

We're asking everyone this: in five words or less, what is the theme of your campaign?

Environment, public safety and community, with emphasis on environment

Interesting. Definitely five words or less!

[Laughs]

Tell me about your history in Malibu. What prepares you to take on this role?

OK. Well, I came to Malibu in 1978 to attend Pepperdine and right away I got involved in the community. I mean, we weren't even a city yet. We didn't become a city until 1991. But we had a, some big storms that year and they were looking for student volunteers to go and help sandbag homes on the coast that were being affected by high tides and you know, tidal, you know, being inundated with flood water. So, I got involved in that and I met a bunch of like-minded people and we ended up starting an organization that went on to do other community service projects in Malibu, like, you know, removing graffiti and things like that along Malibu Canyon. We did other things but, um, we held events to raise money for different causes and so forth. You know, that goes back to when I was an 18-year-old and after school, I left and went back to where I grew up, eventually moved to Newport Beach. I ended up marrying a girl from Malibu, whose family was from Malibu. And her grandparents built a house here in 1953 and so we used to hang out a little bit--you know, we'd known each other a long time and so while I was up here in school, we used to come and get together and hang out at the grandparents' beach house. And then we ended up getting married! Many, many years later. And then I ended up moving back to Malibu. We were in Newport Beach, I owned a house there, and she didn't like it very well and she wanted to come back to Malibu. By that time, her parents were living in the house that the grandparents built on Malibu Road. So I said, "Well, sure, I love Malibu, let's go for it," and we moved back up here. We had a stopover in Calabasas because we couldn't afford to buy anything in Malibu when we were just starting out. Eventually, we got together enough income and whatever to buy a house and I've been here ever since and raised my family here. All the kids went through the public schools, all the way, elementary school, middle school, high school, and they've moved on now but they still come back often because we all have a soft place in our heart for Malibu. They still do, and two of them are surfers and, of course, that's a draw, right?

Mmhmm.

No surf in Pasadena.

Definitely not.

Yeah.

The end of that question was, what prepares you to take on this role?

Oh! Well, I think the fact that I've been here for so long and I've seen so many changes over the years, you know, I was here before we were a city and I think I have a really good sense, finger

on the pulse of what the community needs. And my emphasis like I said was on the environment and there's--people have been fighting for the environment in this town all the way back from when Rhoda May Rindge held off the railroad and the highway with armed posses. So people have been protecting the environment and I'm heavily, uh, invested in making sure that we protect the environment. I'm a big surfer and mountain biker. It's one of the reasons that I love this town. So, in terms of preparation, I mean, I've done work with the city. I was appointed to the parks and rec commission by Jefferson Wagner so I know my way around the city a little bit. I personally know many of the city council people that have gone before me and I think that between all that, I'm prepared to become a leader in the city.

On your website, it says that you manage the assets of a family trust to make money. Basically, can you walk me through that? What skills does that entail and how might they contribute to your strength as a candidate?

Right. Well, managing assets, we own investment real estate and other monetary assets. And you wear a lot of hats when you--it's like being a business manager but for one family. Which means you have to be good at a lot of different things, from property management to insurance or finance. Uh, you know, there's--I have a pretty diverse background which I think would lend itself well to the kinds of issues that would come up in the city and I'm comfortable around budgets and ,uh, and I'm also creative when it comes to finding solutions, which is another thing we'll get to, some of my ideas for funding things in this town that may not be, uh, necessarily need to come from the city coffers. We may be able to find different ways to fund some of the projects that we'd like to do but don't ever seem to have the funds to do, like the arts, for example. Recreation facilities, you know, always seem to end up on the cutting room floor.

OK. [Road noise.] Sorry. I'm interested in talking about that. I saw that on your website and I have some questions about it.

Sure.

But first I wanted to ask you a little bit more about your profile. You're one of three real estate agents or guys running in this race. How does understanding the real estate market in Malibu help you as a candidate?

Well, the first thing I wanna say is I'm not a real estate agent and I've never been a real estate agent.

OK.

Uh, I've never built anything in Malibu. So, I'm not a Realtor and I'm not a developer. I hold a real estate license because part of my job as managing assets involves leasing some of our properties and,, in some cases selling those properties or buying other properties, but it's always for our own account and not, uh, I don't provide real estate services for anybody other than ourselves, so, yeah, it's a big--I'd like to make the record clear that that's--that I'm not a Realtor or a developer.

Thank you for clarifying that. I was gonna ask you what you felt differentiated you from the other two Realtor-slash-developers, which are Andy and Paul, but I think now I'm just going to ask you: What do you think differentiates you from all the other candidates in general?

Oh boy, that's a good question. I think that my environmental focus is one thing. As I mentioned before, I think that it's the most important thing that we have to consider short-term and long-term for many reasons. We're up against climate change, which is affecting us right now. We've got sea level rise. You know, the sea level has already risen and it's already affecting beachfront properties. The earth is becoming warmer so it's affecting the brush and our hills, and as we've seen from the Woolsey Fire, is creating disastrous effects. And so, those things, I mean, if you think about--people are having a difficult time buying insurance, for example, because of sea level rise and because of the fire hazard. So, those are very real issues that we have to fi--whether or not we can do something about them immediately is another matter, but as something to consider, it's affecting us and we're gonna have to deal with the fallout from it one way or another. So that's, that's, that's one thing that I don't hear the others talking about too much. The other thing is, I have some creative ideas for both fundraising for the arts and recreation, as I mentioned, and also some creative ways that I think we can improve public safety. And one of the things I'd like to explore is trying to fix the--part of the issue of PCH, safety on PCH is that we have a lot of people that come through Malibu, tourists and people from out of town that come here for our beautiful beaches and our recreational activities and they're not always following our laws and its creating a problem for local residences. Ah--eh--residences--residences--residents! [Laughs]

I got what you were saying, don't worry.

