

The Mesa Paper

Your Neighborhood Journal of Life on the Mesa

*A folksy grassroots monthly • The first and only neighborhood paper in the city of Santa Barbara
• Host to Allied Neighborhoods Association and the Neighborhood Advisory Council*

**You cannot control results,
only your actions.
You cannot decide outcomes,
only your choices.**

*Messages from the Ancestors
Wisdom for the Way
as received and compiled by
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David Michael Cumes, M.D.*

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Nine of the ten active candidates in this year's by-District Santa Barbara General Municipal elections for seats in the City Council joined OMNI's (Our Mesa Neighborhood Inc.) Candidates Forum at Mesa's official Village Hall, Holy Cross Parish Hall, on the evening of Monday, September 21st. Co-sponsor was La Mesa Neighborhood Association (LMNA).

Ten questions mailed in and submitted from the floor were asked the candidates.

The Questions:

For Yes or No answers:

Cruise ships. Do you think the benefits outweigh the burdens?

Term limits for the City. Do you favor them?

Candidates forum. Is this an effective method to share your message?

OMNI Candidates Forum 2015

For one-minute responses:

Vacation rentals. What are the core issues on vacation rentals and what is the long-term solution?

Safety on Cliff Drive. How do we enhance and fund safety improvements along Cliff Drive? How can reduce the speed limit to 25 - 35 mph soonest?

Qualities of a City Council member. What qualities are most important to be a member of the Santa Barbara City Council? How do you rate yourself on these?

Veronica Meadows. Grassroots movements are prominent in Santa Barbara. They have led in the acquisition of Shoreline Park and the Douglas Family Preserve. What is your position regarding

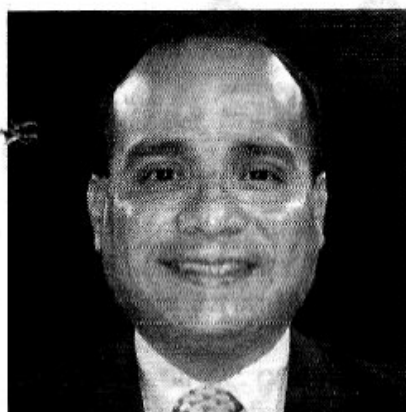
the acquisition by the City of the Veronica Meadows property that borders Las Positas? Would you approve the use of Measure B funds for this purpose?

Business Improvement Districts. The Downtown Organization, hotel district, and others have and are forming Business Improvement Districts. With gentrification in certain areas of our community, what would be your role on City Council in this regard?

Personal accomplishments. What have you accomplished of which you are most proud? What have you accomplished of which you are least proud? In hindsight, what did you learn and would do differently?

(Continued on page 27)

District 1 City Council candidates



Cruzito Herrera Cruz



Jacqueline Inda



**Andria
Martinez Cohen**



1. As a City, we should be able to identify the vacation rentals. Zoning ordinances need to be addressed and updated because it is tied into the Housing Element of the S.B. General Plan. Plus, in District One, all the housing stock and renting opportunities are diminished because city's vacation rentals are not residential homes for Santa Barbarians. Santa Barbarians therefore can not invest and buy residential homes. Some of our housing stock problems can be alleviated with education, enforcement, and execution of better regulations to be able to balance all stakeholder's involved, in order, to have a smooth transition period. Create a balance with past city practices in issuing and collecting TOT from a prohibited business activity in residential neighborhoods.



1. We need to preserve our neighborhoods. But prohibiting vacation rentals without proper enforcement does nothing to create change or protect a neighborhood. In the city, garage conversions are illegal dwellings. Yet, we do not have a mechanism of enforcement so these illegal dwellings go up all over our neighborhoods without meeting safety standards.

We need to create a system to monitor and enforce this ban. I also believe that the true impact to our neighborhoods is not vacation rentals, but short term housing rentals for students. We are not creating a local revenue source out of these non-licensed business ventures. But our neighborhoods are now being impacted by higher rents to accommodate transitional out- of-city students that do not stay in the city long-term and have no vested interest in preserving the tranquility of a neighborhood.



