

# CANDIDATES FORUM 2016

## CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' OPENING STATEMENTS:

**MIKE CLARK:** My wife and I have lived in San Luis Obispo for more than 20 years and I have been familiar with the city since I was a Cal Poly student in 1965. Over the years we came back for a week or two on many occasions. My career took me to many places but when the opportunity arose to move here permanently, we jumped at the chance. After decades of military service at the federal and state levels, I wanted to learn about local government. As part of that education, I volunteered for and served on two county grand juries, once as a foreman. It was a great start and led to an appointment on the County's Juvenile Justice Commission. That in turn led to our police department's Juvenile Diversion Program. I became more interested in city government and was impressed with the many residents who care about our charming small town and participate in keeping its history alive...and with those who care about our downtown and keeping it viable. I marveled at the resolve and tenacity of those living near Cal Poly and I was impressed overall at the level of resident involvement. However, over the past few years, I've noticed that residents' influence and interests are receiving reduced attention as Cal Poly, development and the tourist industry move to the forefront. I've watched residents go to council and commission meetings, explain their neighborhood problems, ask the issue to be agendaized and be rebuffed. I've seen neighbors explain adverse impacts from some aspect of a project on their neighborhood and be ignored by the council majority. It seems to me that in too many cases, neighborhoods' quality of life has become an after thought and that should not be. Through my education, my army career, and a variety of volunteer experiences, I've learned the value of critical thinking, how to evaluate multiple solutions, and the value of looking at several options. Unfortunately, our Council typically receives a single staff-advocated option and, as far as I can tell, never sees or considers other possibilities. I believe that my skills and experience are exactly what we need on our Council to ensure that residents are being listened to in a meaningful way and not simply being patronized. We elect council members to represent us, the residents of San Luis Obispo, and I will do my best to do so. I am not and will not be beholden to any organization or special interest groups, just residents. Thank you.

**AARON GOMEZ:** Hello, my name is Aaron Gomez. I was born and raised here in San Luis Obispo. I'm also a second generation owner of the Gold Concept, a jewelry store downtown. My grandma and my mom both grew up out in Edna Valley so I've been a part of this community all my life and have heard many stories passed down from generation to generation about this area. The whole reason I really wanted to get involved in this is because I very much care about this community, it's an amazing community; and as we continue to evolve, I want to make sure that we understand that sustainability is a key component in how we do that—it's a key component in how we evolve as a society, but where we have the most control is in our city. And so, that takes a lot of smart, dedicated, involved people, much like yourselves here, but I think it also takes a voice that we haven't heard. As you get older, you get more and more involved, but then there are a lot of people who don't understand that you can have a voice at any point in your life and that is extremely important as we move forward. We need to break down the size of just specific people being involved. I think we need to get more and more of the community involved. I understand that those voices matter and we want to create a collective voice. We can't just be arguing against one another. We have to figure out how to work together. So hopefully I can inspire more people to get involved.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** I am Christopher D. Lopez, and I'm a resident of the City of San Luis Obispo. This week has been a whirlwind of excitement for me. This past weekend my sister moved into the Cal Poly dorms and my entire family came to help her move in. And being the good child that I am and being that it was an emotional day for my mother and father, I offered to drive my parents back home to Clovis. And on the ride there, my mother mentioned to me, in fact she confessed, that my father and her had decided that they are going to move to San Luis Obispo by next summer. And low and behold, the excitement for me was enormous, knowing that my parents will be nearby, that I'm going to have Mom and Dad nearby. On the car ride, I began to think, you know, where are they going to live? What is the community going to be like near them? Are they going to have neighbors who keep them up until 5:00 a.m. and Mom and Dad are not going to get good rest? Or are they going to have good neighbors or bad neighbors? So, as I started thinking more about it, I started to get concerned. See and that's why this election is important and that's why this group is important. Because,

you see, this election is going to decide where the City of San Luis Obispo is going to be in the next 10 to 20 years. That's how important this election is which is why we need to elect representatives who are willing to listen and engage community groups and residents. Because it's that fundamental belief "E PLURIBUS UNUM." That out of many, one--that defines who we are. It's not one individual on the council or five individuals on the council that decide what the City of San Luis Obispo is. Rather it's each of them who want to be using your passion of being involved in the legislative process that decides who San Luis Obispo is today and who San Luis Obispo is going to be in the future. And that's why I'm running for City Council. I believe, and I know, that I can be your representative and I will effectively represent you. Thank you.

**ANDREA (ANDY) PEASE:** Thank you for having us here. RQN is a really important voice in our community and I appreciate your having an open forum and having all of us here tonight. I grew up in California. I went to school in Boston and then my husband and I moved back here to San Luis Obispo in 1997. We love it here. We have two teenage daughters. I'm a green built architect. I have a small business in town and a little office in the downtown. I have been in a lot of different organizations. I've been the founding board member for SLO Green Build and serve on the Central Coast Green Build Council now. I am on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce and serve on their Legislative Action Committee. Two years ago I was the co-chair for the campaign for Yes on Measure G which was the additional sales tax on our city which was passed overwhelmingly. It was a great experience and this is the perspective and experience I will bring to the City Council. You know we do have some challenges ahead. It's been about 10 months since I decided to run for Council and since then there have been many, many meetings and many, many pages read. And what I can say is, that as we move through these challenges, they are complicated, and we need all these voices and conversations. My priority is housing affordability, housing options, climate action, water security, and all of this within the context of a livable community for everyone, which includes neighborhood wellness. I'm confident we can address these challenges together working as a community.

**BRETT STICKLAND:** Howdy folks. Thanks for having me here tonight. It means a lot to see everyone come out and be engaged in the community. It's been a passion of mine, trying to get more people involved to demonstrate how much of an impact they can have in their local government. A little bit of background on me: I've lived in the county for 24 years and the city proper for the last 12. During that time, I worked 70 plus hours a week putting myself through both Cuesta and Cal Poly where I eventually graduated with honors. I am currently a project leader in an engineering firm. That position requires leadership, quick action under pressure, and problem solving in very complicated situations. These are all skills that will serve you well with me on the Council. I decided to enter public service here because San Luis Obispo deserves certain things, our residents deserve certain things. One of those things is having a council up there that is reflective of the community as a whole. At the moment, it's rather monochromatic. One of the things I've heard while talking to members of RQN is neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are important. One of the ways we build neighborhoods is by having working professionals and families be a part of those neighborhoods and they retain those individuals. Right now, those individuals don't have a voice, they have a very small voice—they are very outnumbered. And being able to have an individual up there that understands their concerns and who will make those changes necessary for them to be residents here and to be your neighbors, to strengthen our neighborhoods, to stop transient residents coming through, it is really important. And we need somebody who is going to listen. I have been there at council meetings, with the Rental Inspection Ordinance in particular, where we've listened to hours of testimony with people coming up and saying, "we don't want this," and the council majority trying to find a way to explain why they are doing it and continue on the same course. We need council members who will listen to the individual residents who live here in town. Thank you.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Good evening RQN members and thank you very much for hosting this event. My name is Mila Vujovich-La Barre. I've lived on the Central Coast since 1981 when I moved here to be with my ship captain husband. Since he was gone two weeks and then home two weeks, I threw myself not only into public school teaching (I have taught for 33 years) but also to solving problems. One of my strongest suits is bringing people together from all walks of life. When we had a problem with drug abuse, I helped start the County Friday Night Live with a lot of community leaders. When we needed to fund that program, I started the 24 hour Relay Challenge at San Luis High. When we wanted to have students become more involved in the community, I helped start the Mayor's Award for Community Service, both at San Luis Obispo High School and at Laguna. Right now, my collaboration skills, my communication skills, and long-term planning skills will best suit the city. There's a lot of challenges ahead and I'd like to preserve our small town quality of life while

maintaining fiscal responsibility. Recently when I was interviewed, I was asked a couple of times, people have asked, "What's the best part of San Luis Obispo." I have traveled all over the world and for some people it's the natural beauty but I say, it's the people. And one of the reasons why I want to serve on City Council is I'd like to make sure I'm an active voice for residents here in San Luis Obispo. We have some of the best and the brightest and I want to make sure that everybody is collaborating together to make sure we solve problems like with our water shortage and our epic drought, with affordability of our housing, with our traffic infrastructure, with dredging Laguna Lake, with securing more Class 1 bike lanes, and making sure that our county airport remains viable, along with a lot of other goals that I have. I'd like to work together as a listener, leader, and long-term planner. I'm really looking forward for this stage of my life where I can best serve the people these next four years as a city council member. Thank you.