Um, one of the things is, is you get a lot of people coming through on loud motorcycles and loud cars and so forth that think that PCH and the canyon are race tracks and this is their private canyon that they can come and break all of our speed laws and noise requirements and all those kind of things, and I think that there are ways we can reverse this, if we can send a message by providing enforcement and ticketing these people so that they know that it's not OK to come racing through Malibu on their cars and motorcycles. So, by addressing the noise issue, we can also slow down speeds. OK? We'll slow down speeds. We make it safer. There will be less, ah, pedestrian versus vehicle accidents and, and car versus motorcycle accidents and we can get people slowed down on the highway.

OK. I think definitely a lot of candidates agree with you. City council has definitely looked at tickets before and stuff like that. What about that idea, to you, is new or innovative?

What's new is we really haven't pushed the noise ordinance issue and the sheriff--I, I spoke with two of our local representatives, James Braden, and also, uh, Chuck Becerra, and I, I was giving them my ideas about this and they concurred or they, they acknowledged that the sheriff department has a training program where they can train their deputies to identify after-market exhaust on cars and motorcycles. So they don't--we don't have to go through noise traps and things like this that are cumbersome and expensive and whatever. If we can get teams of deputies out here on the weekends that are trained to identify after-market exhaust, they can,

we can issue expensive fix-it tickets that will send a message. And I think it can be, uh, at least revenue neutral if not revenue positive. We can make those tickets expensive, send a message, and the revenue would help pay for that additional enforcement.

[Continuous car horn] Man, I love being out here, but it's so loud. The good thing is the mic is actually extremely good, so it's going to catch everything.

Good.

Well, let's definitely get into that a little later. I also wanna talk about the arts thing, too.

OK.

Saw that on your website.

Yeah.

I wanna go back to your experience. You were on the parks and recs commission from 2008-2012. Let's talk about, just can you describe your record and what that experience taught you?

Sure. Um, one of the big things that happened while I was on the parks and rec commission is that we opened Trancas Park. And it was controversial from the very beginning, there were people that were very concerned that it would attract more people, attract some unhoused people that might end up using it as a place to sleep, uh, that there might be fires caused by people flicking cigarettes and things, which none of that really happened and it was something that we had to deal with, you know, a lot, to try to assure people that that wasn't gonna happen. And as it turns out, that hasn't happened. We don't have a big issue with the unhoused using that as a place. I don't know why. Maybe it's because they'd rather park on the PCH with an ocean view. I have no idea. But the other thing that happened that I was a part of was there was a big ridgeline that was a part of that project that was slated to be bulldozed and flattened so they could get more usable area for the park. And myself and others were adamantly against that happening. A) It's a beautiful ridgeline, B) There were some sensitive caves below it that would have been in jeopardy. It would have created a privacy issue for some of the homes down below. So, a group of us were successful in getting that changed and allowing that ridgeline to stay in place and I'm proud of that. And I didn't do it by myself, but I was involved because I was on the commission and I pushed that agenda along with others and there--we still have that beautiful ridgeline and, uh, so happy that it turned out the way that it did.

OK. What would you say your experience on the commission in general taught you?

Well, it taught me that sometimes the wheels of government turn slowly.

Mmhmm.

Some of the things that I worked on while I was on the commission still haven't come to fruition, like the skatepark.

Was gonna ask you about that!

You know, I was there at the beginning, working on plans for the skatepark with the person that then owned the land where the temporary skatepark is now.

Uh-huh.

You know, we had plans and reviewed plans and got input from the community and consultants and, you know, all those things you have to do to put forward a project like that. And, you know, we were very excited about it then. It was very, uh, even more, um, not--contentious is the wrong word, but it was--there were vocal community members that really wanted it to happen. There was a group of kids at that time that really wanted a place to skate and we had some world-class skaters here at the time that ended up moving because there was just, you know, we didn't have a facility for them. So, you know, it taught me that you can have a lot of great ideas but you have to, um, temper your expectations a little bit and realize that you're not gonna get everything done that you set out to get done. But that's OK because you've set it in motion and if it's a good idea, a good idea's a good idea. And now it looks like we're gonna have a permanent skate park. We got a temporary, we're gonna have a permanent skate park, it's not gonna be too much longer. I talked to the city manager. It sounds like the funds are lined up so it's gonna be a go, you know, eight years later. But it taught me that, look, I, you know, you have to let go of the idea that you're gonna come in and you're gonna put all of your ideas into effect while you're on the council. Not gonna happen.

I was gonna ask you about the timeline of that and how it took eight years for Malibu to get another skatepark after the original one closed. And I was gonna ask why you highlighted an effort on your website that I think outsiders might view as unsuccessful. Is that not how you see it?

No, I don't because I think this stuff takes time and it's much more complicated to get things done than people realize. You know, if you're out in the public and you say, "Well, we need a skate park and gosh, look at all this land around here! There's so many places we could put it and why is it taking so long?" All these things, but they don't necessarily understand all of the steps that, that you have to go through to get something approved and, like I said, it just doesn't, doesn't usually happen overnight. And I don't--I, I'm proud of the fact that we got the ball rolling and, uh, I look at it as a success because now, now it's finally happening. And some of the things that I'm gonna be weighing in on on this council won't happen maybe for another 10 years, but that's OK. You know, we have to start the process and we put our intentions, uh, in the direction that we think Malibu should go and we, we, we, uh, we will try to see what happens.

Yeah. Skatepark aside, your last elected position--or sorry, not elected position, but, I feel like, government position, like being on a commission, was eight years ago. Why are you running for city council now?

