fire truck from out of town comes driving along, they can see the dot and know a fire hydrant's right there. Malibu has almost none of those in place. They've been lost over the years. And we're having the Public Works District put them back in.

Oh, yeah ... I have not noticed those.

But you will!

Yeah, definitely will. OK, so a lot of your record on Public Safety has had to do with reacting to the Woolsey Fire and Improving afterwards?

We have a great set of roadmaps and the three after action reports. There were three—just so you ... since you're new here—after the Woolsey Fire, there was one done by the city, one done by the county, and one done by an outside third party (they did it on a volunteer basis). When you look at those three reports, you overlap 'em, you begin to see the common threads of what needs to be addressed. And that's—if there was anything you could look at and say “This is what we need to have done,” that's what we've been looking at, the ones that are the common threads out of those: evacuation, alert, better preparation for when the fire trucks are here, and how we repopulate.

OK, so looking at all of those reports, one of the questions that we really wanted to know was, a lot of people think the response to the Woolsey Fire was mishandled. Who do you think was responsible for mishandling it?

All you have to do is read the reports. There's several factors to it. First off, it overwhelmed all the resources the fire departments had. It wasn't that they went to Northern California, which is one of the misstatements. Southern California sent almost no equipment to the Paradise Fire, which happened basically at the same time. But they ran out of mutual aid equipment in Southern California. The fires that were taking place in Thousand Oaks and Woolsey basically sucked up the resources and I'm—this is my characterization of it—if you imagine it like a war where all the troops go to fight on one front and then the enemy circles around behind you and cuts you off? That's what happened in Malibu. Here's all these resources on the wrong side of us, with virtually no one ready to come to our aid on this side, and here comes the fire. So why were we out of resources? Mutual aid didn't work well, not enough equipment, mismanagement of how our assets were deployed. But then when it came to the fire here in Malibu, how did we handle the evacuation? Well, that could have been done better, no question about that, and that's the reason why we're trying to improve the evacuation plan.

Hmm.

And there's also another issue in this report. The idea that you can stay and defend your house in a fire is something that we've mistrained everybody to think they can do. The reason why I say that is, they look at the damage that happened and they say, “Why not –

BIG MOTORCYCLE NOISE

Hahaha.

I'll talk louder, how's that?

Alright, go for it!

Um, because people felt like if they stayed behind they could've saved their homes, they could've saved their neighbors. And that's the wrong thing to teach everybody because, candidly, if you've seen a fire front come—and I have, I've actually been a volunteer fireman back in Tennessee—it'll scare you to death. And the last thing we want is a bunch of people trying to evacuate in front of flames that get trapped. They either need to get out early or know how to stay safely. There's a theory called "fire front following." We're working on that right now. This is also something that the Public Safety Commission and Public Safety Department of the city have worked on with an outside group that wrote one of the after action reports to let people that are qualified and trained stay behind to put out the embers after they've gone by. Most houses don't burn up instantaneously. They actually burn up from the embers and things that are left on the house, kind of like a campfire takes a long time to get started. Well, if you can come back just after the fire passes a house, you can probably save it as opposed to trying to stop it from coming to your house.

OK ... this is –

More than you wanted to know.

No! But it's interesting! My own question now is, you've been doing a lot to—basically everybody in Malibu is gearing up for the next fire.

Yes.

Hugely on their minds. You've been doing a lot to prevent or to help mitigate the effects of the next fire on Public Safety Commission.

Yes.

Why do you need to run for city council?

Because the next steps that need to be done I think I can handle better at city council. Getting the rest of the evacuation plans in effect, the alert system in effect, dealing with the budget problems. What I do in Public Safety is just a minor part of what I used to do in my corporate life. And I'm looking at where the needs are, and we've got financial issues, we've got governance issues, we've got public safety issues. So if anybody is qualified to do it, I feel like I am, and since no one else seems to be stepping up at the experience level that I have, then I feel like I need to do it. The old classic line: "If not me, then who?"

