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City Councilor, Moab, Utah
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WHAT IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT OR IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ELECTED LEADER?

In 2017, as a result primarily of the efforts of myself and fellow council member Rani Derasary, the city of Moab adopted a resolution setting ambitious goals to address climate change and create Moab's first sustainability-focussed staff position. The goals include 100 percent renewable electricity for the community by 2030, and an 80 percent reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent by 2040. It was gratifying to see our council chambers packed with supporters the night of the resolution vote. Moab is in a region already experiencing a noticeable rise in temperature, and climate change is becoming a local issue sooner than expected. Cascading effects from the resolution include new community-scale solar in development, investments in electric vehicle infrastructure and building efficiency, and, in partnership with other Utah cities and our electric utility, the framework for new grid-scale renewable capacity to meet our goals.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES AHEAD OF YOU AND FOR YOUR COMMUNITY DURING YOUR TERM?

Broadly speaking, social equity is a large and growing challenge, and housing is the clearest manifestation. The low wages of a tourism/service economy, outside capital converting existing housing stock to second home investments, and intergenerational poverty combine to create significant barriers to affordable and decent housing. Between the 80s and 00s, Moab went from mining bust with ultra-cheap real estate to housing crisis.

After the recession and recovery, a critical mass has come to accept that there is a role for more direct investment in affordability, and the political will to enact stronger policies to engage the private sector in helping. Navigating fiscal constraints and NIMBYism to find viable solutions has been contentious and time consuming. However, our local governments, concerned members of the development community, and other stakeholders are successfully working together to implement a host of strategies.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE CONSIDERING RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Local office is a satisfying, stressful, complex and time-consuming job. Consider whether you have specific interests that can only be achieved at that level, in addition to a general interest in civic service, or if you can effectively contribute in other public or nonprofit entities. Gaining relevant experience prior to, and in the service of, running for office can be worthwhile. Planning commission can provide valuable knowledge of land use planning and codes, parliamentary procedure and legislative process, and public engagement. Other boards can provide some of these as well as experience in government budgeting. It takes much less work to get appointed to a board than to campaign, lets you get your feet wet, and if you do run, you'll be better prepared to lead effectively once in office.

IS THERE A CONSERVATION, CLIMATE OR DEMOCRACY-RELATED RULE, POLICY OR IDEA YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND/OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

Many, but accurate pricing of the projected costs and risks of climate change tops the list. At the federal level, this could be some form of carbon tax. Eliminating other subsidies that prop up fossil fuels would be a reasonable component of that. At the local level, the current "energy dominance" policy is leading to oil and gas leasing on federal lands, which is undermining prior local/federal planning to balance energy development with recreation and other uses which better support stable local economies.