Well, uh, I am 61 years old and I still have the energy. I feel like I still have the energy to do it and my business is at a point where I've got it down to where I can spend about half my day on my business, so I have another half a day to spend on city council. So I have the, you know, I have the time to do it and I still have the energy to do it and I have the drive and the desire to make a positive change. That's why.

I feel like you can make a positive change on commissions, also. Why go straight to council as opposed to being--you know, there's a number of commissions you could be on. Why council?

Well, maybe nobody's wanted to appoint me to a commission! [Laughs] No, that's kind of a joke, but, uh, I think that, you know, the council is the big rodeo and that's where the rubber meets the road and the final decisions get made and I think I'm ready to be in that seat. And, uh, the commissions are great and I applaud everybody that's worked on a commission, the people that are on the commissions now are doing a terrific job. We've got some great people. I just, I also feel that I'm concerned that if, if the vote goes the other way, that our environment will suffer, you know, going back to what we talked about in the beginning, people have been trying since, you know, since the Rindges owned the property to, on one side, preserve it, and on the other side, exploit it. And you can follow that all the way through to cityhood when we decided to become a city because we wanted to stop sewers from coming in to stop, to stop over--over-commercial development of Malibu. I feel like we're at an inflection point where if things go the wrong way we could get a very pro-development council in, that could be very detrimental to Malibu. You know, the city owns four or five significant parcels of land that, you know, this commission--this city council will be, have the, uh, will decide with the help of the community what's gonna happen with those parcels. So I think if we have the right set of people, we'll hopefully end up with more open space and less improvement and still get some of the amenities that we want for us, for the citizens of Malibu, not for people visiting Malibu, not for out of town developers, ah, but for us. And that's what I wanna see.

You're less involved in city politics than almost all of your opponents. Do you feel you have the name recognition needed to win the election?

Yeah, I do. I've been here for a long time and all of my kids went through the public schools and you meet a lot of people over all those years, you know, 20-plus years of your kids going through the school system. I've volunteered, I've coached, I've been on commissions. I've, you know, worked for many years in the city with, ah, my, my lending business so I've met a lot of people through that. I think I know as many people in this town as anybody else does that's running, for sure.

OK. You also have two endorsements, Mikke Pierson and Patt Healy, who are two big names in town. Can you describe your relationship with both of them and what of your politics and views are shared with them?

Sure.

Yeah.

Yeah. Um, Mikke and I know each other for a long time. We've done a lot of outdoor activities together, so we both share a love of the environment. Um, he's an avid surfer and mountain biker and so am I and that's sort of how we met, through those activities. And in our years of knowing each other and being friends, we've had a lot of discussions about the issues that face Malibu and we're very, we're very aligned on most issues. So that's one of the--you know, I think that's the reason that he's endorsing me, he knows that my, that our platforms are aligned and what we want Malibu to look like in the future is the same. Patt Healy, I go back a long way with Patt. We are neighbors and we both work pretty hard on the, uh, Trancas County Mart remodel, trying to get that project reduced in size. It was originally slated to be almost twice as big as it ended up being. They wanted to develop the other lot on the other side of Trancas, the east side of Trancas Creek, the old Riders and Ropers site. And have that both be commercial development, that side and the site which is now the Trancas Country Market. And that was, that was something that Patt and I both fought against very hard and we got a lot of wins on that. We didn't win everything but that's the way this stuff goes. If nobody's out there trying, then the developers are gonna end up having their way on this stuff. So we ended up with a development that's half the size of what they wanted. We ended up with a lighting plan on that center that really toned down the lumens on the lighting so that it, uh, was much more in keeping with the Dark Sky Community. The neighborhood that is contiguous with the center, the Malibu West community, is a Dark Sky Community, we have no street lights, we ask that all the neighbors keep the outdoor lights to a minimum and cover--they don't shine up toward the sky, so that when we come home at night, we can look up and see the stars. And Patt and I worked hard--along with others--worked very hard to get that--along with others--to get that lighting plan through. Had the developer had their way, it probably would have looked something like a used car lot there with huge bright lights and four times more lights than what we have there now, so we feel that was a big win. She was also very instrumental in the Trancas Park and making sure that the ridgeline was not bulldozed. So, we worked together on those things and we were both on the Malibu West Homeowners Association Board together. So, we've known each other a long time and uh, you know, she can be a little controversial with certain issues but, uh, I think that Patt--You know, if it wasn't for people like Patt, Malibu could end up looking like Redondo Beach. And you know, people look at Patt and they, they think that she's extreme, but when you fight these projects, you're not gonna get 100 percent of what you want, so what ends up happening is you make compromise that is, is good--hopefully good--for everybody.

OK. On your website, you have options for voters to donate up to \$500 to your campaign. In a pandemic year, what exactly are you raising money for?

Oh, well, it's expensive to run a campaign. The newspaper advertising and the inserts and social media advertising, uh, we've got graphic artists to pay, uh--It's being spent very easily.

OK. Gonna move into some of the stuff on your platforms now. You describe the coastal commission as "public agency overreach" on your website. How do you characterize the relationship between the commission and the city? And if you were on council, how would you improve that relationship to achieve the city's goals?

Yeah. Well, I, I do characterize it as overreach along with the, ah, the MRCA, and I think we have to, uh, you know, we have to do it through communication and, and, and getting to know, uh, our, our counterparts in those organizations and developing relationships. Because we can't outspend them. You know, these are public agencies with basically unlimited budgets. So we have to be very careful on where we, you know, we have to choose our battles with them. And we've always had to do that as a city because we've got a finite budget and now, the budget's a bigger issue than ever so we can't jump into lawsuits whenever we feel like it, we have to be careful to, ah, to, to try to work with these agencies to get what we need out of the relationships. And by overreach, I believe that we are subjected to certain policies that infringe on homeowners, private homeowners rights, that are, you know, disregard, uh, disregard, you know, private property rights and I think it, uh, it's not a good thing. And we need to do what we can to push back.