OK, uh, I think you were at the roundtable that Karen and Arnold, our publishers, hosted. Laura Rosenthal was there. She said something that I think a lot of city council members who I've talked to who are on city council right now say a lot, and it's that you think you can do a lot on city council, but you have to also accept that you can't – that, for

example, Caltrans owns the highway and that's, like, their thing. And then the fire department and the sheriffs are in charge during emergencies, that MRCA is encroaching on neighborhoods, that there's just a lot of other agencies that you have to work with and that city council is limited. So while it's a step up, it's also limited in what you can really do. The question I was gonna ask is, as long as Malibu's been a city, it's been fighting for local control. But there are some pretty high profile examples of how difficult it is for the city to have control over what goes on, just as the examples I gave you. Is it realistic to campaign for local control when, time and again, outside agencies have proven that they can have their way in Malibu?

I think it's amateur hour for anybody to think, "Gee, I'm gonna go on city council and I'm gonna change the world." That's one of the things that you learn in the corporate world. When you're running a major business, you've got constituencies and restraints all over the place. Just because you're the CEO of a major corporation doesn't mean that the IRS is gonna treat you differently or the customers are all gonna come flocking to your door. You've gotta work with every constituency and every influencer. And you're right. Laura Rosenthal was absolutely correct in that discussion. You're right! You can't stand up and say, "I put out an edict or rule," and suddenly it all happens. We have to make it happen in a consensus-building and agreement-building structure. When you talk about outside agencies like CalTrans and so forth, you don't talk to them, and you don't work with them, then you're not gonna have any influence with them. And they won't have any influence with us. So you have to reach across and get these people to work with you and start building this consensus on things. That's how you get things done. It's not by standing up and suddenly saying, "I'm in charge." You stand up and say, "Here's my hand, let's go try and get something done."

Definitely, and you've definitely focused a lot on that in your campaign materials. Specifically, with MRCA, you've called, on your campaign website, the way that they treat Malibu citizens and their property—I think is the phrasing but you can correct me if I'm wrong—you called them "deplorable?"

Yes.

Do you feel like that's a good sign for a good relationship with them going forward?

Look, you've gotta have an idea of what your counterparty is in every negotiation. This is gonna have to be a negotiation with MRCA. They also have to realize where you're coming from and we know where they're coming from. They've told us very clearly what their attitude is. We have to be clear on what ours is. You can sit down and say, "We have disagreements, now how do we get something done?" This isn't about trying to be nice with these people; they haven't been nice with us. But you have to be assertive and work to build a consensus. Know what's important to them, know what's important to us, and try and get something worked out in the middle.

OK. On your campaign site, you talked about unnecessary divisions, specifically on city council, as well. Who is causing the divide and how would you propose to—basically, what are you talking about there?

Alright. Look, we're a town of 12,000 people, but we're 21 miles long.

Right.

Every neighborhood is its own little silo. Within multiple neighborhoods, you'll find silos that have common interests and common non-interests. Um, look, if it's only your way or the highway, then you're not gonna get anything done, and what you have to be able to do is to reach across to everybody and say, "What can we do to make something happen that's agreeable for all of us?" You'll probably ask me in a few moments about short-term rentals.

Ohhhh, yeah. We had a question right there.

That's a perfect example of trying to build a consensus. There's a whole group of people in town that their silo is, "No short term rentals." There's another group of people that say, "I can't live in my house if I don't have a short term rental income." Well, those two are about as opposite as you can get. Now, how do you find a common ground that will work for both of 'em? And that's what I'm talking about, is trying to get these people to see what we can work out together, so instead of everybody saying, "I'm not happy with the outcome," they can say, "I don't like everything that I got in the deal, but I got something I think is gonna be workable and they listened to me." That's how you build a consensus, that's how you get across the silos, that's how you get the restrictions that everybody seems to have about, "I'm not gonna work with you on this because you're not gonna listen to me:" I'll listen to 'em. And by the way, my campaign ... you can talk to a number of people that are not supporting me—I know who doesn't support me—and they'll tell you I talked to them.

OK ... so when I asked "Who is causing the divide, specifically on city council?" Are you talking about a specific person and their constituents or larger groups, is that what you're talking about?