## **MAYORAL CANDIDATES OPENING STATEMENTS:**

**HEIDI HARMON:** My name is Heidi Harmon and I'm here to be your next Mayor of San Luis Obispo. Thank you so much, first of all, not only for having me, but for having, honestly what I'm guessing, is the best candidate group that we've ever had. It's such a great room of people. This event tonight really speaks to what you're about. Quality, right? And neighborhoods. And that's what you're doing here tonight and I feel like everyone up here is interested in that in their own unique way and that they will be helping San Luis Obispo. I've lived here for 30 years, my whole adult life. I'm a Cal Poly graduate with Honors. I've done a lot in this town in the last 30 years. And Jan's going to talk about her experience, which is extensive. She's been on Council, off and on, for the last 20 years. I think in order to really understand what is important about experience is to really understand the job and what it is to be the Mayor of San Luis Obispo. And that is to be your voice. That is to amplify your voice and stand with you. To listen to the community and to stand with you and to amplify your voice to Staff. There is, I know, a lot of concern I know among this community in particular, but you are not alone in this, that staff has a lot of power in this city, as well as demonization of Staff. And I can tell you that Staff is very qualified and I am not interested in demonizing staff. But, if you are concerned about that, what you need to know is that it is up to us as a community to vote for a Council and a Mayor that has a backbone and not a wishbone about what this community can be. So I ask you for your vote for Mayor of San Luis Obispo.

**JAN MARX:** Good evening everyone. As a long time member of RQN, I always look forward to the Annual Dinner and tonight's no exception. I'm running for re-election because I'm passionate about serving the residents of the City of San Luis Obispo. Under my leadership, we have been recognized universally as a really quality place to live. But we cannot rest on our laurels. A city will always have problems and I'm the only candidate with the know-how, the experience, and a balanced perspective needed to deal with these problems effectively. I am not in the habit of making fake promises nor do I claim to be a mighty force of nature. But I do have a 12-year track record on Council of actually getting things done to protect the neighborhoods. Noise complaints have gone down steadily since I've been in office-there are still too many of them; blight has been reduced by the Neighborhood Services Program; I effectively lobbied to build more on-campus housing which in 2018 there will be 1,475 more beds. I don't think they're located in the right place but at least it's more on-campus housing. I've continued to put pressure on Cal Poly to build more dorms and they just initiated the next round, slated to add 1,800 more beds by about 2020, which is really good news. The Neighborhood Civility Project has won an international prize as a way to change the student culture and I spearheaded funding a new park in our neighborhood, fulfilling a 40-year city promise. During my next term, I will fulfill and support senior and workforce housing in new neighborhoods, and, where it's appropriate, in the downtown, strengthen neighborhood wellness, and evaluate the Rental Inspection program to determine if there are unintended consequences to permanent residents. It's very important in the future for people who put down roots in this community to live in a safe home. I am a proven strong supporter for the established neighborhoods on Council, so vote Jan Marx for Mayor.

## **QUESTION #1: WHAT IS IT ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO STAY HERE AND WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO'S FUTURE.**

**MIKE CLARK:** There are so many answers to that question, I'll just have to give it a shot. What makes San Luis Obispo such a great place is not only the beauty of the surrounding beauty of the hillsides that we have, but is, in fact, the people, as was mentioned before. I grew up in a large city up in the Bay area. My wife grew

up in a small town in rural Indiana, about the size of San Luis Obispo. I lived in a small town in Maryland for about 3 years, smaller than San Luis Obispo. But both my wife and I have lived in big cities. We lived in San Diego, several cities in the Bay area, we've lived in Long Beach, and we've lived in Cerritos. When we decided to live here, we did it on purpose. We had been to places we did not want to live. We didn't like the traffic, we didn't like the tall buildings and we didn't like the hustle and bustle. We liked quiet San Luis Obispo. So I guess, I'd have to say my vision for San Luis Obispo would be, I know it's going to change, everything changes gradually, but I don't think we should be racing into the future, eager to build more buildings, more houses, and all that without very carefully considering the consequences, because once we've made an error, if it turns out to be an error, you cannot undo that. You can't go back and tear down those houses, you're not going to knock down that 35 foot tall building. San Luis Obispo is unique and I will do everything I can to keep it that way, recognizing that there is going to be some slow growth but that it should be kept well within the 1% target that we have. Thank you.

**AARON GOMEZ:** What I love about San Luis Obispo is the way of life. I was born and raised here so I have been able to see it and live it very up close. I have lived elsewhere throughout California and other areas. I've lived in smaller areas, I've lived in bigger cities, and lived in other places around the world but I always come back here because it is an amazing place. You get to know a lot of people here and you get to have conversations with people here that care. The big issue I see moving forward is that we are starting to lose that way of life. Some people may not think we may not be or may be thinking we are losing it in a certain aspect. The people who are really thinking we are losing that way of life is the average worker in San Luis Obispo. I have friends, a lot of which have now moved to Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Paso Robles, all because that is the only places they can afford to go. And that is a major issue. These are families, these are our workforce. And when you do that to a community, it's no longer the community which you were brought up in. My dad was able to raise me and my family with a stay-at-home mom, based on the same job I have currently. There is absolutely zero way I could do that and be able to afford a home. It's impossible. So, we need to make some major inroads on figuring out what the data is, what the true issues are. It's not one single issue, it's a multitude of them and we're going to have to figure that out.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** The thing I love most about San Luis Obispo is the community. You see, I grew up in a town called Clovis, California--in the outskirts-- lived on a ranch. And everything I needed was virtually in my backyard, plus a few friends I met at school, and one or two neighbors down the road. So growing up, I never really had that sense of community or that I was part of a community. That didn't happen until September of 2012 when I moved to the City of San Luis Obispo to pursue higher education. Immediately I fell in love with the community, the people, and the surroundings. I think San Luis Obispo is an amazing place and we need to continue to be proactive to preserve it in the future. The vision I have for the City of San Luis Obispo is to make housing more affordable than it is today. Where neighbors and town gown relations are improved tomorrow, compared to what they are today. Relationships where we don't have neighbors keeping us up until 5:00 a.m., where we have students who care about the relationships they have with their neighbors, and a vision for the city of San Luis Obispo prosperous where we have an even a stronger economy than we do today. I think if we can keep this as our vision, the City of San Luis Obispo will be successful not just for the next 10 to 20 years but for more generations to come. This is where I see my children growing up and I think it's a vision for San Luis Obispo—I'm looking years and years out—and I hope they get to experience everything, as I am experiencing today.