OK. So what would those efforts to push back look like?

Well, I think we're gonna have to do it through communication and building relationships. We can jump up and down and rave all we want but that's not gonna do anything. Uh, you know, we can file lawsuits, but you know, that's expensive. So what are we left with? At the end of the day, we're left with, uh, lobbying efforts and creating relationships so that we can really understand where each other are coming from. And why we have a problem with the things we have a problem with. Others will say, "they don't care what we think," but if we don't try, we, you know, "nothing ventured, nothing gained" is what I always say. And I think it's, you know, it's important rather than to just assume that we can't gain any ground by talking. I don't believe that.

Going to the MRCA, specifically the plan to turn Malibu Bluffs Park into a campground. You wrote that if you were elected to city council, you would fight any attempt to do so. I think many in Malibu, including everyone on council, would agree with you on that, uh, on the fact that the campground is a bad idea. So how would your fight be different?

Oh, boy. You ask tough questions. [Laughs] Um, I'm not sure it will be different. I just pledged to continue the fight. In looking at prior agreements, the MRCA is already starting from a place that is much more, uh, a much softer stance than what they had before. Meaning they've already agreed to make it dry camping, no fires, and they've agreed to close the campground during our high winds season. So that's a good place to start. But my--I don't wanna see it happen at all. First of all, it's one of the last undeveloped coastal bluffs in Southern California, so I--you know, camping, it's nice to have something for foster kids to do that's just for them, although I think there's other creative ways that we can provide great experiences for them that don't include creating a bunch of hardscape and, and, building and lighting and restrooms and all those infrastructure things that you have to have even for a campground. I mean, you picture a campground as open space to pitch your tent, but you know, when you have a state run facility like that, it's gonna take a lot of infrastructure. Parking--you know, all the things I mentioned.

Yeah.

So I think at the end of the day, we gotta come up with a better solution to help this underprivileged group experience Malibu.

One of your endorsers, Mayor Mikke Pierson, voted in favor of that Charmlee/Malibu Bluffs trade in 2019. Are you familiar with what I'm talking about?

Yes.

OK. Do you agree with how he voted?

No. I don't. And you know, nor do I always agree with everything that Patt Healy is a proponent of either. Just because they're endorsing me doesn't mean we're stuck together like paper and glue. There are places we're going to have differences and I'm OK with that and I think they're OK with that, too. But there were other forces at play in that decision and I don't know whether in hindsight, Mikke thinks he made a good decision or not. But it is what it is. So--

OK. You wrote that you also have innovative ideas to battle against the "insidious and ever-worsening noise pollution in our city." I like all the adjectives. So this is kind of going back to the noise pollution stuff we talked about. Basically, what are some of these ideas, did you kind of already go over them?

Yeah, I, we talked about that, but it's really just goes back to enforcement. We can make a revenue neutral or revenue positive event out of this if we utilize these trained deputies and set up operations on the busy weekends to stop vehicles with after-market exhaust and give them very expensive fix-it tickets. And I think in a short period of time, we'll send a message that these guys aren't welcome to come through town with these loud vehicles. It's gonna be a domino effect; it's gonna help reduce speeds and increase safety. You know, the problem is, people get this after-market exhaust because it makes--I think a lot of them like the sound, which is sort of silly. But the other thing is it makes more horsepower and when they make more horsepower they tend to wanna use it. When they use the horsepower, they end up speeding. It leads to a dangerous situation that I think if we start to curb that--and by the way, other cities are doin' it. And doing it successfully. We just have to figure out the logistics of the enforcement piece of it. But I firmly believe that we can raise the money to do it with, uh, with the tickets. With the price of the tickets.

That'd be interesting to look at within the budget. And it would also be interesting with the short-term rental ordinance and seeing how that has gone through so many different, um, iterations--

Right.

—How this type of ordinance would also move through.

Right. Well, look, I don't think we need an ordinance. That's the beauty of this. The laws are already on the books. We have state laws against modified exhaust. It's already there. To me, it's one of the more simple things that I'm bringing forward because all it takes is, the training is already there for the sheriff's to get the training, the law's already there, all we gotta do is set up

enforcement, which is, you know, those guys know how to do that. We don't have to tell the sheriffs how to pull people over. They get that. So it's just a matter of: Am I right about being able to make it a revenue neutral or positive event? And if so, I think it's a no-brainer and we should be doing it, sorta like we do drunk driving stings periodically to get the drunk drivers off the road. And part of that is, you nail people at those events, the drunk driving, or whatever you call 'em, the DUI checks, but it also sends a message, doesn't it? Sort of, you know, a lot of people, it's gonna freak 'em out that at some point in time they could be coming through town and be subject to a stop and be checked, their sobriety be ascer--or whatever you--looked at, but also whether or not their car is registered properly, they've got a valid license, or they have any warrants out. I think that is super effective and I think this noise thing could be just along those same lines.

This is a bit off-script: don't you have a motorcycle?

I do.

Is it loud?

No, you know, I don't have crazy exhaust on it. I've got exhaust that comes with it. I putt around on my motorcycle and I really love it and I've, you know, it's a whole other thing that's unre--you know, people are not interested in hearing, but I've ridden over 30,000 miles on it. But it's a different kind of thing. A normal motorcycle from the factory is, you know, it has to meet all the same state noise standards that are on the books. It's gotta meet these noise ordinances. Otherwise, you can't sell them. So you know, normal cars and motorcycles aren't the problem. It's the guys that change the exhaust to make 'em really loud and then, and come whizzing through town. Everybody complains about it but I think there's a simple way to nip it in the bud.