Look, the city council represents the city. They have people they listen to and constituencies they listen to. There's nobody in particular. And honestly, if you have the right people on city council, they're listening to everybody. But let me digress for a moment and talk about what I think—because I've been asked this numerous times—what do you think the right city council should look like? What I've said is, we need to have people who are different. If everybody thinks every house in Malibu should be blue, then you have no divergence of opinion, no new ideas, but what you really should have are five council members who see things in their own way, represent their own set of people that they talk to, and they come together, and instead of being—and I'm not saying they are—adversarial, they start saying, "Oh, I see how your idea comes together, my idea comes together," and suddenly, instead of being five—and I use the word "silos" again—they become a cohesive group and say, "This is what we can do for the city." And that's how you build a really good city council, a really good board of directors, a really good chief executive office. This is how you start making things work better.

OK. And I just wanted to touch base on the short term rentals, specifically. What's your view on how much the city has done so far? Do you think they need to do more to restrict them?

If you ask the city staff, I think they're on their seventh version of short term rental proposals, and it's way past time to get this resolved one way or another. We've got a bunch of people in

this city that are very unhappy with the way short term rentals are operating today. Not talking about what we want in the future, but how are they gonna operate today? So –

SIREN

It's noisy here, by the way, haha.

I know.

Idyllic setting, but you hear a lot of noise.

The good thing is, I'll be transcribing it, so it's gonna be in print.

Yeah, I know.

Won't come through, but yes, haha.

Um, if you look at what needs to be done in short term rentals, I have a home in Lake Arrowhead, and I watched how they solved the problem up there, and then I see what we're doing here. Arrowhead was the same way, and it's an unincorporated area so the county had to make the decision and it was a group of people that said, "I don't want 'em," a group of people that said, "I need 'em," and they were in total disagreement until someone thought, "What's the major stumbling block?" And it was really enforcement. People were willing to agree to something in the center with the unquestioned enforcement that the rules were gonna be applied. And that's what I've suggested here. Look, let's have dedicated code enforcement officers who are paid for by the permit fees for the people that are generating the income, and this would envision, say, a once-a-year inspection of the property, the code enforcement officers know the house, they know how many cars are supposed to be parked there, how many people can sleep there and so forth. It's posted outside. And if you have a problem at 1 o'clock on Saturday morning, you can call a phone number, and it gets resolved then. Not Tuesday. That brought people together and they said, "Oh, now I see this can work." The other thing is, how deep do we go on what we allow? Obviously, it seems like there's a consensus for hosted short term rentals.

Yeah.

But you also have a large number of people who are not happy with that because they need the income or they rent their house out two weeks a year so they can take a big trip. Are we gonna make a criminal out of somebody that rents their house for two weeks? But we need to have a process for how we handle more than the hosted house. But there's a limit as to how far I think we can go, and that is, there probably needs to be a primary resident and probably no corporate ownership.

Got it.

So there truly is a Malibu resident renting their house out, either while they're gone or while somebody's living with them or in their guest house. But it's something where the enforcement has to be very strict and we don't turn the city into a bunch of hotels.

Thanks for clarifying that. Enforcement, yeah, that's come up a lot at the ...

I've said this in city council meetings, I said, "the number one issue, before we ever get to decide how deep we're gonna go into short term rentals, enforcement, enforcement, enforcement." And you've gotta be able to show that this isn't just a one-time, today, that we're gonna have enforcement. You gotta show, "this is the structure that's going to enforce our rules." People forget that when the council passes the law, it's gotta be enforced. And that's what we need to have. I use the phrase, "if we're going to growl, we need to be willing to bark." And that's what needs to happen on the short term rentals. These are the rules, this is how we're gonna enforce 'em, and we keep going.

Very comprehensive answer. I'm gonna pivot ... let's see. I wanted to pivot to the school system. Emily wrote this question, so I'm just gonna read it to you, and then we can clarify: "On your campaign website, you say you 'understand the importance of maintaining Malibu's unique school system and want to be focusing on preserving local student enrollment and emphasizing an efficient use of existing school funding.'" To me, that's a little vague. When you say, "unique school system," I wanna learn a little bit more about what you mean by that. And then also, specifically, what do you wanna accomplish numbers-wise with the schools and how do you propose to get there?

OK, let's talk about why we need a school system first.

OK.