**ANDY PEASE:** One of the things I love most about San Luis Obispo is the people and the level of engagement. People feel ownership and participation and empowerment by participating in decision-making. That's critical for me. I'd like to have more of that. I'd like for the folks new to this town to feel that same ownership and engagement. My vision for the city is one of balance--sustainable to the bottom line so that we know that we need to have an economy that is healthy, that businesses succeed, and employees thrive. We can have all that as well as protect our open spaces and our precious resources, including water, and a livable community on top of all of that, so that we have community relations where we connect with each other, a community that is inclusive, and yet but that will be able to improve the affordability of housing for those folks who work in town but are unable to live in town. I think we can bring all that together and have a great quality of life and a wonderful place to live.

**BRETT STRICKLAND:** What about SLO makes me want to stay? I think every single one of you know that

answer—that's why you're here. San Luis Obispo is safe, it's beautiful, the people are friendly, you can't walk down the street without people saying hello and asking you how your day has been. It's a really special place where we live. Personally, I never considered living anywhere else. San Luis Obispo has spoiled me—it has set my standards too high. If I go anywhere else, I find fault with every other place I look at. I didn't choose Cal Poly because it was a great school. I chose Cal Poly because it's in San Luis Obispo. My vision for the city going forward has to do with community cohesion. It's very much in line with building quality neighborhoods with having a diverse background for those neighborhoods. Nobody wants to live in a monochromatic society. As part of that, I use my neighborhood as a model for it. I live over in the De Tolosa Ranch apartment complex. Over there we have a mixture of students, working professionals, retirees, families, and it's a great place to live and work right now, where everybody is very respectful, and when you have that diversity and that mixture going on, you don't have the problems that you have in heavily impacted student areas because they feel they can get away with more because they have just student neighbors. But because we have that nice mix, everybody is more conscious of who's around them and what's going on.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Thank you very much. Why I stay here? I love this town. I'm a Southern California transplant and I have been, like many of you, in traffic jams where you'll go about 10 miles and it will take you 30 minutes. I never want to have a San Luis Obispo like that. The ease of lifestyle here is one of the issues with regard traffic infrastructure, walk-ability, bike-ability, and also the open space, and the view sheds. I will defend public view sheds and open space. I am proud to say that I'm the only City Council candidate who was endorsed by the Sierra Club because of my long history of defending everything that I believe in. As far as my vision for the future, I really think that we need to make sure that we build only if there is the availability of quality water for the blueprint that the city currently has. I am very much adamant that we stay within the 150 foot line as far as building. In addition to that, I think we should protect our viable Ag land that we have in town here or surrounding the town. I would love to make sure that we welcome a vibrant cultural life where I've seen a huge increase in the arts, the music, and the restaurants, and it's absolutely fabulous. In addition to that, with the closure of Diablo that is going to rock our local school districts, I'd like to do everything in my power to make sure that our schools remain strong and that they continue to be supported by the community. Thank you.

**HEIDI HARMON:** So I stay here because pretty much everyone I love lives here. I've grown up here. I came here as a teenager to go to Cal Poly and have stayed the whole time. I had my kids here and raised my family here. I love this place and I love the people in it. But this question reminds me that there are a lot of people not in this room because they have already left. I know this, having spent time with you (addressing Linda White in the audience), and spent a lot of time with the people in this room, that there are a lot of people getting ready to leave. I'm thinking of Terry and Vicki, if you know them, formerly on Slack Street, great wonderful people who have already left. And so we are definitely at a crossroads. And while I am still here, and we all in this room are still here, we recognize that this is a very essential moment and that this election is a very essential reflection in terms of who stays here and who doesn't and who has already left, and who is being pushed out. And I'm here to represent those folks that aren't in this room, that I have spent a lot of time talking with and am bringing into this conversation, since they can't be here, because they have already been pushed out. And as far as my vision, this term is very important to me, and to this city, and this is a term that comes up a lot, "what's missing" in the city, in terms of what's missing in the leadership of this city. We can't be a city of vision, on sustainability, on community engagement, on all of these issues that are essential to all of us. It takes visionary leadership to do that.

**JAN MARX:** Thank you. What do I love about San Luis Obispo. I tell you every time I leave town, when I come back I think, wow, it's not too bad to live in San Luis Obispo. I feel many people here have already said the things that are really important to me. We basically have maybe zero degrees of separation, maybe one degree of separation. It's just amazing all the different ways we relate in this community and I think that's one of the reasons we treat each other so well compared to other communities, because we know that people are not disposable. People are not just one function type encounter, people are going to be there, in grocery store lines, everywhere you go, you know, like at soccer games. Like everyone else, we raised our kids here, we are raising our two grandchildren now we have in our home. I care very much about the community. I've worked really hard over the years to bring the environmental community and the business community together so that we can all work together toward a sustainable San Luis Obispo. I'm interested in the vision the community has and that we have collectively put together over the years which is the General Plan and all the other Plans that

we have put together, like the Neighborhood Civility Report. I'm not interested in my individual vision. It's the collective vision of everyone together in San Luis Obispo.

**QUESTION #2: A BIG ISSUE IN SOME NEIGHBORHOODS IS NOISE AND YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD A LOT ABOUT THAT FROM RESIDENTS HERE TONIGHT AS WELL AS OTHER RESIDENTS. THE NUMBER OF NOISE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAVE GONE DOWN BUT THERE ARE STILL APPROXIMATELY 1,800 NOISE CALLS A YEAR. DOES THIS CONCERN YOU, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO LOWER THE NUMBER OF CALLS, AND DO YOU HAVE A GOAL NUMBER IN MIND—HOW MANY WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU IN THIS CITY?**

**AARON GOMEZ:** That's a really good question. To me the biggest issue that we have is that we really want to narrow in on the specific cause of noise complaints, and the biggest issue is the individuals that we have populated in very specific areas. We've all talked about it. The student population has grown significantly in certain areas and those are generally the population you are talking about that help produce the noise. So there are ways that we can change that demographic. Getting students out of old-time neighborhoods that are full of everybody here. That's the biggest issue. I could tell you a number that I would like to get it down to and it's really just making something up. There's not a single number that's going to be acceptable, if it's not acceptable to the neighbors. That's who it has to be acceptable for. I don't live in a neighborhood with noise problems. I have college students there but they are very quiet—I think they are very studious based on the inventions they have in their garage. They're just not of that same type. So, it's very specific on what type of person that we're dealing with. If we could break them all up, that would be great. Then you would spread them out—and you won't have that congregation of that very specific type of very specific interests. Pushing for more housing on Cal Poly—that's the goal—getting them into student developments that aren't next door to everyday people—some with five or six people—that's a goal.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** So I definitely think it's concerning that we have over 1,800 noise calls per year, that's roughly 4-5 phone calls a day of loud noise violations. So that is very concerning and one of the visions I have is to narrow it down so that we only have about 720 calls a year. If we could narrow that down to about half that would be amazing. So how do we do that? I believe one of the ways is building more on campus housing for students would be a great way to reduce noise calls in our community but that will take a long time—especially with Cal Poly's Master Plan and future use of public-private partnerships, it's going to take at least 8 years to continue building more housing on campus and then we can house more students on campus. So what we need to do right now to start with, what can we do today? We can start with the Student Community Liaison Committee. I believe by revamping and recreating this committee, we can actually create a committee that will work toward getting this problem solved. Right now the committee includes student individuals that most of you would consider good neighbors, right? I know you guys know who the good neighbors are and who the bad neighbors are. Good neighbors are the ones involved in the community, the ones who are involved in finding a solution. What we need to figure out is how can we target the bad neighbors—I know you know who they are. How can we target them, work with them, and get them to sit down at the table. I am confident that I'm the only candidate who will get these bad neighbors to sit down. If we can target them, then we can hopefully figure out what we can do to find a solution. And it starts by revamping the committee and creating a task force focused on finding a solution to this problem.