A lot of your ideas, again, it's gonna have to do with: does it fit in the budget? The city manager is predicting there's gonna be a crisis in the budget next year.

Yeah.

Because of the economic downturn, the pandemic. Where would you propose to cut from the budget?

That's a good question. Unfortunately, what usually ends up happening is you're gonna cut staff and you're gonna cut programs that are non-essential. There's certain budget items that are fixed that we have to pay, but there are the things that we like to have as a city. You know, arts and recreation, like I mentioned are usually the ones that hit the cutting room floor when there's a budget problem. But one of the other things that I don't think we do well--we do the same thing in other areas, like we get the state and the county to pay for road improvements and other projects like this, so all that isn't coming out of our budget and I think we can do something similar with arts and recreation where we get, you know, public and private, uh, we set up partnerships like universities and museums and, you know that's what happens out in the real world. You get wealthy donors who have money that would like to see a performing arts center for example in Malibu. I just don't see that it would be that hard to go out and raise that money from the entertainment industry. We have more entertainment people per capita in this town than anywhere else in the world and we don't even have a movie theatre. I mean, to me, it's--I

just don't understand it. You know, it comes down to budget. But I just think we're not thinking creatively about how we fund this stuff and I think there's money out there. There's private money and foundations and grants and all kinds of other ways to get these things that we want funded and we're not, we just need a little creative thinking.

OK. I just wanna clarify, so in your community platform, you wrote that we had to work harder in the city to find more budget for arts and that you have a plan and that it's not to have screenings at the Jewish Center or at Bluffs Park now and then. Just to be clear, your plan is centered on private funding? Is this correct?

Well, I--uh, I would say, if we want a good performing arts center, we're not gonna be able to pay for it out of our city budget. We don't have the money, I mean, especially now and maybe never. I mean, those things are really expensive to get a center like that built. So that's what I mean, I think that we can go after private money to help us get those kinds of things funded and paid for.

OK. I think, and I might be mistaken, I think you're the only candidate who mentioned arts in their platform. I think so. I find it interesting because I feel like it *is* a low priority thing. There's a budget crisis looming and rising crime and stuff like that--I'm not sure, actually, that there is rising crime--

No, it's true.

--but there's rising homelessness. It's true?

It's true! Yeah.

Do you have numbers? Like how do you prove that?

Well, I can't--I mean, anecdotally, that's what I've heard.

OK.

I mean, I haven't studied it but I've heard from, uh, various neighborhood groups that the crime in their particular neighborhoods has gone up. And it may be not true for every neighborhood but I think there are some neighborhoods that that's true. I've got examples in my own neighborhood that I could point to, but I think that's a different conversation.

Yeah.

But I think that many people would agree that--and it's probably gotten worse with COVID, I think we have more people out here that weren't out here before. Many that are, uh, unhoused, that are, uh, have, have, have problems that, uh, you know, that, that, lead to bad things happening.

OK.

You know.

So let's say this is true. And you included arts in your platform.

Yeah. Why? Because I think--I'm tired of seeing the arts cut out of the budget because we can't afford it and I think we can afford it if we are creative and we go after private funding. Like I said, there's a ton of money out there. I think it really would not be that difficult. If Pepperdine can do it, if the local, you know, the museums in LA can do it, why can't we do it? There's tons of examples of, uh, you know, hospitals do it. I mean, they all raise funds to get things that they can't, wouldn't otherwise afford. You know? I mean, this isn't new news, but I don't understand why we're not pushing it forward in this way. To me, not to have a great performing or fine arts center and facility or even a movie theatre I think is just because of our lack of creativity of how to fund it and I think it's definitely, definitely doable. And I don't think we have to worry about whether we can afford it. We'll go find the money.

The last thing I'll say on that is, interesting one for the pandemic because you wouldn't be able to go to plays and movie theatres right now.

But it's not gonna last forever. Right?

Yeah, you're right.

I mean, let's plan for later on. Like we talked about, a lot of the stuff that we initiate won't be done even in my term. But someone's gotta start it. Let's bring these good ideas forward and get the ball rolling and eventually, you know, they'll come about.

OK. Going back to crime and the budget, would you consider cutting the sheriff's department budget? Do you think it's reasonable that Malibu increased it's sheriff's department budget when LA County decreased it?

I think it would be extremely unpopular to cut the sheriff's budget. I think in this town, public safety is probably the number one issue for people. Uh, part of that public safety is feeling safe, feeling safe! And having--part of the problem is, you know, a lot of the sheriff's time is spent enforcing the highway. And there's not enough, uh, left over to address, uh, the crime in neighborhoods and patrolling neighborhoods and responding to domestic situations. So no, I don't see cutting the sheriff's budget--I think again, we should look at creative ways that we might be able to, uh, have greater security for our residents. Maybe it's employing a security service neighborhood by neighborhood. Or perhaps the city can negotiate a great deal for the entire city and partially fund it and have it, you know, have it, the majority of it funded by the neighborhoods that wanna be included. The problem is sheriff's deputies are expensive. I heard the figure that each sheriff deputy costs \$250,000 a year. That's a lot of money. And they're talking about, you know, all in, you know, the salaries aren't \$200,000. It's the benefits package, insurance, vehicles, whatever that, you know--all in. So that's a lot of money and I think it's a lot less expensive to provide a lesser, uh, level of coverage but maybe it may be adequate. We're employing CSOs and VOPs, I don't know if you're familiar with those?

Yeah.