When you have a family that is saying, "Where do I wanna live?" Because what you're really saying when you have a family or you're going to have a family is, "Where do I wanna raise my children?" What's one of the first criteria? How good are the schools. And you can look at places like Arcadia or San Marino or Beverly Hills or Agoura Hills that have fairly good or excellent school systems. They attract families even if the housing prices are expensive because people go, "I'd rather put my child in a public school that's really good than have to pay for a private school somewhere else." So if we had really good schools, we'll attract the families that create the future of Malibu. You know, a city rolls over based upon people growing up in the town, coming back to the town, bringing their families back to the town, and if we don't have a good school system, we're not gonna have that seed that causes the city to maintain itself. Otherwise, we become a resort town with a bunch of rentals.

OK.

First criteria is: get a family-oriented school system that people wanna belong to. Now, we're in a unique situation. I understand we're the only school district in California that is separated in two parts.

Mmhmm.

How disconnected can you be? And we only have 1500-1200 students, I don't know what the final count is this year, it's hard to tell where we're gonna start with this year, especially now.

That's actually a very large private school. There are private schools in our area around here that are that size.

OK.

So we need to have a good school system for our little town with 12,000 people, we got 1,200 students and that becomes Malibu's school. As a city, on the city government side, we can't do a whole lot except be a cheerleader, provide support where we can, and help them where we can, because it's really up to the parents in the school district and the county school authority—I forget what the name is at the moment.

SMMUSD? Is that what you're talking about?

Uh, no it's the county supervisor of schools. And then there's the state superintendent of schools.

Got it.

It's out of our hands. But we can be an influencer and a supporter. So I think what we wanna do as city council is do everything we can to help the school district to become separated, be viable, and be the best school we can be. So yeah, we can't give 'em money necessarily but we can give 'em support and we can help with things.

So the answer to what you want to accomplish specifically would be ... help Malibu parents advocate for a fully-separated, like, basically going away from SMMUSD?

Absolutely, and do everything we can to make it happen. It's been going on way too long.

Yeah.

And kids are gonna graduate from this school system that were in first grade when we started talking about it.

Yeah?

And there's still not gonna be a separate school system.

Yeah. One issue I would have with that is that Malibu's schools population has been declining. So if you wanted to create a separate school district, that school district would be shrinking as it was created. Why do you think that the numbers are declining and do you have a way to address that?

Got two issues. First off, you've got the Woolsey Fire. And I'll just give you an easy example: they had a twelve-man football team in the high school. After the Woolsey Fire, it was an eight-man football team. That's how many students left in the high school—that you couldn't field a full football team.

Right.

Woolsey Fire caused that. So as we get houses being rebuilt and coming back, hopefully the families will return and that will help repopulate the schools. But also what I said before: if you've got a good school system, hate to use a phrase from baseball, but "if you build it, they will come." Yeah, I think we'll have the kids return. A quality school system brings quality students. People will wanna come here.

Yeah. Again, I think ... like we talked about, everybody in Malibu is gearing up for the next fire and so that the students will wanna come back just on if there are enough houses for students is really gonna depend on how we handle the natural disasters of the next few years, too. That's also something you can do on city council.

You've got it exactly right. Your job is ... the job for the city council, the sheriff's department, and everybody else, is not just to put the fire out, but to save the town.

Yeah.

You know, we're at high risk from about Malibu Canyon all the way to the 405 freeway. Parts of that haven't burned in about 27 years. We are so due for a fire in those areas, we have to realize that it's almost inevitable. We've got to save the town this next time.

Yeah. I agree. OK. I got one more question that's generally about your life in Malibu and then the rest are gonna be about your campaign and the race specifically. So this question is, uh, I think you already told me, but how long have you lived in Malibu, and do you think the quality of life in Malibu has gotten better or worse?

I lived a little bit over twenty years.

That's right.

Quality of life, to me, has not changed as much as maybe the attitudes changed. I think there's a little bit more—I don't wanna say "partisanship" because that implies Democratic, Republican—I think there's a little bit more divisiveness because I think people are becoming, as I call it, silo'd.

Hmm.

I will say though that since the last six to twelve months because of the COVID issue, we're having a different town right now because we've become a destination town more than ever. And parking – and for instance, this Labor Day Weekend – is going to be horrific. I'm already, as part of my Public Safety Commission role, I'm going to be out working with the sheriff's department and the CSOs trying to see if we got any traffic issues. Last weekend, Chris Foster who is the chairman was doing it. This week is my week. So, it's ...