**ANDY PEASE:** I agree that there are too many complaints and a long-term plan to have more students on campus and to have more rental options in general outside of our established neighborhoods and new homes as well so we can take the pressure off of our older neighborhoods so that they can have more families again. Because I think it's that critical mass—a tipping point. So if you have a few neighbors who are students, you can communicate with each other effectively and be a neighborhood still. It's just when it hits critical mass. And there does seem to be an increased concentration close to campus. So when I talk to folks in other neighborhoods, maybe over in the Arbors or some of the neighborhoods in Laguna Lake on the further side of Oceanaire, they feel like families are moving back to town, not as many students. Even though there are the same number of students that live in the city since the 70's, it's the same number of students, but they seem to be congregating closer and closer to the campus. And some of this may be because it's more competitive since some of these students and their families are more affluent and they are buying closer to the campus and can pay more money for housing. So I think there are long-term options we need to look at and we need to talk

with the students more and organize that and continue with the good renter certification program and the terrific work of our police force to continue building relationships.

**BRETT STRICKLAND:** This issue actually hits close to home to me. As I mentioned earlier, I worked my way through school and most of the time I worked 70 hours plus a week. I used to live over off Murray in an apartment complex. I'd have people throwing parties above me on Wednesday night until 3:00 in the morning and I had to be at work at 5:00. Again, this is an issue I can sympathize with and empathize with, as I've been through it—I've lived it. It's a real issue and I will tell you that I will try to address it. I agree with some of the others candidates up here who have said we need to reduce student concentrations in the city. I want to mention my community cohesion answer—it's when you have a large concentration of people that have similar views—especially with the student population—they feel they can get away with more because they are surrounded by like-minded individuals. So breaking up those student concentrations is paramount. I believe that the city should try to work with Cal Poly as well, because currently all students face from noise violations are financial and with many students at Cal Poly (not necessarily finances being their #1 concern, whether their parents are paying for it or financial aid) that doesn't necessarily hit home for them in the same way it would to a working professional that would take food out of their mouths. I think we should work with Cal Poly to find a way to have actual repercussions on campus for them should they have a certain number of noise complaints in the city. If you impact their academic career, the whole reason why they are here, that would have a more actual impact—that might give them pause before they make their decisions.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Thank you very much. I know for RQN, the noise complaints has been a significant concern. I would like to see them go down—half would be lovely—within the next year or two and one of the stepping stones will be education—making sure the students are educated; making sure we have buy in from the landlords, making sure that the police department is aware that the majority of the public would like to see those students fined. Very often people call in and the police arrive but it is rare that fine is written and that they don't have a financial repercussion or an academic or professional repercussion for those fines. In addition to that, the noise calls are a concern for me as a city council person because that means the police are being taken away from dealing with more serious crimes. Very often the alcohol infused parties are also linked to sexual assaults, also linked to sometimes property damage, people urinating in public, people littering, so it's not just the noise that some of the RQN people and some of the residents are concerned about. I really see again that working with the police department and working with the landlords as a way to combat this problem. I think that a lot of students, if they feel like they are part of this community, are going to be more willing again to be good neighbors. I think that is going to come with working with groups and volunteers in the community, working with student leaders, working with students themselves, and working with residents from all different cross-sections of the community, knowing that we just don't want to be punitive but that we want to live together and have this be the best place it can be.

**HEIDI HARMON:** So I think so much of this isn't about noise or about ordinances but it's about relationships. Ordinances are really important, and they have to be there, we acknowledge that. But they can't replace the essential importance of building relationships with your community. And I think this takes people at the City Council level to start those conversations, to facilitate those conversations and to support those conversations. I think that's really important. You're never going to ordinance your way into a better neighborhood. You have to build those. It takes a lot of heavy lifting and a lot of community commitment and a lot of community building skills to do that. I think it also absolutely takes holding Cal Poly accountable for the amount of students. From my understanding, I'm the only candidate up here who is actually talking about capping the number of students at Cal Poly. Because after I investigate what's going on in some of these neighborhoods, this seems like one of the potential solution pieces that we need to be talking about. And so without that, how will we ever address these neighborhood issues? Also, the police, which have come up a couple of times. I'm sure you're well aware that Cal Poly does not financially contribute to supporting our local police force. If they were held financially accountable for some of these interactions (much of our police is spent on dealing or interacting with these noise complaints, etc.), wouldn't they take a more meaningful role. These are the questions we need to be asking and the leadership that we need.

**JAN MARX:** Well, I agree that there are far too many noise complaints. I have to say we live right there on Albert Drive so we are ground zero with some of the parties that go on. But we do get along with our student

neighbors by and large. I think that the point that needs to be made is that Alta Vista, where I live, with a parking district, with also a neighborhood association, is doing the right thing by handing out fliers to the student residences and also contacting the people directly, trying to make those human relationships as strong as possible. But I have to say that it's really the large parties that drive us crazy. It's not just somebody with a loud voice. It's 600 people celebrating Caesar Chavez Day next door, that kind of thing--these out of control parties. I'm in favor of getting a Greek Row on campus—moving as many of the fraternities, sororities, and satellite houses onto campus and I've negotiated with the President about that and he's in favor. I also want to say that I've worked with Cal Poly to make sure that there are academic consequences for off-campus behavior. That system exists right now—people may not be aware of that. But that is a new initiative. In terms of putting a cap on student enrollment, that's up to the CSU, that's up to Cal Poly, not up to us.

**MIKE CLARK:** Noise. I think maybe four, five, maybe six years ago, the city was very pumped up on a book called "Thrive" by Dan Buettner, and I finally got it and read through it--the part that pertains to San Luis Obispo. And he talked about noise and he said humans do not adapt well to noise. And the more noise you hear, the less happy you are. I think all of us can agree with that conclusion, I certainly can. The noise that we're forced to tolerate is the result of bad behavior. If I had a power mower, which I don't, and I fired it up at 2 o'clock in the morning and ran it around my yard, somebody would complain about that, a police officer would show up and I would be getting a citation and told to put that lawn mower away. We know that's the case. What we're dealing with here is the lack of effective enforcement, would be the way I say it. It starts with the city council, then flows down to the city manager, and then flows down to the police chief, and then the police chief gives direction to the police officers. I doubt very much that, with many of the police officers driving through neighborhoods looking for noise complaints with their windows rolled up and can't find it, I doubt they would tolerate that next door to them if they were home in whatever city they live in, other than San Luis Obispo. There's no reason for us to have to tolerate that noise. To me, the ideal answer for noise is, while I can't give you a number, when a noise complaint is made, a police officer shows up, that noise should disappear in moments. We've done it before during Mardi Gras, we've done it before during WOW week, etc. The best defense we saw in our neighborhood, when making a noise complaint, was when a Ventura Department Sheriff's Department officer showed up and the noise stopped.