Yeah, so those services are going a long way in helping in enforcement in different ways, right? The VOPs are out writing parking tickets. I guess the CSOs are a level above them, can do a bit more, uh, in the way of traffic enforcement and things like that. That's a creative way to leverage the money that we have for law enforcement out here. I think there are other ways to do it as well, like I just mentioned.

OK. It's generally acknowledged in Malibu that the Woolsey Fire and it's response were mishandled. Do you agree?

Was mishandled?

Yeah.

Oh, of course. Yes.

OK. Who do you think was responsible for mishandling the Woolsey Fire?

Well, I think there's a lot of fingers that have been pointed and I think there's plenty of blame to go around. And I think that, uh, to try to pin it on one people or two people is unfair. I think it was an unfortunate incident that was, in a way, a black swan event. It was something that you can't be ready for. Because what happened is we had multiple fires in the state going on at the same time and a few of them started just before the Woolsey Fire started so we had a lot of resources that went to fight those fires. So we were left with very few resources. So that's something that is not easy to anticipate--*then*, certainly wouldn't have been able to anticipate. Did the city staff, uh, screw up? Of course, they did. There was very little communication. There was no coordination between the agencies that were in charge of, you know, the fire department, the sheriff's department, CalFire and all these agencies that had a hand in, in, in the response. So it ended up being chaos, of course. So there's plenty of blame. Lessons were learned. If you wanna hear about it, I can talk a little bit about the volunteer fire department.

Ah, I have a follow-up question, actually.

OK.

You just said lessons were learned. I saw that you wrote that on your website as well. You wrote, "there will be a next time and we must be certain to correct our past mistakes."

Right.

I'd like to hear some of your ideas to correct those mistakes.

Sure. Sure. Well, the communication is the big one. We have to have coordination between the agencies that respond to fires so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing, which is where one of the biggest problems was in the aftermath of the Woolsey Fire. I believe that that lesson has been learned. The other thing that, we--we don't, apparently still don't--I shouldn't say that, but some neighborhoods are working on it more diligently than others but in my neighborhood we have a volunteer fire brigade and I'm a part of that. I think if you, you know, at the end of the day, every homeowner has to ask themselves, what would I do if I knew that in the event of a fire, no one was coming to help me? What would I do? How would I get ready for that? And if you're not asking yourself that question, you're not gonna be prepared when the next Woolsey comes. Because you know what, we'll never have enough resources to come and save every house in Malibu. It just is not--it's not feasible. No matter how many firemen and how many fire engines, you know, nature doesn't care. You know, when the wind's blowin' that hard and the fire's comin', you know, sometimes those guys gotta get outta the way. So in our neighborhood, we've got a volunteer fire department which grew, uh, probably doubled in size after Woolsey. I think we're up to maybe 20 people now. We have our own, uh, equipment.

We've got fire hoses and we've got wrenches to turn on the fire hydrants and we have turnout coats and walkie-talkies and goggles and basically everything that we need if we choose to stay and fight the fire. The problem is is that the city can't advocate for that because of the liability. They can't tell people to stay in a fire and then, you know, have somebody die or be gravely harmed by smoke inhalation or whatever. They don't wanna be on the hook for that. But again, we need some creativity. For example, we have a retired fire chief that comes and trains us about every, you know, once a quarter or so, we'll hold trainings and we'll roll out the fire hoses and we'll go through our procedures on what to do in the event of a fire and all of our stations are numbered and we've got the boxes in each location with all the equipment and we know how to communicate with each other. I think--I don't know what the exact statistic is but something like 80% of the nations fire departments are volunteer. I think we need to figure out how we can integrate our volunteer fire departments with LA County and the city to make it so, you know, the city isn't taking liability but people are really ready and prepared.

OK. And you think city council is the place where you would be able to figure that out?

One way or another, if, if, you know, the city may have a difficult time taking an official position on that so maybe it's not something that would, you know, we could have an entity that is city-sponsored that comes to a vote in the city council, maybe not. But that doesn't mean that we can't work with other community leaders in--outside of the official role of a city council person to try to come up with a solution.

I wanted to just go back to--you said you wanted to improve communication with the city. Specifically, like, what does that look like?

Well, uh, I wanna see the city communicate better with residents and also the other agencies that are involved in a disaster. So we've fixed--I think we've done a pretty good job at now putting in place these disaster alerts that are routinely broadcasted via telephone by the city. So that was a lesson we learned which is actually one in practice. The other thing is we should probably keep our, you know, a back-up disaster facility, identify a location in Malibu to coordinate instead of having, like in the Woolsey Fire, you know, the communication center was moved to Santa Monica. I think we just didn't have enough city officials in Malibu directing these other agencies and coordinating with these other agencies. So I think maybe that was a mistake to move it out. It was a ready facility that was offered to us but in hindsight I think we lacked city staff that was able to stay in Malibu and help coordinate.

Um, you've called the parking situation on PCH "untenable." Most of the other candidates in the race agree and they've presented solutions. You wrote that you'd like to see us try some new methods and innovative ideas to control traffic. Can you tell me what these innovative ideas are?

Sure. Well, I said that I didn't think that what the city was doing had gone far enough. They brought forward an ordinance to limit overnight parking on PCH and stagger it--I'm talking about Zuma Beach and also Corral, two of the areas that are most impacted, a staggered parking where there's no parking on the ocean side from 2-4am and then on the other side of the street there's no parking from 2-4 so it forces people to not be able to fall asleep and stay overnight. It forces people to get up and not have to move their vehicles. But I don't think it really goes far enough. Plenty of people would be willing to juggle around that thing but part of it is the city is concerned about what they can get through the coastal commission. Coastal has to approve those signs that go up because--and I think that coastal commission feels like that you're restricting beach access if you're restricting parking. But I think safety has to come above, you

know, come before access. Why do you wanna give people access when it's dangerous? I don't understand it. I think that's something we have to work through, again going back to the communication and developing relationships with Coastal and MRCA and CalTrans and these other entities we have to interact with often on these kinds of decisions.