Good luck! I hope you wear a mask and stay safe and everything.

But that's the biggest change and that, that will pass. Once we get COVID passed, once we have more options to get out of the house better, got schools and so forth, Malibu's life will return back to normal, which is only 12-15 million visitors per year.

Got it. I think it's interesting that you touched on ... I don't know how we would talk about – because you're right, I think "partisanship" implies Republican/Democrat – I think maybe "polarization" may be a better word in Malibu.

That's a much better word, I like that much better. I'd appreciate it if you used it instead of "partisanship," I couldn't think of a better word.

OK! We have a question about that and you, specifically ... I mean, not necessarily you, specifically, but city council, specifically, council members and city staff are more and more becoming targets of both national (so, from Mitch McConnell, FOX News) and then local disdain (uh, a lot of Facebook groups, just a lot of talk around town) and the tenor has just really changed in the past few years, at least, we think. Are you ready to field the level of scrutiny that council members can expect in the role?

Sure. That's, look, I got a thick skin. You know, if you do the right things and you've done the right job to do the right things, then you'll take the heat for your decision. You're not gonna please everybody. You just have to see if you can't build the most number of people that buy into the program and support it. Now, you're right about the polarization and the volume, but I think social media overamps the number of people that are really feeling this way. You look at the voting population of Malibu and there are people that are on social media and people that are not. We hear a lot – those of us that look at social media—we hear a lot of the same people shouting the same things. You have to ask yourself, does that speak for the entire population? I think a lot of the people that are on social media have valid issues. A lot of people have misunderstandings as to what they're talking about. Somebody told them this, and they think that's true, and so forth. You know, the old joke: "It must be true if it's on the Internet." There's a lot of that. So yeah, city council staff has caught a lot of gas. I don't know that it's all justified, some of it is. But it comes with the turf.

OK. Uh, something else that comes with the turf is ... like council member Mikke Pierson talks about this a lot, he's on the phone, especially with the short term rentals thing, he talked about it a lot, he's on the phone all the time with his constituents. City council just takes up a lot of your time, all hours of the day. This is a tough question because ... city council races tend to draw people who are older, who are retired, and who have enough money to put their time towards this. Can you afford to be a city council member and can you afford to run this race?

Yes.

OK. We were gonna ask, "What's your net worth?" You can answer that if you want, you don't have to, though.

Haha, I think that's an inappropriate question, but let's just say it's enough.

Alright! Sounds good. I'll cross that question off. We were considering it, but we decided not to. Alright, I have two more questions—

And by the way, I made sure that if I'm elected, when I'm elected, I have the time available to spend. I figure this is somewhere between a 30-50 hour week job, being a city council member, just because I know what it takes to be a public safety commissioner. And I know how I wanna run an office if I was a city council member. Yeah, it's a 30-50 hour week position. My joke is, I get no compensation for being a public safety commissioner, so I'm gonna become a city council member so I can make about \$2 an hour. Hoping to move up!

Got it. I'm glad you brought up your experience on the public safety commission. In your campaign video, you focused on your experienced leadership. But you're running against Rick Mullen, who is an incumbent, a former public safety commissioner, also a planning commissioner, a former VP of the Malibu Democratic Club, and basically, a lot of other candidates have experience, too, and in similar capacities to you. I think you, on your website, it says that you have kind of a business angle that you can bring to the race, but Steve Uhring also has business experience. What is making you different than all the other candidates?

Well, I don't know what Steve Uhring's experience is, so I have to defer to what you may know that I don't know. But in terms of what I bring, this, to me, is a big business. We have constituencies, we've got—call 'em customers if you wanna call it that—and we've got issues and agendas and capital expenditures and so forth. This is a big business. I'm used to running a big business. We have a 60 million dollar a year budget. Most of the people that are running on this campaign have experience in their own little niches. But I'm the only one that's actually run major businesses with budgets like this, staffs much larger than we have for city hall. I know what we're facing, I know what needs to be done to run an operation well and efficiently. So that's what I bring to the table. I don't know what Steve's background is—like I said, I don't wanna comment on it – but I think I'm the only person that's been a chief executive officer, chief operating officer, of any company. And I've also been on corporate boards. I'm the one that people usually have brought in, when you've got problems in a company, I'm the one you call, uh, I've got a history of turning things around, making it work, so, yeah, I think I'm the right person for the job.