**QUESTION #3: WE'VE TALKED ABOUT HOW CAL POLY NEEDS TO BUILD MORE ON-CAMPUS HOUSING AND WE ALL PROBABLY AGREE WITH THAT BUT IT'S REALLY UP TO OUR LEADERS TO TAKE A STAND TO CAL POLY ABOUT THAT ISSUE. SO THE QUESTION IS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES LIVING IN NEIGHBORHOODS AND WHAT WOULD YOU DIRECTLY DO TO FORCE CAL POLY TO BUILD MORE ON-CAMPUS HOUSING—HOW WOULD YOU GET THEM TO DO THAT BESIDES JUST TELLING THEM THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT?**

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** So the answer really lies in how do we get more families in neighborhoods. That's why bringing up the number of the units in homes and apartments in our community and how do we do that? It's a complex question and I know the question asks for how are we going to take a stand to Cal Poly and encourage them to build more housing. You see, that's the flaw in the question itself. It's not by taking a stand to Cal Poly but it's taking a stand to the Chancellor's Office. They're the ones that actually have a voice and have decision power in figuring out what's going to happen on campus. So what will I directly do? If elected, I will personally go down to the Chancellor's office on my own dime and not leave until we have a discussion about what is going to happen in our community. Many of the reasons that the Chancellor's office and the CSU doesn't take into consideration what is happening at Cal Poly is they look at it with a perspective of what is happening across campuses throughout all CSU's. What they fail to acknowledge with the city and Cal Poly is how it is unique here. There is no other community college relationship that is exactly the same as our current situation with Cal Poly. Which is why Chancellor's Office and CSU Chancellor White needs to sit down with the City of San Luis Obispo's local government leaders and figure out how are we going to solve the issues and the housing prices in our community. And that's how we're going to create more housing to be available for our local families and friends that we have in San Luis Obispo. It's by working with the Chancellor's Office because Cal Poly can only do so much on it's own. The decision really comes down to what Chancellor White can do for us.

**ANDY PEASE:** So Cal Poly has a Master Plan. They've spent a couple of years developing it, approximately

one gazillion outreach meetings. They've had a whole lot of input. They have an Environmental Impact Report on it now and it will be up for comment. ***(Tapes were turned over here and the remaining answer by Andy was not taped)***

***HEIDI HARMON: ...beginning of this answer was not taped.*** It can happen and it will happen here if we stand together. And seriously, I love Cal Poly. I'm a graduate and I'm sure many of you here in this room are graduates or were professors there and benefited greatly and it's not about demonizing Cal Poly. But it is about recognizing that if we do not re-establish the balance in this community, we will not be able to build neighborhoods. We will not be able to build long-lasting community bonds. And this is what this group is about and you are not alone. There are a lot of folks out there from all ages and all demographics who are struggling with recognizing that this is the essential problem here in this community. Young people, young families, like you, are wanting the opportunity to set down real roots here in San Luis Obispo but they do not have that opportunity. You will never hear that we have a student housing crisis. Right? That's never the issue and that is important to recognize. We have a very specific housing crisis here. It's the housing crisis of the people who really want to live here, young people, young families, young professionals, and that is something we can only go back to the source of the problem which really does involve Cal Poly.

***JAN MARX:*** Thank you. Well how I would convince Cal Poly to build more on campus housing, I'm also going to talk about how I have really influenced them over the years with direct conversations with the administration. I asked a question of Jeffrey Armstrong, "how are the grade point averages of the students living on campus compared with the students living off campus?" They did a study. They found that actually students living on campus do a lot better than the ones living off campus and all of a sudden they are starting to talk about student excellence and residential education. It's not just getting them out of our neighborhoods. That is the direction that I have really encouraged them. I have had experience as the Assistant Dean of Students for Graduate Student Housing at Stanford University and Dean of Students at Scripps College. I have talked with Armstrong and also with City Management about actually purchasing homes in the established neighborhoods and renting them out to their faculty and staff. That's what we need—we need those permanent residents in those established neighborhoods to rehabilitate them. I think we also need to build new neighborhoods and have affordable and workforce housing in the annexation areas and increase the number of housing units available so we are not overwhelmed by the majority of students—not just with Cal Poly but we also have Cuesta students, a lot of them. So I do think this city has to grow in the southerly part of the city.

***MIKE CLARK:*** When I came to Cal Poly in 1965, I don't know how many students were living in the City of San Luis Obispo or how big the city was at that time but I think it was inconsequential. Not many of us went downtown, there wasn't really a reason to—that's kind of sad. Over the years since then, Cal Poly has grown and has failed to build adequate housing for their students and they've dumped that problem on the City of San Luis Obispo. It's been up to the city to provide housing for Cal Poly students and of course Cuesta students—but that's kind of a different issue. Over the past 20 odd years that I've been here, it seems to me that councils and city staff have been timid about approaching Cal Poly from any kind of a strong arguing point. It's like they believe were they to stand up to Cal Poly, they might pack up and go someplace else. That's not going to happen. Cal Poly has been here a long time and is not leaving. We need to take them to task for the things that they have failed to do and housing is certainly one of them. The City of Santa Cruz took action against UC Santa Cruz and they got a cap on enrollment and they got a commitment to build additional on-campus housing, pretty rapidly. I have spoken with developers and realtors recently, which is a new experience for me, and they told me about the public-private partnerships that Mila mentioned a little while ago. They assured me that there is a lot of money out there in the private world that would love to get involved in building public-private partnerships and that is being done on other UC campuses in California, so it can be done here.

***AARON GOMEZ:*** Well, I think we've heard the whole gamut of solutions being proposed. As much as we want to think that it's simply Cal Poly, and we have left Cuesta out of it completely, I think that is a strong point. We've seen Cal Poly plan for more housing and we need to hold them to that. We need to make those numbers balance out and we need to ask how many people can we have within our city that isn't an allowable amount. I think actually getting a real figure on how many students are in the San Luis population so we can understand how much housing we really need to get on campus, so we have a true goal and we also need to consider how many Cuesta students are actually in our population. If they're still mixed in and taking up that housing, we haven't solved the problem. We still need to have some sort of student development that gets them out of the

neighborhoods. And if you want families to be in these houses, we are going to have to make some major inroads on owner occupation and the only way we are going to be able to do that is to do owner-occupation deed restrictions on new developments or infill projects. If we just continue down this road to build things that investors can purchase, just to rent out, then, guess what, we have the exact same problem over again. I don't think we can simply go to Cal Poly and they can be the solution. I don't think they can solve all of this. Our population has grown significantly, not just because of Cal Poly, but there are a lot of factors.

**QUESTION NO. #4: DO YOU SUPPORT THE RENTAL INSPECTION ORDINANCE? IF SO, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MODIFICATIONS TO THE CURRENT ORDINANCE OR IF YOU DON'T SUPPORT IT, WHY NOT?**

**ANDY PEASE:** I think that it's really important that we have safe buildings and housing and that we put in check the degradation of our neighborhoods. However, the current Rental Housing Inspection Program, with a blanket inspection, has gone too far. It has unintended consequences that are having a real negative effect. People are shutting down safe, great rental housing because the checklist itself was big, the initial training about what was going on was sometimes conflicted, would not necessarily have consistent standards. So I would definitely revamp. I would suspend the blanket inspections and then revamp the program from input from a lot of different people. At the same time, I think we need to figure out what are the things that we can do to make it an effective program. So we need to make sure we have on the radar who are running these businesses, make sure they have business licenses, empower tenants, and have real consequences for repeat offenders of landlords.