OK. You said you don't think it goes far enough, the 12-2, 2-4 thing?

Yeah, right.

I mean, how much farther do you wanna go, like parking meters or something?

Well, in certain areas, I wouldn't be against it. It's not my favorite option because I think they're environmentally not great. Not that they're--in and of--I mean, I think just from a visual standpoint, you know, pollution is a lot more than what comes out of a tailpipe. You've got view obstruction, which in some cases those might affect our views, noise pollution, light pollution. There's all these things that as an environmentalist I like to look at. I mean, I suppose no parking signs are--sort of do the same thing but there are fewer of them required. And parking meters you have to--I suppose there's pay stations. That's something to study. For that. But I think restricting overnight parking should go beyond 2-4, I think it should be 10-5 for example. There's a stretch along Westward Beach where there's no parking from 10pm-5am. I think that's, it's more restrictive and more effective.

OK. So when you wrote you would like to see us try some new methods and innovative ideas, you don't know what those are quite yet?

Well, no, I think, I think we should--by innovative, I guess that may be the wrong word, I would say things we haven't tried like--in many other cities, oversize vehicles are banned from parking on the city streets. You know if you've got a motorhome, those things are not supposed to be parked on city streets. They have hookups that are required for electricity, they have wastewater that can be dumped, which, there's some evidence out there that people have been dumping wastewater onto the side of the road and even in some cases over the cliff and onto the beach. So oversize vehicles should not be allowed to park, especially overnight. That's what RV parks are for. I'm told that sometimes our Malibu RV Park will have plenty of spaces open while they're all lined up along PCH looking for a free place to park. So I don't think we should allow it. It's a safety hazard from lots of angles, from you know, traffic standpoint, from an environmental hazard, to a blight on the views, on the ocean views.

Just to get super specific here, yeah, I agree, a lot of people think that PCH parking is an issue. Specifically, your solution that you would wanna look at is restricting oversize RV parking? Is that what it is?

Well, that's one thing. I mean, it's not just one thing. It's restricting the oversize parking.

OK.

Um, I believe that the, uh, in certain areas, parking on the inland side of Pacific Coast Highway should be banned because what happens is you get people darting back and forth across the highway where there's no crosswalk or signal. So I think that's a safety issue. And parking is tight and it's a problem, but again, I think that we can't put access ahead of safety. I think we have to put, I think we have to think of safety first, then access. If it's not safe, don't give 'em access! It doesn't seem like rocket science to me, I mean, you know, from time to time, people

get hit walking across the highway and, uh, we shouldn't have that. In certain areas, speed should be reduced. I think along the more dangerous stretches where parking is allowed on the highway then we should reduce those speeds. Maybe we should try to go down to 45 miles per hour instead of 50 and maybe it'll get people to slow down and maybe people will go down to 50 instead of 60. Post the speed at 45, you know?

OK. So the ideas are, ah, was it like a 10-5 ordinance, speed limit restrictions--

Ban oversize vehicles.

Oversize vehicles.

Right.

OK. I've understood you that these are the solutions.

I mean, the part, the homeless solution ties into it where we're gonna have to conform with *Martin v. Boise* and probably come up with a safe parking lot and a small shelter to, uh, to provide temporary shelter for the unhoused and it will help in many ways. It will help that parking issue along certain parts of Pacific Coast Highway. It will hopefully help the unhoused, which I think we should all be concerned with. And not just to the extent that they bother us because they're here and there are issues of hygiene and uh, uh, you know in some cases more crime and so forth. It's the fact that it's the moral--in my view--it's the moral and humane thing to do to try to help the homeless. By helping the homeless, we help ourselves, we help the rest of the community, too, right? We're getting them off of the highway and out of public land and into, uh, a facility where they can get help or move them on. So, you know, it gives us a tool. It's a tool basically for us to help them and help us.

OK. Let's check time. I got two more questions. all right, we're at a minute and nine so two more questions is gonna fit in perfect. Council members are becoming more and more targets of national and local disdain. Are you ready to field the level of scrutiny and sometimes hate that council members can expect in this role at this point?

Um, I think I am at this point. I believe so passionately in protecting what we have here that I'm willing to take abuse by people who would do the environment harm. And I think that's where the real rub is, is between environmentalists that wanna see our open space preserved and people who would like to or are OK with out of town developers coming in and building speculative projects and creating more parking lots and hardscape and things that go against our mission statement as a city.

OK. You wrote on your website that Malibu is uniquely positioned to influence the rest of the world. How so?

Well, uh, I think, and you could correct me if you think I'm wrong, I think everyone in the world knows Malibu. I mean, I've done a lot of traveling and I haven't been anywhere where people didn't know where Malibu was. I mean, within reason. We're internationally known for many reasons and, uh, we can, we should be leveraging that. We should be leveraging our notoriety to get certain environmental causes pushed forward. We can use our notoriety in the court of public opinion in the, uh, in, in gaining, in garnering help from other agencies and outside people that would, uh, would help us. And I don't think we're doing that effectively. We can be and we should be. It's sort of like why companies pick celebrities to pitch their products, right? Because

they're well-known and they know that if this celebrity is pitching their product that boy, we can believe that that's a good product. And I think we should apply that same logic to environmental causes. Why shouldn't we? To me, it's a no-brainer. We should absolutely be doing it. We'd be helping ourselves and helping the rest of the world.

OK. I actually have two questions. Well, one's a compound question. So I have three, technically.

[Laughs]

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?

Yeah.

Number one.