Yeah, hmm. I would wanna push back a little bit and say, so I see your point for sure that your business experience definitely would really help, but at the same time, city council is not a business because there's a huge public service component to it, as well. In that way, it would differ from a really big company.

I think you're wrong there.

OK.

Let me correct you on that. If you think public service is different than running a business, I think that's a misstatement, because if you think about it, if you're Zoom, are you a big business because you're Zoom or do you provide a—and I'm using them because how many schools have suddenly become dependent on Zoom? That is a public safety, public service kind of a business right now. And it's no different than working for the city. We have to provide necessary

services. Let's say we were in property management as a business. Well, we've got fire protection, police protection to deal with, the same things you'd have if you were in property protection for a huge company, fire protection, police protection, safety of the tenants, so on. So yeah, it's got a different name on the door, but you still have constituencies that you have to work with and support and make sure they're taken care of and that's true whether or it's a business or you're in government. And people in government are quick to say, "Oh, we're not in a business." But you know what, if they wanted it to run well and satisfy the clients, who are the constituents, they'd run it like a business and make sure that they were satisfying the needs and requirements of the population. Not just saying, "Hey, we're a government, we can't do this."

OK. Thanks, Doug. I have one more question.

OK.

Let's see how we're doing on time.

We just need to make sure Paul gets his free moment, too. Oh, he's at 2:30!

Oh yeah, we got a lot of time. Yeah, and we've done this about forty five minutes and these run about forty five minutes to an hour. So we're doing very good. Um, easy question ... or maybe not an easy question, but. The question we're giving to everybody as the last question is: What do you think is the number one issue facing Malibu today and what are you gonna do in your first year in office to tackle it?

The biggest issue we have is the one that nobody's really talking about because they're all focused on, you know, what's important to an individual. Short term rental or how do we manage fire prevention or whatever the particular tactical issue is. The strategic issue we've got is how we're gonna pay our bills. We're in financial dire straits. And we made it through this year's budget by basically taking the icing off the cake, whatever you wanna call it. We've pulled every cheap trick out of the book to make sure this year worked. Next year, '21-'22 and '22-'23, are automatically gonna be very difficult times for the city. And people that talk about, "Oh, I wanna do this, oh, I wanna do that in city government," you don't have the money, can't pull it off. We're going to have to live within our means and it's going to be a tough 2-3 years guaranteed.

So for you the biggest issues is staying within the budget, staying within Malibu's needs?

Well, that and – you haven't seen my video that's gonna come out shortly, another video—and I call it Black Swans. Have you ever heard of Black Swan theory?

No, but I did see you mention it on your campaign website, I thought you were talking about the movie. Nope?

Nope. This is a longstanding business statement when you say, "It's a black swan event." The one-in-a-million event. How often do you see a black swan? Once in a million. And there are such things as black swans. They happen so infrequently, you go, "Oh, that's a black swan event." But in hindsight, you knew it was gonna happen. We've had the Woolsey Fire. We got

COVID. Now we're gonna have a budget crisis. Then, we've got potentially a natural disaster. We got four black swans coming in here. Just like a flock of 'em!

Got it.

That's what's impacting the city. It's not about, you know, making sure that there's a left-turn lane on PCH, a right turn lane on Trancas or whatever. Those are important but we're talking about the wellbeing of the city. And I'll give a quote from Zev Yaroslavsky from a few years back when he was still county supervisor. He told one of the then-mayors when the mayor said, "You know, we've got a nice reserve." I forget what the number was, but Yaroslavsky said, "You're just one natural disaster away from bankruptcy." If you think about what could happen to us in, say, another major fire. Say we lost East Malibu on the same level we lost West Malibu in the Woolsey Fire. Then it would impact probably our property taxes plus our sales taxes. We've got major risk coming up here and we need to be able to manage through that.

Yeah.

And by the way, that's the reason why I think somebody with my experience oughta be on the city council.