**BRETT STRICKLAND:** Well, if you've been following my campaign, you already know my answer on this issue fairly clearly. I will push forward to kill this program. It's real simple. Whenever you have landlords and tenants on the same side in an argument, you already know you're doing something wrong. Those two groups are like cats and dogs. If they agree that what you're doing is wrong, you're doing it wrong. There's no other way to put that. A lot of people are complaining about it and this impacts young professionals as well. Between 64% and 66% of our population are renters here. Only about half of that is the student population. We have about 15,000 individuals who are working professionals here in town that feel insulted about this law. The city is coming in and saying we need to look out for you because you're not capable of doing it yourself. I'm in this group, and I'm insulted by this law, as an adult. Along with that, there's privacy concerns and there are lot of people who don't want strangers coming into their homes. If you're a working professional, you have to take time off from work to be there for these inspections as well to make sure they are comfortable with having somebody there. There are a lot of unintended consequences, one the least of which is raising rents. I have talked to people whose rents have been raised \$200.00 a month and I have talked with others who have been misplaced because their landlords are on fixed incomes and they can't afford to make all the repairs to the property that the city's demanding. The individuals were perfectly happy with their living conditions and didn't want any of the repairs to begin with. The homeowner has to sell the home, probably to a developer. The developer will come in and remodel the entire home and charge rent through the roof for it. So now we have people that are being placed back into the rental market that is increasing the demand on our rental supply, compounding our problem.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Since over 60% of our San Luis Obispo residents are renters, I have followed this over the past couple of years and its evolution. I think it was originally designed to protect tenants, to encourage landlords to take good care of their property, but what I think it has evolved to and why I think the entire ordinance needs to be revamped, is that it has become a nightmare for tenants, it's become an invasion of their privacy. For the landlords, it's become an incredible nightmare but it's been a huge money-maker for the city, you need to know. So you're going to go ahead and hear that being revisited, I'm sure, in 2017. At the last City Council meeting, during public comment, the City Council members did agree to put this matter on the Agenda and I look forward to being a part of that revamping process as a City Council member because I think it needs to be looked at, revamped, and revisited to make it user friendly, not so invasive, and make sure that both tenants and landlords feel that it's a good law. I also feel that there are a lot of ways to protect tenants' rights now. I think tenants should go ahead right now and make sure that they know their rights throughout the county and that we make that easy on our city website to make sure tenants know how to communicate with City staff and to get simple solutions to problems. Thank you.

**HEIDI HARMON:** I'm against the Rental Housing Inspection Program and have been from the beginning. I am much more interested in empowering both tenants and landlords to figure out more proactive and engaged solutions. We can't always ordinance our way out of these problems. We need to look at the core issue underneath—why do we need these ordinances in the first place. I feel like in some ways, this is a way of not digging deeper and asking ourselves why are we having these issues in the first place—which are the issues and how do they need to be addressed. I don't want to assume that renters, and even young renters, cannot handle stepping up and being engaged and empowered and deal with landlords in a meaningful way. We can give, young people in particular, the skill sets they need that they can take with them for the rest of their lives, if we change the way we deal with some of these issues. This also is a good example of a good idea, potentially, gone wrong. And this is another example of staff potentially changing and morphing a situation to which the community is really very much not wanting. My understanding, including petition signers, there were over a thousand comments against this program and it was still voted for by council. And to me this is another really important aspect of the Rental Housing Inspection Program that really needs to be understood and addressed. So, it's not just about the Rental Housing Inspection Program. It's about really listening meaningfully and engaging the community to find solutions that the community really want.

**JAN MARX:** Yes, well the idea of a Rental Housing Inspection Program started right here with RQN. For a number of years, RQN has been advocating for it, all the way back to when Cydney Holcomb was involved, may she rest in peace. And I have to say that the concern that I had when I voted for it in 2015 was the safety and health of the tenants. Also the fact that there are people from all over the world buying our housing here in San Luis Obispo, investors who have money, and know they have a big supply of American Dollars coming out, they don't have to—there's nobody requiring them to actually fix up those homes and so we have a very difficult situation with nearly a zero vacancy rate and people are competing for a rental. I have to say that I have been working with the Legal Alternatives Foundation at the Monterey School of Law to start a landlord/tenant clinic that would essentially focus on tenants' rights. When I practiced law, I represented tenants. Nobody in this county is representing tenants now. Also, I have been working with the Cal Poly Off-campus Coordinator to introduce landlord/tenant education. I did make the motion to put this on the Agenda in March, 2017, and I look forward to re-evaluating it to make sure that the program doesn't have unintended consequences, especially on permanent renters.

**MIKE CLARK:** I suppose you can say the Rental Housing Inspection Program is a perfect example of how you can have a law with unintended consequences. I think those unintended consequences came about, as I mentioned in my introduction. Many times when a program is brought to the city council, it is put together by staff and nobody sees it while it's being worked on. Just some background information from talking to a number of people: Joseph Lease, when he was putting together this program in the first place, got a buy in from the police department, neighborhood groups, and got a buy in from the real estate associations because everybody recognized that there were a certain number of residential units in this town that no one should be inhabiting. That's a certain number of them nobody should be inhabiting. Somehow now we're going to inspect every single rental property in R-1 and R-2 zones, regardless of the area. That's just crazy. I didn't realize at the time that there are only 700 rental units that had complaints filed against them. It seems to me that the program could have been targeted toward those 700 units, get them cleaned up and make sure they don't have any more problems in the future. So why are we going to inspect every other unit, if the landlord and tenant are perfectly happy with how things are working? Having people evicted from their homes is just not something that should not be happening and certainly not here in San Luis Obispo. I've talked to some of the same people that some of the other folks up here have talked to. The program needs to be halted, temporarily, as quickly as possible, and we need to have a very thorough evaluation with a lot more options discussed--the things that are on the checklist, how the inspectors are going to act, because I've heard some bad stories about how they are going in and treating the landlords and the tenants, and that's just not right.

**AARON GOMEZ:** This is a subject that we all, the candidates, agree on. This program does not work. It missed the mark. It may have been based on a great intention but that intention has had some severe repercussions and we have seen it in place long enough to know these repercussions. A lot of people who were against it in the first place were worried about this happening and it's happened. So we're now at that point where a repeal is out there and it's kind of up to the voters right now. If you really want to repeal it, get out there and tell your friends—get them to vote—and we'll get a repeal pushed forward. If it's not repealed at that level, then it's going to come to the council and the next council is going to completely revamp it, one way or

the other. The reality is, we need to address the true issue without causing a bigger issue--the affordability problem. We already have that as a major problem and this is making it even worse. So, you can't expect to take students out of a place that they live in, who got there because it's unaffordable, it's very expensive. They're not necessarily going to make a complaint on that. But there's also the 15,000 other residents who are not students and I guarantee they will complain if they're not in an uninhabitable situation. So we need to be very focused on who we're trying to address and give them power to understand their rights. And that's how we should move forward on this.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** Do I believe in a program that empowers and protects tenants? Yes. Do I believe in a program that cares about your safety and well being as tenants? Of course. Do I believe the Rental Housing Inspection Program is the answer? My answer to that is no. I do not believe that the Rental Housing Inspection Program is the answer to some of the concerns we have about our community but the fact is that there is a problem. But Rental Housing Inspection is not the answer. One of the proposed ideas that I have and why I believe it can solve one of the immediate concerns that we have is if we use the resources that went into the Rental Housing Inspection Program and apply that to the list of houses that have previous violations, where they could target houses individually, depending on a history of complaints and violations, that program would be successful. Well, people who recall that type of program have said that program didn't work and it wasn't successful. The reason it wasn't successful is because it didn't have the resources that the Rental Housing Inspection Program currently has. I agree with what Mayor Marx and others who have said that we need more education. I believe that if we apply the resources to the complaint-based system, and focus emphasis on not only tenant education but also encouraging and educating landlords about the rights that they have, about the resources that are available to them, then we're going to have permanent success. Then we're not going to have a program that decreases residents' rights but rather one that encourages, promotes, and protects individual rights. So I believe in a program that has resources and a focus on education.