Number one, number one. Well, listen, I'm running as an environmentalist and I think that the environment is the number one problem that we have short-term and long-term. And I'll explain why. I think, you know, this council is going to be looking at what we do with these properties that the city owns. All these properties are open space. What are we gonna want that to look like? I think that the citizens of Malibu should weigh in on what they want but as a city council, we'll be there to guide the ship. We should be looking to our mission statement as the determining factor on how we go forward in using those assets that we have. What I mean by that is our mission statement says that we wanna maintain our rural character of Malibu and that we're willing to forgo certain conveniences and amenities in order to preserve open space and our way of life, which is our rural, maintaining our rural feel. And that, you know, I think that that is, it's a powerful statement and it's too often overlooked. People forget about that and they say, "We gotta have this and we gotta have that," you know? The town of Olentia has this thing and we don't have it. But go back to the mission statement. The mission statement says that we are obligated to maintain our rural character. So when those, when ideas come forward on what to do with those properties, the first thing we need to do is look at that mission statement. So that's why I'm saying that the environment is the number one issue. I don't think we can deal with the environment in a vacuum. Obviously, we have lots of other problems we have to be working on simultaneously. The budget's a big issue. Public safety, the traffic on PCH, uh, uh, you know, trying to keep our local small businesses going. There's tons of problems. But I think, to me, if we don't have our rural character, what do we got? The rest of it will be a footnote at the end of the day. Long-term, we're facing sea-level rise, we're facing a global, you know, climate change that's affecting our weather to the point where our droughts are becoming more severe, which is creating, uh, bigger fires. We talked about the fact that it's harder today to buy insurance. It comes down to practical stuff, too. There's also, you know, you're gonna start hearing a lot about something called planned retreat. Which is, uh, a process where cities, coastal cities, are being, uh, you know, are introducing this idea that maybe eventually these products, or properties along our coast can't exist anymore because of sea level rise and that, you know, eventually a big storm may come along, may wipe out some of these properties and we're gonna wake up and the coastal commission may say, "Well, you know what, the big mean high tide line is ten feet further in than it was 50 years ago, so I'm sorry, you're not gonna be able to rebuild that property." These are gonna be real issues for homeowners. We're a coastal city.

OK. And in your first year in office, to tackle it ...

Well, uh, listen, I think the first year in office, I'm pretty sure that there's gonna be agendized discussion about what to do with these properties that the city owns. So I hope and I pray that we get an environmentally leaning city council, meaning we have three or more people on the council that agree with our mission statement that we wanna maintain the rural character of our city and not increase hardscape and needless commercial development and we should be very, very careful about what we allow. We talked about a few things that the city should probably have. I'm passionate about the arts so I think there should be an arts facility. Everything else in my mind can be discussed, negotiated or otherwise bandied about, but whatever we do should be for the residents of Malibu. I think we have enough visitor-serving things for outside of Malibu.

I wanna think about how I wanna phrase the last question--I wanna know why Mark? Because yeah, you were on a commission, but you know, Rick Mullen's an incumbent, Steve Uhring, Doug Stewart, they're all on commissions. And then you feel strongly about the environment but Bruce Silverstein does too and feels strongly about development, but Andy Lyon also does. I think a lot of people in Malibu would agree with how you feel about certain, about almost all the issues in Malibu.

Right.

But so would a lot of the other candidates. So why should you be the person elected?

Well, I think I'm good at, uh, I have a lot of skills that will be, uh, will be helpful on the council. I'm a problem solver. What I do all day long in my business is solve problems and I can bring that expertise to the council and it's in a wide range of areas from, you know, finance to insurance to, uh, property management to, you know, a whole host of things. I think that I've got the right temperament to be able to work with others and build consensus. I have a strong environmental leaning but I'm also a consensus-builder and I think some of the other candidates that are running, quite frankly, can be divisive and not consensus-builders and not--and maybe are too single-minded about certain issues that face the city. And without getting too specific, from doing those interviews, you might, you know, you probably understand what I'm talking about. And I don't think we want divisiveness. I think we want a council that puts the mission statement first and then rolls its sleeves up and goes to work to solve the problems that face us. And I think I'm the guy to do that.

OK. Mark, I got a follow-up question if you want, but we can be done.

[Laughs]

You were endorsed by Mikke. I don't see you running as an outsider in the way that I would see maybe some of the other candidates we were talking about. Do you feel like a vote for you is a vote for the status quo? People who like the way Malibu's council is operating right now should vote for Mark Wetton? Or do you think things would change if you came in?

Uh, I am, I would hate to be viewed as a vote for the status quo. And it's been put out there on social media by sort of extreme factions that, "Oh, if you're not for firing the city manager and the city attorney, that you're a vote for the status quo," which I think is mis--what do you wanna say--not mischaracterizing, but I think it's inaccurate. You know, I'm running because I wanna make change. I am not for the status quo. I think, you know, we had a group of city councillors that were elected in the last couple of elections that were elected based on one issue, one or

two issues, and I think that many people are now disillusioned. That slate of candidates didn't live up to how they were advertised. I don't--I've always been the guy that is, you know, what you see is what you get. I'm not gonna change from who you're talkin' to now once I get on the council. I'm the same guy. But I don't think, I think there are a lot of things that can change about running the city and I hope to make those changes or at least be part of that change. But do it in a way that is not divisive, that is, uh, we can build a consensus on how to move forward and make the city staff better and more responsive and make the process better. Make fire preparedness better. Make public safety better. Get the amenities that Malibuites want all within the lens of sticking with our mission statement.

Mm.

And I don't think that's been done. I think the city council in the past has been pushed and pulled by different factions and I wanna be the one that stands up for the mission statement and is a champion for the environment. I want us to--move forward in that way.

I got no more! Don't worry!

OK [laughs].