1. Vacation rentals in residential zones are reducing the available housing stock for Santa Barbara residents and working families while also compromising the quiet character of many neighborhoods. I support the City Council's decision to enforce existing zoning ordinances, and eliminate vacation rentals from most areas of the city. This is one good step towards addressing the problem of less than a 1% vacancy rate in the rental housing market.

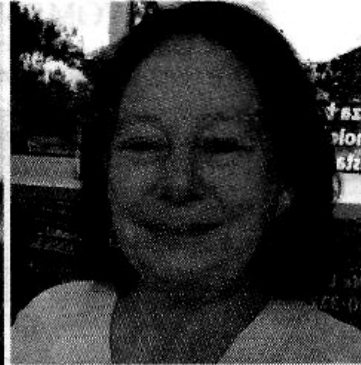
District 2 City Council candidates



Luis Esparza



Randy Rowse



**Kathleen Missy
McSweeney-Zeitsoff**



1. Core issues are neighborhood characteristics and impropriety of current ban. I support reasonable regulations to discourage and dis-incentivize short-term rental activity. Enforcement entails unpredictable litigation and costs, loss of revenue, and ineffectiveness given the popular economic demand, facilitation by mobile technology and previous City policy on the issue. Nonetheless, the Council has spoken and is currently acting to protect our neighborhoods.



1. The core issue is allowable activities within a residential zone. I have never agreed with the City's policy of collecting TOT and business license fees from these units when they are not permitted. Even when VRBO's are well managed, people who live in an area zoned specifically for residential use have a rightful expectation that the activity be limited to long-term occupancy. We shouldn't put residents in the position of having to police their neighbors. There are areas in the city where this activity can be permitted, and I believe the business should be contained within those zones that are currently established.



1. Mostly illegal in R-1 residential zoning, the Council, City Staff and City Attorney were complicit in issuing illegal business licenses for a fee, and in collecting visitor rental payment tax for years. Some even rented out without fees or taxes paid, nor any scrutiny by City enforcers! When caught, the Council voted to crack down with an 18 month phase-out to allow the owners to deal with their losses. NO !! NOW!! Today, with no particular priority enforcement given to those who obeyed the City's fraud. We need the rental stock NOW for our lower income and work-force labor. SBCC needs to eliminate international and out-of-state students, and concentrate on housing the regional and possibly state students. SBCC has become too much of a good thing and SB renters are being squeezed out. There will be a new ordinance for Homesharing, where the owner rents a bedroom or two to tourists or students. It should be subject to tax, under 30 days; to building, safety and health standards; licensing, proof of a liability insurance, and a waiver of liability for the City.

District 3 City Council candidates



Sharon Byrne



Cristina Cardoso



Cathy Murillo



1. The biggest issue is that growth of the sharing economy caught everyone by surprise. The city's short-term answer of collecting bed taxes while ignoring the zoning laws allowed this to grow unchecked. I've read that there are as many as 1,000 listed VRBOs. They may well have partly contributed to the critical housing shortage in the city. Enforcing zoning laws is not certain to return each and every VRBO property to the market as either a long-term rental or sale property. While I support private property rights, I am also respectful of people who bought into a neighborhood expecting to live among fellow neighbors, not a constant turnover of vacationers. The city is moving in the right direction by enforcing zoning laws, and providing a phase-out period. Goleta's ordinance on VRBO seems responsible, and might be worth looking into.



1. They are causing enormous problems for working class and middle class residents. The City has tolerated them and profited from them for years. I have no clear long-term solution, but this area needs serious investigation. Quick answers are not credible.



1. Vacation rentals remove from the market long-term rentals for local working people and families. They impact neighborhood. Residential areas should not have commercial activities. The City must enforce its zoning regulations. In response, the City Council is severely restricting where vacation rentals can locate (areas zoned for hotels) and giving people time to divest their invested money from vacation rentals.

2. I supported a half-cent sales tax measure for the November 2015 ballot. The voters should have decided whether or not to approve a tax that would fund street and sidewalk repairs and other infrastructure projects. The Council needed five votes; we only had four. Some new improvements will soon be made from Meigs Road to Las Positas, now that our transportation and traffic engineers have worked through the challenges of the Flora Vista/Mesa Lane double

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