**QUESTION #5: MANY OF YOU HAVE TALKED ABOUT BUILDING MORE HOUSING, A LOT MORE HOUSING. THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO THIS QUESTION: #1—DO YOU BELIEVE WE CAN BUILD OUR WAY OUT OF OUR AFFORDABILITY PROBLEM; AND #2—IF WE COMPLETE ALL THE BUILDING THAT IS PLANNED, HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DEAL WITH ALL THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION THAT WE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING THAT WILL ONLY GET MUCH WORSE?**

**BRETT STRICKLAND:** Okay, well, as far as building our way out of our affordability problem, there's no one single solution to that. It's a multi-faceted problem that will take a multi-faceted approach. Building is part of it, and as we mentioned before tonight, also trying to get more on-campus housing built to reduce our student congestion is part of that as well. Building won't be the only solution but it will be part of it so we can't rule that out—it plays a key role. As I mentioned before, affordability by design will really help with that. So as far as traffic goes, I feel that having infrastructure funding, as part of the city's actual general fund will be really important to that—to make sure we have the roads and the capacity to handle the new residents. Along with that, getting more housing here and increasing the affordability doesn't necessarily mean we will have more residents. I know some people, working professionals, who are living here with four people in a house right now because they can't find a place to live. We have those individuals who are looking to occupy some of those new homes as well. So you won't necessarily be increasing the population or increasing congestion. You're moving and are actually alleviating congestion. As far as infrastructure funding goes, right now, primarily, the city puts it on the backs of the developers saying, hey, we want somebody else to pay for this for us. The city needs to take a proactive approach in funding our infrastructure because that's not always going to be there. We can't always hope somebody else will be there to pay for us--not only for funding of our new infrastructure but also to maintain our existing infrastructure.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Thank you. I do not think we can build ourselves out of this affordability issue. I'm a product of Southern California. I've seen costs escalate there. A little 1500 sq. ft. house, like my mom bought in the 1960's, is now going for about 2.7 million dollars in her neighborhood with no improvements. So I think we are in one of the most desirable places in the United States. I think a lot of people are wanting to move here but I do not think we can build our way out of the affordability. As far as traffic infrastructure, I went to a number of Land Use Circulation Element meetings. I was very vocal in the fact that if we do build, we should have traffic infrastructure in place. A lot of the current developers are trying to get it more by what is called "fair share" and not paying for their whole percentage for what they should be paying for the traffic

infrastructure. Currently, for example, we have a new development in Serra Meadows. Prado Road is supposed to be a four-lane truck highway. It should have been built as a four-lane truck highway adjacent to that neighborhood to avoid problems in the future. We are looking at a nightmare unless we address the traffic infrastructure currently, and also with every single new development. In addition to that, although it's not part of the question, I have a lot of concerns about our epic drought, climate change and global warming. I do not think that we have the appropriate water supply for the projected build out, and I think that that needs to be dealt with as another factual matter in the very, very near future after I'm elected. Thank you very much.

**HEIDI HARMON:** Thank you. So there's definitely no way to build our into affordability in a real sense. We have open space boundaries, we have cultural standards here. We have a community that we want to preserve to some extent and when you juxtapose that--when you live in one of the most desirable places, potentially in the world, quite literally, and what are we going to do about it? So, we have to accept that reality and it's heartbreaking, it's heartbreaking to me personally, as a very inclusive person that is interested in more diversity here, more economic diversity, more cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity here to delve into this question. It's really important to me for this reason. And I recognize there are limitations here which is why I say, I keep going back to Cal Poly as a source of potentially the beginning of a solution here. When we talk about affordable housing, we need not to just talk about affordable housing in the traditional sense, where it's subsidized, but building truly affordable in the building sense -- especially for younger families who are interested in tiny homes and community living. When you look at the Palomar property, for example, one of the heartbreaks for me about that is that it is a perfect space for this new type of living, which is, of course, is a really old type of living. And these are the kind of things that we really need to recognize. I think that we're not a community that is necessarily against building, even the folks that might have a somewhat anti-building sense, maybe yourselves included. I think what we're really interested in is building neighborhoods, and building communities that we really want to come home to.

**JAN MARX:** Thank you. I'm going to start with the second part of the question first which is the traffic issue, okay? Right now we have about 45,000 to 46,000 people at night and close to 100,000 people during the day. All those people are commuting in cars and that's where a lot of our congestion comes from. If we're able to bring in new neighborhoods in the annexation areas and build modest homes that are close to mass transit stations, we can, you know, hopefully bring in some good workforce housing. I'm looking for a good definition for workforce housing, working with some people up in San Jose who also build affordable housing. I don't think it should be subsidized but I think we must figure out a way for people who work in the City of San Luis Obispo also to live here. Development must pay its fair share, that's part of our General Plan, and it's also constitutional standards. There has to be a nexus; that means that if you don't have developers pay their fair share of infrastructure, then what you've got is corporate welfare where all of us taxpayers have to pay for that and we don't want to go there. We need to stay within our natural resources and move slowly in a phased way and stick within our 1% growth cap, which we've never met. It's always about .4 or .5% every year.

**MIKE CLARK:** You can't build your way into affordability. When my wife and I lived in San Diego, the population was about 750,000 people and the county was about the same. Now the population in the city is one and a half million and the rest of the county is one and a half million. And surprisingly enough, the housing prices have not dropped--in fact they've gone up. It's just a fact of life in California and there are always going to be more people who want to live here than we have room for--it's just the way things are. An alternative is to look at some of the options that have been proposed here. I don't know when the last time was that a mobile home park was built in San Luis Obispo. I'm not really sure when the last time an honest to God family-oriented apartment complex was built. Those are relatively affordable compared to buying a traditional single-family size home on a traditional size lot. These are options that need to be explored--certainly when building in other parts of town. If we're going to be building in other parts of town, I believe the developers should pay the full cost of the streets and other infrastructure that's needed for their development and they should pay a percentage, if we have to upgrade our sewer or water system because of the development they are building--they need to pay for it. There's no reason for those of us who live here today to pay for that additional capacity--for all the new building coming in. Because frankly, I don't care if anybody else moves into our city. We're here, I'm not saying close the door behind us, but I'm saying if somebody is going to add to the cost of running our city, they should have to pay their fair share.

**AARON GOMEZ:** I do care if people come here because that's me, that's the people that work for me, the

people who have grown up here, that have been here. And, no we're not ever going to build our way of it. We can design our way out of it for a short term. Eventually, it's going to be a county-wide issue. People will live outside San Luis Obispo. There are inroads that can be made right now. It's just like you said, they're building smaller homes, building something that is affordable. We actually have—HASLO—has just completed their project which is a family oriented apartment complex. It is subsidized but I went there, at the opening, and the majority of the people who live there are families. And the reason they can live there—you qualify at \$39,000.00 a year and under. That's a large portion of people who work in San Luis Obispo. I know that we don't want to really want to take that on and consider that because there are a lot of people who make above that but when you look at our average wages, that's the issue that we have. These are average people that are being left out of the process of being able to rent and own homes. It's multi-faceted. We do need more on-campus housing at Cal Poly, we need smaller footprints, we need homes that are efficient. That's just the time we are at in the history of life. Efficiency is where we are at. We've seen what this expanse of doing whatever we want to do has done globally—it's done the same thing locally. You can't pretend that that's not an issue.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** I don't believe we can build our way out of the affordable housing problem we have right now. I think one of the issues we have is creating a way to lower some of the costs added to the houses when they are developed. I know oftentimes developers talk about how those can be costly and there's a number of regulations that together add up to why housing isn't affordable. So finding a process where we can reduce the costs of the review process that will hopefully bring down the price of housing--will be one solution. I believe that we can also start by creating more head-of-household jobs. I know that my experience (approaching graduation) makes me start thinking about how am I going to live in San Luis Obispo if I can't find a job that will allow for me to pay my rent. So creating those head of household jobs will be another solution. In regards to the concern that building more housing will add to the traffic congestion, I believe we can be proactive. We can't grow too fast but it's inevitable our community will grow. So if we are going to grow, we need to grow slow. As funny as that sounds, we will need to be smart and proactive in figuring out our future and figuring out how the community can function as a whole.

**ANDY PEASE:** It's never going to be cheap to live in town. At the same time, we have grown a lot of jobs in this town, right, so we have 30,000 to 40,000 people commuting into town everyday because we have done a lot of non-residential development. So, because of this housing imbalance, we have this additional demand that is trashing affordability. So, we do have a responsibility and as we move forward I think we need to be more strategic and intentional about the non-residential growth so even as we add housing, we don't also increase jobs at the same time in a way that is going to continue to exacerbate the problem. Those folks who are commuting are contributing to the traffic. If we can get some of those folks to live actually in town, then they can have better opportunity for biking, walking, multi-modal transportation that will reduce the traffic and the congestion. Maybe if we can get down to a single car per household and take advantage of Uber kinds of commuting so we can get fewer traffic problems in that way. I think we do need the folks who are getting priced out—they are the fabric of our community. We are going to be very sad as we become more and more mono-cultural with more students who are the ones who can afford to be able to live here.

## **CANDIDATES' CLOSING STATEMENTS:**

**BRETT STRICKLAND:** I want to start off by thanking you all again for inviting me here and for taking the time to be here. I know everybody's busy, everybody has stuff to do. So I really appreciate it that as a community member that you're engaged in our community. I've been trying to push more people, especially in my age demographic, to become involved in local politics which has much more impact in our day-to-day lives than at the national level that everybody wants to pay attention to. But I encourage all of you to visit my website: [stricklandslocouncil.com](http://stricklandslocouncil.com) to learn more about my campaign. If you liked some of the stuff I said here today, you can sign up to volunteer and help me out. If you have any other questions that didn't get answered, please feel free to send me an e-mail and I'll get back to you with whatever you weren't able to ask tonight. Thank you again and everybody get home safe.

**MILA VUJOVICH-LA BARRE:** Thank you very much for hosting this wonderful forum and as Brett said, a lot of us have campaign material on the table. Please pick up this letter that has a lot of my goals for the future as

well as my full resume and business card that has a full link to my website if you'd like to do some more research. As a person, I have personally thrived here for over 25 years. I'm a great listener, leader, and long-term planner. And what I really hope to do as a council member is to make sure people are heard and that people are able to communicate with elected officials and have very transparent access to city government. Right now, I do not feel that that is the case and I would not just like to have compatibility workshops in the neighborhoods when there's a big project in the pipeline, but I'd like to have those meetings throughout the year in various neighborhoods and for those people who are "in person" type people and not "e-mail type" people to go ahead and have the opportunity to talk to their elected officials and not just be heard but also start getting some answers on how we can make this town the best it can be. Thank you.

**HEIDI HARMON:** Thank you so much not just for being here tonight but for spending so much time with me, showing me your concerns. Linda, especially, and so many of you. Linda took me on a several hour tour of the neighborhoods that are being lost and that really had a strong impact on me, really feeling that emotional deep sadness, really about the loss of connection and loss of neighborhoods. So I'm really hearing that. I recognize that. And I think it's really important to recognize too that a lot of the low-hanging fruit of making this a better community has already been picked. Because you see what comes next is heart. And it takes political courage to do that, to recognize that, to stand with you and to stand up and make that happen, and I am that person. It takes, disparege it or not, a mighty force of nature to stand with you and that is me. So I hope you'll consider voting for me for Mayor.

**JAN MARX:** Thank you and thanks for being here tonight. I want to say that I'm clearly the most qualified candidate for mayor and I'm the only candidate with the experience, in-depth understanding and positive vision and balanced perspective that is needed to face the challenges and solve the problems successfully. Learn by doing is an appropriate slogan for undergraduates but not for the next mayor of the city who is the economical, environmental and cultural leader of our county. I'm open to new ideas and welcome new talent, encourage entrepreneurship and diversity. I'm respectful and accessible to all and I believe in accountability, diplomacy, fairness, and optimism. During my next term I will work to facilitate workforce and senior affordable housing and improved communication with residents and work hard to implement the Climate Action Plan which I think is really crucial. Thank you for voting for me.

**MIKE CLARK:** Some of you probably remember Bill Roalman. He served two terms on Council back in the 90's. When we moved to our Garden Street house, we were three houses away from Bill's. I didn't get to know him well, but I admired him on the Council. As he left, he wrote a final column for the SLO Journal Magazine. In it, he discussed the changing planning process and how staff was becoming "de facto" advocates for projects. He pointed out that the public and the Council were left out of the discussion until nearly all the details had been worked out...and that the public wasn't empowered to participate in shaping its community. Little has changed in the past 16 years. In fact, I think it has gotten worse. Bill's solution was to elect council candidates who would seriously question the community-wide costs and benefits of proposed developments. He wrote that our city needs council members who are true advocates for the general public. If you believe that, I'm your guy. Think about the last time you saw a large project come before Council without the staff cheer-leading it. I don't recall one. Residents' voices and votes matter. We live here; it is our City. I respectfully ask for your vote to be your voice on our City Council.

**AARON GOMEZ:** So I'm not into political posturing so I'm not going to tell you to vote for me better than anybody else. I'm a candidate with a certain perspective. I think you are all well educated. You can vote for those who you agree with and see a vision for your city. I do want to recognize that it is groups like this that make this city wonderful and that's the whole idea--dialogue, conversation, groups getting together, making their voices heard, and understanding the process. And that's all this is, it's a process. Life's a process, politics is a process—they are no different from one another. I just want to commend you all for being part of that process. I hope that we do it in a way that we can progress and can do it with an understanding that solutions are where we have to go. It's not just about finding something to complain about but not finding solutions for them.

**CHRISTOPHER LOPEZ:** First of all thank you so much for giving me such a wonderful experience to be here. I'm not asking you to take a chance on me. I'm asking you to take a chance on the vision that I have for the

City of San Luis Obispo. I want to touch on two questions that were emphasized during this discussion. Those would be Noise and increasing the housing for students on campus. I've worked in the President's office at Cal Poly. I've worked in the Chancellor's office myself. I know what we need to do to create solutions today. Now I agree that we need to increase the housing on campus—we need to house more students on campus—but the problem is that an entire term will have gone by and housing will still not have been built on campus to alleviate the concerns that you all have. We need a solution that is going to begin the day that a candidate is elected. And by having the experiences that I have, both with the CSU and Cal Poly and ASI. I know that I'm the only candidate that on day one can begin solutions that are going to create solutions to your concerns. Not in four or eight years.

**ANDY PEASE:** Thank you so much for having all of us up here. I believe that local government is really important. This is the way people can really have an influence about coming together as a community, making decisions. I'd like to help facilitate that process so that we engage with each other. It's not just five people in front of an audience but in a way where we do more listening to each other, all of us. I believe that we need a city council leadership that honors our shared paths and also can plan courageously for the future. I'm excited about that future, I'm hopeful and I'd be honored to serve on City Council.